

SRMBC Family Bible Study

Romans: A New Lifestyle

June 13, 2018

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Lesson 13: Misguided Zeal Romans 9:30—10:21

The world is full of religious people: There are over a billion Muslims, 750 million Hindus, 334 million Buddhists and 18 million Jews in the world today. Many of these people are zealous, dedicated and sincere. But are zeal and sincerity enough? Are there many paths to God or just one?

Having considered Israel's unbelief from the standpoint of divine election, Paul now focuses on Israel's and our own responsibility to believe the gospel.

Group Discussion: How do you respond—emotionally and intellectually—when you think of all the religious people in the world who don't know Jesus Christ?

Emotionally

- Anguish – my heart breaks at the thought of the lost people – here and around the world
- Passion – A desire to take the Gospel – to pray and preach with God's power and urgency.
- Bewilderment – why won't people confess and believe in Jesus.

Intellectually

- I think about strategic ways to promote and introduce Jesus Christ
- I try to think about the most common objections to faith in Christ and have an answer for them (Apologetics).
- I want to understand that God is in control and ultimately knows where the lost are and how to reach them.

Read Romans 9:30—9:33

1. **Why was Jesus Christ more of a stumbling stone to the Jews than to the Gentiles (9:30-33)?**

Jesus and the Gentiles

- They did not start out with the law of righteousness – but more importantly they did not have the religious traditions (man-made) of those who followed the law.
- They found the righteousness of God – as expressed in the One he has sent Jesus Christ.
- What a blessing – to find that righteousness not by righteous works- but by faith in Jesus Christ.
- They were not ashamed to admit they had no righteousness of their own and needed the righteousness of Christ.

Jesus and the Jews

- They had the knowledge of the true God from the OT and the law of righteousness – which should've led them directly to Jesus.
- Despite knowing the law, they tried to establish their own righteousness – by their works.
- They sought to be right with God by trying to establish righteousness on their own – apart from God's way, His Son Jesus Christ.
- The proud and self – righteousness will stumble over the fact that their "righteousness" will never be accepted apart from Jesus (a blow to their ego).

A turtle once wanted to spend the winter in Florida, but he knew he could never walk that far. He convinced a couple of geese to help him, each taking one end of a piece of rope, while he clamped his vise-like jaws in the center. The flight went fine until someone on the ground looked up in admiration and asked, "Who in the world thought of that?" Unable to resist the chance to take credit, the turtle opened his mouth to shout, "I did."

You will probably do more damage to your spiritual life than anyone else around you. Yet, in your pride you will try to blame someone else for your faults and take credit for the successes.

Read Romans 10:1—8

2. In 10:2 Paul states that the Israelites are "zealous for God." Why doesn't this conflict with what he said about human depravity in 3:10-18?

10 **As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one;** 11 there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. 12 All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."13 "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips."14 "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness."15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood;16 ruin and misery mark their ways, 17 and the way of peace they do not know."18 **"There is no fear of God before their eyes."**

- Paul says in chapter 3, that there is none righteous – not even one– that does not mean that "religious folks" can't be lost (cf. Luke 15:25 – 32).
- One characteristic of human depravity is the propensity for creating a God of our own understanding (Idolatry).
- Some of the most religiously zealous people are also the most sinfully deprived as they have the arrogance to think that they can be righteous without God.

The Israelites of Paul's day were "zealous for God," they were guilty of a misguided zeal—one that rejected God's free gift of righteousness through Jesus Christ and tried to substitute self-righteousness through the law.

3. Many people believe religious zeal and sincerity are all a person needs to be saved. How would you respond to this belief based on Paul's words in 10:1-4?

- You can be sincere but also sincerely wrong – when you don't know the God that you are supposedly following. (Spanish Inquisition, decision to burn Protestant “heretics, Jim Jones, David Koresh, etc.)
- Humility and submission – understanding your need for a Saviour and submitting to God's way Jesus (I AM the Way - John 8).
- Jesus Christ is the goal, the fulfillment the central figure and point of Salvation to everyone (rich, poor, Jew, gentile, black, white, young, old) who will believe.

Paul insists that true zeal must be combined with knowledge of God's offer of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Kirsten and I were headed to SF – following our family in 2 different cars – not knowing the way and we lost them when we missed a turn. I said I can't follow y'all – send me the address so I can know the way on my own. We have got to know Jesus, the Way, for ourselves!!!

4. In verses 6-8 Paul rewords Deuteronomy 30:11-14 in order to describe righteousness by faith. How do verses 6-8 stress the simplicity of this righteousness? How does it differ from righteousness by law (v. 5)?

11 Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. 12 It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, “Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?” 13 Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, “Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?” 14 No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it.

The original wording of Deuteronomy 30:11-14 describes the righteousness that is by law. Paul's change of wording highlights the differences between these two ways of seeking salvation

Righteousness By The Law

- The keeping of **all** the rules and regulations perfectly (works).
- Man's attempt to reach up to God and His standard of righteousness.
- Keeping the whole law means death. Failure to keep the Law perfectly results in death.

Righteousness by Faith

- **Believing the One of Salvation** Jesus has already come down from heaven and raised from the dead to establish righteousness for us.
- **Believing the Word of Salvation** – the Gospel is all that is needed and is brought close to us by God. (in your mouth, in your heart).
- **Believing the Way of Salvation** – The preached Word - is how we get saved (the foolishness of preaching – not the preaching of foolishness) faith comes by hearing and hearing by Word.

“Christ died for sin. Believers die to sin. Unbelievers die in sin.”—Unknown

Read Romans 10:9—15

5. First-century Christians publicly confessed that “Jesus is Lord” at their baptism. Why do you think it is important to publicly confess the belief in one’s heart (vv. 9-13)?

- It is important for me to know for sure that I have trusted Him with my heart.
- It is important as a witness to others who need to know Jesus.
- It is important for the church to see the evidence of Christ in my life to build up the Body of Christ.

The confession “Jesus is Lord” was one of the earliest Christian creeds (see 1 Cor 12:3). It briefly summarized who Jesus is and the position to which he has been exalted following his incarnation, death, burial and resurrection

As with baptism and all good works, public confession is not the means of salvation; it is the evidence of salvation

6. In what ways have you publicly expressed your belief in Christ?

- My Baptism 25 years ago – O Happy Day!
- My marriage on June 6, 2011.
- Preaching and teaching the Word of God in and of Church.
- Praying for others in and out of the Church.
- My lifestyle (Hopefully) – How I treat others and conduct myself in the world.

7. How is the meaning of the phrase “there is no difference” in 3:22 and the same phrase in 10:11-13 different and why?

Scripture	Remarks
Romans 3:22 This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile.	In this passage, Paul is highlighting the fact the God’s righteous judgement against sin applies to all people – Jews and Gentile.
Romans 10:11-13 11 As Scripture says, “Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame.” 12 For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile -the same LORD is LORD of all and richly blesses all who call on him, 13for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”	In this passage, Paul is highlighting the fact the God’s gracious forgiveness of sin, salvation and blessing applies all people who believe in Christ by faith – Jews and Gentile.

Read Romans 10:16—21

8. What do verses 16-21 reveal about the reasons for Israel’s unbelief? How are these similar to or different from reasons people have today?

- **Failure/Unwillingness to accept the Good News** (*understanding the bad news that we are sinners*).

- **Failure/Unwillingness to hearing/understand the Good News** about Christ and what He has done.
- **Failure/Unwillingness to believe the Good News** about Christ.
- **Failure/Unwillingness to seek the Good News** about Christ.
- **Failure/Unwillingness to obey God** and receive the Good News about Christ.

The Israelites have both heard and understood the gospel. Their unbelief in Paul's day must be explained as the result of deliberate disobedience and obstinacy.

Today, we see the same reasons today – people are not in Christ as the result of deliberate disobedience and obstinacy

Although people have no excuse not to believe in God - Today there are those who are ignorant or have not heard the true Gospel.

Israel's unbelief did not stop Paul from praying for them (10:1). Pray for those with whom you have the opportunity of sharing the gospel.

Keys for Living



Simply being religious and zealous (even doing "God's Work") does not save. Only faith in the Person and Work of Jesus Christ does.



While following Christ is a deeply personal decision, once it is made, we should never be ashamed to proclaim our faith in Him publicly.



The reasons that people are lost and in unbelief have not changed. We need to ask the Lord to re-ignite our passion to spread the Gospel to everyone – near or far.