

# The Gospel in Romans: Romans 10:1-4

## INTRODUCTION

1. How should we respond to the fact there are multitudes of people right now that are lost and under God's wrath?
  - a. Many would deny it is so; surely a loving God would not condemn people; surely people are not so bad.
  - b. Others would lower the bar by suggesting many are saved who never knowingly trust in Jesus. (*Inclusivism*)
2. Paul did not deny the reality that many of his Jewish kinsmen were lost, nor did he change his doctrine to save them.
  - a. What he did instead is instructive for us and is succinctly captured in our text today: Romans 10:1-4.
  - b. Paul's response to the condition of his family serves as a helpful paradigm for our attitude in evangelism today.
3. As we have seen already, Romans 9-11 addresses questions raised by Paul's gospel, esp. in reference to Israel.
  - a. Chapter 9 answers these questions by focusing on God's sovereign election of people to be saved.
  - b. Chapter 10 focuses attention on human responsibility in responding to the preaching of the gospel.
4. These are not in conflict. The Bible affirms *both* sovereign election *and* human responsibility to repent and believe.

## I. PAUL'S HEARTFELT DESIRE AND PRAYER FOR THEIR SALVATION (1)

### A. *The Heartfelt Desire*

1. The message of the cross and doctrine of election were not cold, impersonal, academic issues for Paul.
  - Paul understood the message he preached announced condemnation for many of his loved ones.
  - The implication of his understanding of God's redemptive work was not lost of the apostle.
2. But if the message Paul preached was true, then it had to be preached no matter the consequences.
  - Paul did not wish his kinsmen to be lost, but believing anything other than the truth would not save!
  - We do not choose *what* we believe based on what we would prefer; we simply affirm what is true.
3. Is it unloving for a doctor to diagnose cancer and prescribe treatment? Would hiding it be an act of love?
  - We are not loving the lost when we deny or obscure the implications of not believing in Jesus.
  - We must preach the truth in love, but we must not use love as an excuse for not preaching truth.

### B. *The Sincere Prayer*

1. How did Paul handle his grief for his kinsmen who were lost?
  - He did not change his beliefs, alter his message, or omit the eternal consequences of unbelief.
  - Instead, he lovingly and persistently shared the truth and prayed for those he was seeking to reach.
2. Some have asked, 'If God is sovereign and already chosen who to save, why pray at all?'
  - The answer, of course, is to point out we pray *because* God is sovereign. If He is not, why pray?  
"[Paul] wants something accomplished in his mission – the salvation of Jews as he preaches in the synagogues. So he prays to God that this would happen. He asks God to save them. 'O God, that they might be saved! Do it, God! Do what you need to do to save my kinsmen.' But that kind of praying is inconsistent if you do not believe in the sovereignty of God in election and conversion." –J. Piper, *The Pleasures of God*, p.217
  - Do you believe God can change the sinner's heart, as the Bible says He must for anyone to be saved? (**Deut. 30:6; Ezek. 36:26-27**)
  - Do you believe God can give faith and repentance to sinners, as the Bible says He does? (**Php. 1:29; 2Tim. 2:25; Eph. 2:8-9**)
  - Do you believe God will effectually draw all those foreknown to His Son, as the Bible says He does? (**John 6:37, 44; 10:27-28; 2Pet. 3:9**)
3. God works through *means*; there are things we do not have (yet) because we have not asked. **Jas. 4:2b**
  - In other words, there are things God wills to do, plans to do, and predestined to do...when we pray!
4. Romans 10 makes clear why we preach and why we pray: because God is sovereign to save.

## II. THE JEWS' UNINFORMED AND MISGUIDED ZEAL (2-3)

### A. *A Zeal for God Without Knowledge (2)*

1. Paul makes the startling indictment that the Jews who had the Law remained ignorant of the Lawgiver.
  - Their zeal for God was sincere, as Paul's was when he persecuted the church and pursued Christians.
  - But sincere does not mean sound; they misunderstood Scripture's true meaning. **Jn. 5:39-40, 45-47**
2. Religious zeal may be commendable, but unless properly guided by divine revelation, it is damnable.
  - Few believe the violent fanaticism of Islamic militants will justify them before God or save them.
  - But many who deny that do believe the sincerity of other, non-violent unbelievers will save them.
3. The Scriptures are very clear: religious devotion does not save. Only the truth can. **Mt. 7:13-14; Ac. 4:12**

B. *An Effort to Establish Righteousness Rather than Submit to God's (3)*

1. Paul's writings, or the traditional interpretation of them, are criticized for misrepresenting Judaism.
  - It is true many Christian teachers have misunderstood and mischaracterized first century Judaism.
  - Judaism in the first century was not monolithic, and it was not universally legalistic.
2. Nevertheless, the NT and Jewish literature from the period indicate many *did* misunderstand the Law.
  - Even within the Apocryphal writings there is evidence of works-righteousness. **Sir. 3:14, 30; 20:28**
  - Though all acknowledged God's grace, many believed obedience to Law was the path to salvation.
3. But one can never be truly righteous before God on the basis of his deeds. **1Ki. 8:46; Psa. 130:3; Ro. 3:23**
  - Though we may be "righteous" before men or in an accommodative way on the basis of law...
  - The righteousness we ultimately need is not our own; it is God's righteousness. **Php. 3:8-9; 2Co. 5:21**
4. As we saw at the end of chapter 9, Jews who clung to the Law for justification were not saved. **9:32-32**
  - The gospel confronts us w/ our unrighteousness, our inability to save ourselves, our desperate need.
  - The righteousness of faith is received by submitting to Christ, by accepting and yielding in faith.
5. What is required is not to try harder to be saved, but realize you cannot do enough. Jesus must save.

III. **CHRIST'S CONSUMMATION OF THE LAW FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS (4)**

A. *The Meaning and Position of Τελος*

1. Τελος, the Greek word translated *end* in 10:4, is in the emphatic position as the first word in the verse.
  - That indicates it is primary in this sentence. Whatever is being said, this word is at the heart of it.
  - Jesus is not just the end of the Law. The END!...Jesus is to a law of righteousness to all who believe.
2. Just like our word *end*, this Greek word carries a few different meanings, including *goal* or *termination*.
  - Jesus uses it when He describes the salvation of those who "endure to the end." (Mt. 10:22; 24:13)
  - It sometimes describes the "outcome" (NASB) of sin or of obedience/faith. (Rom. 6:21-22; 1Pet. 1:9)
  - It can also be used to describe a goal or intention, e.g. of the gospel and doctrine. (1Tim. 1:5)

B. *The Significance of Christ as the Τελος*

1. The difficulty here is that each of these meanings makes sense and is, to some extent, true of Christ.
  - Jesus is the termination of the Law in the sense that it was removed at the cross. **Co. 2:13-14**
    - This speaks specifically of the demands of the Law which we had transgressed, not of Law generally.
    - Jesus did not destroy the Law's authority or free us from any obligation to Law at all. (1Co. 9:21)
    - The Law no longer condemns us, but it remains a binding authority for holy living today. **Jas. 2:8**
  - Jesus is also the outcome of the Law in redemptive history; it anticipated His arrival. **Gal. 3:23-26**
    - The Law pointed to humanity's need for a Savior and stood guard until He came into the world.
    - The Lord is the inevitable result of the Law's ministry. He did what it could not. **Ro. 8:1-4; Gal. 4:1-5**
  - Jesus is also the goal or intention of the Law; He fulfills, rightly interprets, and upholds it. **Ro. 3:31**
    - The Law was never intended to save; it showed us the need for the salvation it could never provide.
    - The Law's purpose is to point us to Christ, and He helps us properly understand and apply it.
    - Jesus is not an opponent of the Law, nor it of Him. He brings out its fullest intention. (e.g. Matt. 5)
2. To some extent, Paul's argument requires an understanding of v.4 that embraces all of these aspects.
  - Christ is *not* merely the end of the Law as if formerly justification were through obedience to it.
    - Paul is not saying, nor does the Bible teach, men in the OT were justified by Law but now by Christ.
    - Romans 1-4 labors to prove justification has always and only been by grace through faith alone.
  - Christ is the end of the Law's hold on believers, our bondage to it, the crushing condemnation of it.
    - The Law could only indicate our guilt and indict us for it. It could never save us from that guilt.
    - What the Law of Moses could not free us from, Jesus has broken, redeemed, and set at liberty.
  - The Law is the path of righteousness, but it is not (and never has been) the path to righteousness.
    - The Jews rejected Christ and the cross because they misunderstood the Law's purpose and power.
    - Yes, the Law is holy and just and good and we must obey it. But its aim and outcome is Christ.
  - Jesus did not fulfill the Law by destroying or annulling it. He fulfilled it by obeying it perfectly for us.
    - He affirmed its authority, and He submitted completely and flawlessly to it, as we could not.
    - Now its righteous requirements are fulfilled in and for us, not by our obedience, but through faith.
3. Whoever believes in Jesus is set free from the condemnation of the Law and its unbearable demand.
  - But whoever rejects Jesus as Savior says they believe they can justify themselves by their own work.
  - That is why Christ is the *end* of the Law for righteousness, but only "to everyone who believes."

#### IV. APPLICATION

##### A. *Rightly Responding to the Lost*

1. How do we respond to the realization so many, including friends and loved ones, are lost?
  - Do we change the doctrine, denying the truth that faith in Christ is the only way to salvation?
  - Do we soften the message, downplaying the necessity of biblical submission to Jesus as Lord?
  - Are we simply unmoved by the plight of so many passing us by on their way to Hell?
2. Let us resolve:
  - Never to deny the truth of Jesus, but to affirm Him as the only Savior without fear or shame
  - Never to soften the message, but to gently and lovingly but firmly call men to faith and repentance
  - Never to neglect to share the message of Christ with those with whom God may give opportunity

##### B. *Preaching the Good News to Legalists*

1. Many are moralists and legalists, trusting in their own piety or goodness to save them
  - There is a real difference between being a religious person and submitting to God's righteousness.
  - Christ is the only hope and Savior. You cannot do this on your own. You can't do it at all. He must.
2. Some who are legalists do not feel proud. They feel broken, burdened by how bad they are.
  - Let me assure you, you don't know the half of it. None of us do. You are much worse than you fear.
  - But Christ is greater than you know, and His death sets you free from the Law for righteousness.
3. You do not have to save yourself. You can stop trying. Christ has accomplished what you never could.
  - Only when Christ sets you free from trying to be saved by the Law can you begin to appreciate it.
  - The Law is holy, just, and beautiful. You don't have to run from it anymore. You can embrace it.

#### PRAYER OF REFLECTION

Holy Father, we all fall naturally and, if we are not careful, return frequently, to trusting in ourselves. We look to the Law and to our obedience to it for our salvation, and that always ends either in pride or in frustration and despair. We cannot do it on our own. We cannot do it at all. It is only by grace that we can stand, and that grace is only to be found in Your Son. So help us, Lord, give us the grace we need to abandon the foolish, prideful attitude of thinking we can save ourselves, as though by some act of sincerity or piety we can ever be worthy of your love and favor. Help us to see our brokenness and Christ's beauty. Help us run to Him daily for the cleansing and mercy and renewing we need. And help our hearts to burn with the desire to share the joy of His love, His work, and His salvation with the lost around us.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

Deuteronomy 30:6 And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

Ezekiel 36:26-27 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. (27) And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

Philippians 1:29 For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake,

2 Timothy 2:24-25 And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, (25) correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth,

Ephesians 2:8-9 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, (9) not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

John 6:37 All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.

John 6:44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

John 10:27-28 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. (28) I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

James 4:2 You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask.

John 5:39-47 You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, (40) yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.... (45) Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. (46) For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. (47) But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?"

Matthew 7:13-14 "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. (14) For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

Acts 4:12 And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

1 Kings 8:46 "If they sin against you--for there is no one who does not sin--and you are angry with them and give them to an enemy, so that they are carried away captive to the land of the enemy, far off or near,

Psalms 130:3 If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?

Philippians 3:8-9 Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ (9) and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith--

Colossians 2:13-14 And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, (14) by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

James 2:8 If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well.

Galatians 3:23-26 Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. (24) So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. (25) But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, (26) for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.

Galatians 4:1-5 I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything, (2) but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. (3) In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. (4) But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, (5) to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.