

Not Ashamed
(Week 27)
Romans 10
“Christ: The Final Destination”

Introduction

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes”

Romans 10:4

Have you ever stopped to think about just who would make the “best” Believers? Of course, we would never purposely say that out loud, but we do try and make that distinction by the way that we share our faith do we not? We think of someone who is lost, and we say to ourselves, “I need to share Christ with them.” But what about all of the people who are lost that never cross our minds? Are we supposed to pick and choose who gets to hear the message and who doesn’t? If we truly believe that God is sovereign, and only He knows who will and who will not believe, then shouldn’t we be about sharing the gospel with everyone? The answer to that question is “yes” by the way. We have no idea who the “chosen” ones are. Therefore, it is our responsibility to see to it that **everyone** hears, not just the select few.

I recently read a story about an American pastor, who went to China to help distribute *Bibles* through an underground church. When he arrived, he asked the leaders of the church what would happen if they were caught (handing out *Bibles* is not legal in China). The leaders replied, “Well, you will be immediately deported, but we will each spend three years in prison”. He was shocked by the reply and overcome that they were willing to risk their very lives for the furtherance of Christ’s kingdom.

These Chinese pastors began to inquire of him what worship was like in America. The pastor tried to describe for them a typical Sunday worship service; in ornate buildings, and the music, and then the sermon. He told of the various ways that he had tried to equip his congregation to share the gospel. The church leaders were astonished with the freedom to believe that the American churches enjoyed.

The pastor asked the Chinese elders how they trained their pastors to lead under such difficult circumstances. They began to share with him some of the ways that they helped these young men grow to maturity in Christ, and how they prepared them for ministry. One particular statement cut the visiting pastor to the heart. The men told him that the government there was particularly hard on pastors. For they were seen as being responsible for propagating doctrines that were contrary to the communist regime. Pastors who were caught preaching the gospel were therefore often executed. In order to prepare these young men for the fate they could very well receive as a result of preaching the gospel, they were trained on how to witness to their executioners on their way to the death chamber!

When the pastor had completed his mission in China, he asked the members of this underground church how he could pray for them. They asked him to pray that they would one day be like the church in America. He refused. He told them, the church in America needs to be more like you! Just imagine, if we had such passion for spreading the gospel of Christ, that we would share it with our executioner as we were being led away to die for our faith! If we had this kind of compassion, how many would come to Christ? For you see, we have no idea who would make the “best” believers. So, why don’t we make it our mission to share the gospel with everyone and let God decide whom he will choose for Himself?

Paul longed to see the nation of Israel come to Christ. But Christ had become a stumbling block for them. So God instructed Paul to take His message of grace to the Gentiles. This didn’t make Paul very popular with his own people, for they believed the Gentiles to be inferior. But God, and God alone, knows who will make the “best” believers. The very people that the Jews despised were repenting of their sins and coming to Christ by the thousands! We have been saved, because the message was shared with a people deemed unworthy. Thanks be to God, that He didn’t feel that way about us. I don’t know who “the chosen ones” are. I just know that they are lost and scattered about somewhere out there, and many of them would be the last ones that I would suspect. I want to be a witness to any who will hear the word of God. I want our church to be this kind of witness as well. How about you? Do you have the kind of faith that would share Christ with your executioner? Pretty convicting is it not?

The gospel message is the most important thing that we possess. It is the only thing that can bring genuine hope to this fallen world. And we are called to take part in a never ending “cycle” that is meant to keep repeating until our LORD returns for His bride. We have been commissioned to **Teach** so others will, **Trust**, and then **Testify**.

Teach

As we look at **Romans 10** today, I am going to take this chapter in sort of a “sandwich order” starting with the first portion, then skipping to the last verses, and finally returning to the middle (Trust me, there is a method to the madness). Paul begins the chapter by saying how much that he would love to see his beloved Israel come to know Christ, but as a nation, they had rejected the gospel message, because they felt they were righteous before God and had no need of Him.

“Brothers and sisters, my heart’s desire and prayer to God concerning them is for their salvation. I can testify about them that they have zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. Since they are ignorant of the righteousness of God and attempted to establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted to God’s righteousness. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes, since Moses writes about the righteousness that is from the law: The one who does these things will live by them. But the righteousness that comes from faith speaks like this: Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will go up to heaven?’ that is, to bring Christ down or, ‘Who will go down into the abyss?’ that is, to bring Christ up from the dead. On the contrary, what does it say? The message is near you, in your mouth and in your heart.” **Romans 10:1-8a**

This passage has some “difficult” verses for many to grasp, but the truths of it are really quite simple. The Jews, as a nation, rejected Christ, because they believed they were already acceptable to God by living according to the law of Moses. Moses had told them in Leviticus:

“Keep my statutes and ordinances; a person will live if he does them.” **Levi. 18:5**

What this actually means is, if you attempt to attain righteousness by living according to God’s laws, then you will be judged based upon how well you did. The fact remains that no matter how hard we try, we cannot live according to this standard. The book of *James* tells us that if we break just one of God’s perfect commands then we are guilty of them all (**James 2:10**). Therefore, the law was never intended to save us. It was given so that we would come to realize that we were in desperate need of a Savior. This is what Paul is saying when he says:

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.” **Romans 10:4**

If we are completely honest about our own shortcomings, then we will see that we cannot live in God’s perfection (righteousness) on our own. Therefore, the “end of the law” or the final destination, as it were, is our need for Christ. Paul understood this truth more than anyone, for he had himself been a Pharisee. And those guys really had convinced themselves that they were perfectly holy and righteous. But Jesus had warned His disciples:

“For I tell you, unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven.” **Matthew 5:20**

So you see, the very best “keepers of the Law” were woefully inadequate. This is why, after Paul met Christ on the Damascus road, he said of all his “religious training”:

“More than that, I also consider everything to be a loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. Because of him I have suffered the loss of all things and consider them as dung, so that I may gain Christ”. **Philippians 3:8**

Paul continues his thoughts on the subject of self-righteousness, by saying that it is just as impossible to live a perfect life before God as it would be for us to go up to heaven and get Christ and bring Him down, or to go into the grave and raise Him from the dead! We could never possibly make these things happen! But thanks to God’s mercy and grace, we do not have to. Christ did it for us! The work that we could not do for ourselves, Christ did. So don’t try and please God by your own

righteousness, God will be pleased with you, when you are in Christ Jesus! You need to put on HIS righteousness in order to be made holy. This “message” has been brought near to you (**vs. 8**).

Now, here is the part where I am going to skip to the end of the chapter. Let us look at this “message” that has been brought near to us:

“How, then, can they call on him they have not believed in? And how can they believe without hearing about him? And how can they hear without a preacher? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news. But not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, Lord, who has believed our message? So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ. But I ask, “Did they not hear?” Yes, they did:

**Their voice has gone out to the whole earth,
and their words to the ends of the world.**

But I ask, “Did Israel not understand?” First, Moses said,

**I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation;
I will make you angry by a nation that lacks understanding.**

And Isaiah says boldly,

**I was found by those who were not looking for me:
I revealed myself to those who were not asking for me.**

But to Israel he says, All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and defiant people.” **Romans 10:14-21**

The fact is that God did send His message of the gospel to Israel before anyone else. They rejected it, and God then offered it to us, the pagan Gentiles. *The Old Testament* is filled with passages that foretell of Israel’s stubborn refusal of the gospel and the Gentiles subsequent acceptance of it. When the prophet Isaiah says, **“Who has believed our message?”**, in **Isaiah 53**, he is speaking about the suffering servant of God Who would be wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities, and by His stripes we are healed. (**Isaiah 53:5**). The Jews, as a nation, refuse to believe in Him, but many others, those who no one expected to be called “children of God”, did in fact believe. They are intended to become a source of jealousy for Israel, in order that they too will come to faith in Christ. And just how can they come to faith? By hearing the word! That’s how.

We have been called to bring the gospel message to any who would “hear it” (accept and believe). We have no idea just who those people are, so we have been called to teach anyone who will listen about the grace of God through our LORD Jesus. We do not have the wisdom or foresight to know just who would make the best Believers, so we just share the message. This is what we are responsible for. The rest is up to God. So how can people come to faith? The church must go out and make disciples. The word *disciple* means “student” or “learner”, and there can be no such thing, without those who are willing to teach them! So teach, Church! Teach any who will hear, so that they can be saved. This is the reason that God has strategically placed you in this world, so that you can reach those no one else can.

Trust

Now let us return to that “middle portion”:

“This is the message of faith that we proclaim: If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation. For the Scripture says, Everyone who believes on him will not be put to shame, since there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, because the same Lord of all richly blesses all who call on him. For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” **Romans 10:8b-13**

So, once a person has “heard the message”, they are then required to “Trust the message”. They believe it in their heart. To believe something with your heart is to be willing to risk everything for it. When I married my wife Sandi, I believed in my heart that she was the “one for me”. This required me to walk away from the dating scene. No more girlfriends for me. She was the one. I knew it in my heart. This is exactly what it means to believe in Christ with your heart. You become so convinced that He is the “One”, that you are willing to walk away from everything else. There is no such thing as a Believer that doesn’t follow Christ! This is what Paul means when he says, “One believes in the heart, resulting in righteousness”. If you truly believe that Jesus is LORD, then you will surrender your will to His and strive to live according to His commands.

Many a person has walked down the aisle at a church, claiming that they want to be saved and that they believe in Christ. But even the devil believes in Christ! If you believe in your heart, then your heart will be changed by that faith. You will long to forsake all sin and be remade in the righteousness of Christ Himself. This is what happens when a person truly “trusts” in Christ. They believe in Him with their whole heart. Why? Because we believe that God raised Him from the dead! The resurrection is the reality that causes us to believe. You see, anyone can die. We see that every day, but only God can raise someone from the grave. The Holy Spirit convinces us of Christ’s resurrection, and therefore, we believe in our hearts that Jesus Christ is LORD! First, we are ***Taught*** about Christ, and then, we ***Trust*** in Christ in our hearts.

Testify

“If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is LORD,’...”

And what happens to the chosen ones who are Taught about Christ, and Trust the message of Christ with their whole heart? They will give Testimony for Christ. They will confess with their mouths that He is not just LORD, but **their** LORD. I love what it says in *Revelation* about the chosen ones, who will overcome the devil and be saved during the great tribulation period:

“They conquered him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony: for they did not love their lives to the point of death.” **Revelation 12:11**

For you see, those who truly believe in Christ will take their stand for Him. Even if it costs them everything. When we believe in our hearts that Jesus is risen from the dead and confess with our mouths that He is our LORD, then we are saved. So you see, we don’t have to do anything spectacular, just hear, believe and confess. We don’t have to go to heaven to bring Christ down. We don’t have to raise Christ from the dead. We don’t have to impress God by our good deeds. We just simply have to HEAR, BELIEVE and TESTIFY. Everything else that is required has already been done for us. This is our testimony. Confess with your mouth that Jesus is LORD and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, and you shall be saved! You were saved because someone cared enough to teach you these truths. You trusted the message, and now you testify to what Christ has done. You proclaim Him as LORD. And the cycle continues as you share the message with others: Teach, Trust, Testify.

We have no idea who will or who won’t believe. We are simply called to perpetuate the cycle. So I would like to leave you today with this question: Would you be willing to share the message of Christ with your executioner on the way to the death chamber? That is exactly what Christ did for us. Do you love Him enough to do the same?

Let the chosen people of God say...TRUTH!!!