

30. Learning How People Receive Salvation

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children grow and understand the fact that God wants to help them learn to share the Gospel with others. God set aside the Jews as a nation for a period of time because of their sin. As a result, God has chosen the church during this time to share the message of the Gospel with others. We saw that we want to help our children understand this great opportunity and privilege that we have been given to share the Gospel with others. In our topic today, we want to help our children learn how to explain to others how they can receive salvation and forgiveness of sins.

In Romans 10:1-4, we read, “Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.” God called Paul to be the apostle to the Gentiles. However, that did not mean that he forgot about his own people the Jews. Here, we see that Paul continually prayed for the salvation of the Jews just as he continually prayed for the salvation of the Gentiles.

Because of his own background, Paul knew that the Jews had a great zeal for God. As a Pharisee, Paul had tried to keep the law. Paul describes the zeal that he had for God as a Pharisee in Philippians 3:6 where we read, “Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.” He showed his zeal for the law and especially for the rules of the Pharisees by persecuting the church. He said that in his efforts to keep the law, he considered himself blameless. Here, we see that Paul had tried to establish his own righteousness by keeping the law. Because of the fact that he was working to keep the law by his own efforts, he realized later that he had not submitted to the righteousness of God. The law and the rest of the Old Testament showed that everyone was sinful and guilty before God. Instead of recognizing his sin and guilt, Paul thought he had kept the law.

When Paul met Christ, he realized that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. Paul recognized that he did not meet the holy standard of God. When God stopped Paul on the road to Damascus, Paul asked the Lord two questions. The first was, “Who are you Lord?” The second was, “Lord, what do you want me to do?” Suddenly, Paul realized that he had to believe in Christ instead of depend on his own righteousness. Later, in Galatians 3:24-25, Paul explained the true purpose of the law when he wrote, “Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.” Paul wanted others to know that the purpose of the law was to show all people their sin so that they would come to God in repentance and believe in Christ by faith.

Paul goes on to contrast the difference between law and faith. Romans 10:5-7 says, “For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, ‘The man who does those things shall live by them.’ But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, ‘Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’ (that is, to bring Christ down *from above*) or, ‘Who will descend into the

abyss?” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).” In Leviticus 18:5, Moses wrote, “You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I *am* the LORD.” Here, we see that Moses pointed out that in order to be righteous in the sight of the law, a person would have to keep the law perfectly and never disobey a single commandment.

In Deuteronomy 30:12-15, God told the people of Israel that they had a choice; they could either choose life or they could choose death. Deuteronomy 30:12-13 says, “It *is* not in heaven, that you should say, “Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?” Nor *is* it beyond the sea, that you should say, “Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?”” Here, we see that the righteousness which is by faith does not ask us to ascend up into heaven to try and find Christ. We are not to descend into the deep to try and find Christ and bring Him back from the dead. Such an effort to become righteous would be impossible.

Instead, Paul goes on in Romans 10:8 to tell how we receive the righteousness of God. Those verses say, “But what does it say? ‘The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart’ (that is, the word of faith which we preach).” Here, we see the contrast from Deuteronomy 30:14 where we read, “But the word *is* very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.” Here, we see that God made it clear to Israel that the way to choose life was by faith. God had offered them life and they had to choose that life by faith.

Paul went on to explain the message of faith, in Romans 10:9-10, where we read, “That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” True faith means that we confess with our mouth that we want to make Jesus our Lord. We make that choice because of the fact that we believe in our heart that God raised Christ from the dead. That is why God could say in Deuteronomy that the Word which was near them had to be in their mouth and in their heart.

We see that it is in the heart that a person believes or places his or her faith in the Word God has spoken about Christ. 1 Corinthians 15:3-6 says, “For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep.” Old Testament Scriptures such as Isaiah 53:3-4 speak of Christ’s death when those verses say, “He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, *our* faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.” Then, Old Testament Scriptures, like Psalm 16:10, speak of Christ’s resurrection when that verse says, “For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.” As a result, we believe by faith in our hearts that Christ died for our sins and the Father showed that He was satisfied with the payment of Christ by raising Him from the dead.

We see that then we confess with our mouth the fact that we have believed in the death and resurrection of Christ by faith and made Him our Lord. The word “confess” means *to say the same thing*. Here, we see that confession is saying the same thing that the Father says about Christ. In the previous verse, we saw that the Father said that Jesus is Lord and showed that He was satisfied with the payment Christ made for our sins by raising Christ from the dead. When we believe these things by faith and agree with the Father that Christ is our Lord, God says that we are saved.

Romans 10:11-13 goes on to promise us, “For the Scripture says, ‘Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.’ For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For ‘whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.’” Here, we see that salvation is for all people. Isaiah 28:16 says, “Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; whoever believes will not act hastily.’” Then, Isaiah 49:23 adds, “‘Kings shall be your foster fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers; they shall bow down to you with *their* faces to the earth, and lick up the dust of your feet. Then you will know that I *am* the LORD, for they shall not be ashamed who wait for Me.’” In these quotations from Isaiah, we see that the contexts include both the Jews and the Gentiles. As a result, any who believe in Christ will not be ashamed.

Paul also makes it clear that salvation is available for all, whether they are Jews or Gentiles. Those who come to Christ in repentance and faith are made one in the body of Christ. Ephesians 2:14 says, “For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation.” As a result, we see that it is the plan of God for people of every background to receive salvation as a free gift. In that way, people of every nation, tribe and tongue are able to experience the riches Christ provides to all who call upon Him.

God promised through Joel, in Joel 2:32, “And it shall come to pass *that* whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, as the LORD has said, among the remnant whom the LORD calls.” Here, we see that Paul quotes that verse to point out the fact that God had promised in the Old Testament that God wanted people of every nation to call upon Him for salvation. We want to help our physical and spiritual children understand that it has always been the plan of God to save both Jews and Gentiles. We also want to help our children learn how to explain to any person with whom they talk that people can receive salvation as a free gift through repentance and faith. Repentance is turning from the sin of unbelief to God. Faith is coming to God through Jesus Christ. We want to help our children learn how to explain this clearly to others so that they are equipped to share the good news of salvation with all people whether they are Jews or Gentiles. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to share with others how to receive salvation.