

Romans 10:1~4

This section opens up with a very beautiful image that of man broken hearted over the condition of his brother. Not his blood brother, but a reference to his fellow man. It is a beautiful image of a “*godly man*.” Tragically, many mistake “*clean living*,” living a good “*moral*” life, as “*godliness*.” Which it is not.

The Prodigal Son... That’s what that story was all about. Jesus was speaking to the Pharisees who were complaining that Jesus was eating with sinners. They were the evil brother who detested that the father readily accepted his brother to simply come back home. The point of the story was, like the sheep, and the lost coin, the son who was lost was now found. Those men saw themselves as Godly by their conformity to the law, when in reality, they were evil.

True Godliness is a result of seeing the world, through the eyes of God. True godliness is reflected in a man’s life, when he sees mankind, as God sees mankind. He’s not consumed with *the trivial* and *useless pursuits* of this world, but rather, he attends to matters of great importance...the “*souls of men*.” While the world around him are consumed by all the various attractions and pleasures this world has to offer, he is filled with grief and sorrow as he watches them dying in their sin.

What he “*sees*” bothers him so much, that he’s willing to do whatever it takes to help them. Here in chapter ten, Paul picks back up where he left off in chapter nine.

¹I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, ²That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. ³For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

“*Anathema*” carries the meaning of “*being set apart for destruction*.” It breaks his heart, as he looks at Israel, to think, that if they don’t repent and submit their lives to Christ...they will perish! His heart was so grieved by that fact; that he was willing to go to Hell and if it would bring about Israel’s salvation.

What a “*picture*” that is... **Can you see him?** I believe that herein is why we don’t see a greater move of God in our churches today...for the fact that God’s not interested in what we are interested in. Programs, activities, etc. God is interested in reaching the lost.

So we see a beautiful picture of a man of God, grieving over his people...but there’s also a much darker side here... It’s a picture of many perishing...Paul looks out over his fellow countryman, his brethren, among whom which a “*large number*” are perishing. And the “*Tragic Part*” of it, is the reason why they are perishing...which he declares in verses 2~3...

²For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. ³For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

He beings by making clear, what the problem is NOT...

He says, “*I’ll say this, the problem is certainly not for lack of effort!*”

I bear witness their efforts to please God...They “*TRULY ARE*” trying to please Him! I will certainly testify to that fact. There is no one on earth as earnest and sincere as they are! That’s not the problem...

What makes this one so bad, is that these folks were earnestly seeking God. It wasn’t like they were out here committing “*horrific*” sins. It wasn’t like they were out here being “*willfully disobedient*” to God, doing things that “*they knew to be wrong*.” There are people all around us beloved, who “*know better*,” people who were raised in church, heard the gospel of Christ so much they can quote it to you. But

continue to insist to live their lives to themselves. They “*know*” what the call of the gospel is, they simply “*reject Christ*” in their heart, and live out their lives of their own choosing. It’s one thing to know someone like that, who dies, and as a Christian, know in your heart the destiny of that person...is tough. But as tough as that is, it’s easier than this scenario, because they made a conscious choice to reject God.

That’s hard enough...but these folks were genuinely sincere, people who earnestly sought to live righteously before God. These folks acknowledge the scriptures as God’s Holy Word, and tried their best to live accordingly... The TRAGEDY is, what they were holding too, would be the very thing that caused their demise.

So what is the problem? ²...*I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.* ³*For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*

The problem was ***Ignorance***... They simply “*did not know*” the source in which men would be made righteous. They “*sincerely thought*” they were doing right. They earnestly believed that by submission to God’s law, God’s ways...that they were right with God. But the tragic truth is, they were no better off than those who worshiped no God at all! In spite of all Israel’s efforts and diligence, they would end up the same way as their neighboring Gentiles, ***guilty before God***, and would suffer ***his wrath!***

Ignorance would be their demise... They “*thought*” they were right...they “*thought*” wrong!

Illustration of Flight # 5191. The cause of that awful tragedy, that took the lives of 49 people, could be summed up in one statement. “*They didn’t know they were on the wrong runway!*” The sole cause of that crash, was that the runway was too short for that plane to take off. There were no mechanical errors, the plane was functioning perfectly. It was not due to “*pilot error*” in the sense that he did something to cause the plane to crash. The sole problem was the fact that they were on the wrong runway, and the runway they were on, was too short.

Point is... They had “*no idea*” that the runway they were lined up to take off on, was too short. They were unaware, they had *no knowledge* that the course they had chosen, would end in disaster. Let me ask you something, do you think that if they had “*any idea*” that they were on the wrong one, that they would have continued to take off on it? Absolutely not... If it had been brought to their attention, if they had learned that they were on the wrong runway, there’s no way they would have attempted it! Bottom line was...they “*didn’t know!*” They were “*Ignorant*” of the fact, that the course they were on, held certain death!

The same is true with many of the nation Israel... In their hearts, they were sincerely giving their all to live in a way that was pleasing to God! But even so, all their efforts were in vain, because that is not how righteousness is attained! They “*thought it was,*” but they thought wrong.

Israel’ problem was not their heart...*it was ignorance!* The “*Righteousness*” that saves is not the “*Goodness of Man*” through the works of the law, but by man yielding himself to Christ as Lord!

This passage reminds us of the fact, that sincerity alone is not enough to save! I have people come to me time-to-time, asking about other “*beliefs.*” They have a hard time believing that someone who is so sincere, and earnest would be rejected by God. But according to the bible, they most certainly will... If God didn’t accept Israel’s self made righteousness, then you can rest assured that no one else’s will. The righteousness that saves, is submission to Christ Jesus.

Israel needed to “***Know***” this, and *so does all other nations of people...*

In Acts 4, Peter says...¹²*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

(Vs 14~17) That really emphasizes the importance of preaching the gospel... The Gospel message really is a matter of “*life*” and “*death!*”

Paul’s point here is, Israel’s problem was not their lack of zeal, their lack of effort or sincerity to God... Their heart was not the problem... Paul “*bears witness*” that their hearts were right!

The problem was the source from which they sought righteousness. Submission to the law *was vain*. Reason being, that’s self-righteousness, self made righteousness, and considering the knowledge through the gospel message, that we are depraved sinners, means it is not righteousness at all.

Israel sought God *with all their heart, soul and mind!* Problem was, their “**HEART**” was given to the wrong thing... It’s a reminder that a “*Heart*” given to ANYTHING other than Christ...will perish!

The call here is for Israel to “*redirect*” their hearts desire to the Lord Jesus rather than the Law.

Brethren, I too am grieved... I see a very similar picture in today’s church. I for one believe that the Gospel has been so perverted in our western society, that there is a large number of people, who are good hearted people, kind and generous people, who are perishing. “*Salvation by Grace*” is being taught in many churches, in the sense that our obedience to God is no big deal. There’s a gospel being preached that requires “*nothing*” of the individual. It’s a gospel that offers one salvation, with no strings attached. You can do what you want too still, you can continue to live your life for yourself, it calls for little or no commitment. That’s a much different gospel than that of what Paul preaches. In Romans 12:1~2...he calls all believers to “*yield their bodies*” as a living sacrifice to God. That is the “*Righteousness that saves...a yielded heart to Christ!*”

But many are preaching a much different gospel...And the tragic part is, many have “*Believed*” it. Like Israel, they may take part in religious things, partakers in church activities, but have not truly surrendered their hearts to the Lord. Self still continues to reside on the throne. And unless they repent, and humble themselves, and submit to the Lordship of Christ, they will perish.

Beloved... There are people all around us, who are perishing. And the sad part is, most of them don’t even *know it*. It’s up to us to reach them with the gospel...