

## Text— Romans 10:4-18

Fellow redeemed sinners, redeemed by the blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,

Just prior to our Scripture selection, the apostle Paul declared, “Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 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.” (Romans 10:1-3) Hence, it was undoubtedly heart-wrenching for Paul to see his fellow Jews stuck in the same falsehood he had been enmeshed in when he was a staunch Pharisee— that of thinking one can save one's self by one's own works, the works of the Law.

Unfortunately, there are many people today who think they can save themselves by their own works, whether by obtaining merit-badges, or by praying a certain number of times each day, or by making pilgrimages to this or that city, or by doing more supposedly good things than bad things. Such people picture God as being a sort of paymaster who sits in heaven with a big balance-scale, upon which one's good works are placed on one side, while one's sinful works are placed on the other side; and, as long as the good works outweigh the bad, they think they'll be saved. Sadly, such people stuck on works-righteousness fail to realize the Lord God demands perfection, for He clearly states in Leviticus 19:2, “Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy.” And, lest anyone think that the command applies only to the Jews of old, Jesus Christ says to all people in Matthew 5:48, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” Yes, it's as James 2:10 declares, where we read, “whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.” Accordingly, the Lord God definitely commands and demands perfection.

Therefore, our sermon text can be of benefit to all who will take it to heart, for it pointedly lays out

the truth regarding:

“THE PERSONAL RIGHTEOUSNESS REQUIRED FOR SALVATION”

With that as our theme, may we, in view of our text and with the help of the Holy Ghost, see—

- 1) What such righteousness is based upon and how it is received
- 2) Why some folks fail to obtain such righteousness

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Verses 4 & 5, ----- (Romans 10:4-5)

The opening verses of our Scripture selection make it quite clear what the personal righteousness required for salvation is based upon, for we just read: *Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.*

Note well that belief in Christ, faith in Christ, is what receives the personal righteousness required for salvation, “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” — reports Romans 8:3 followed by John 3:16.

Indeed, Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is the ONLY MAN who has kept God's holy Law perfectly in thoughts, words and deeds, for Hebrews 4:14-15 declares, “Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” Furthermore, Jesus Christ, true God and true man, our great high Priest, has paid for ALL of our sins in full with His own holy and precious blood which He

shed while nailed to the tree of the cross, for Hebrews 9:11-15 informs us, "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."

Praise be to Jesus! *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.*

Observe in our sermon text that if one were to have the personal righteousness required for salvation by means of one's own works, one would have to keep God's holy Law PERFECTLY, for our text plainly states: *the man which doeth those things shall live by them.* However, every human being – with the exception of Jesus Christ – is sinful and unclean, for if we would be honest we must all confess as did David the psalmist, Psalm 51:5, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." And, Isaiah 64:6 informs us, "we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." Accordingly, it is quite clear that the personal righteousness required for salvation is based upon Christ's perfect Person and Christ's perfect work, NOT upon our sin-stained persons and works.

Looking again at the first verse of our sermon text,

we note that *Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.* Hence, God's Law still has a purpose, albeit it is NOT for righteousness.

God's Law shows us human beings that we are sinful, for we read in Romans 3:19-20, "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Additionally, God's Law is a guide to show us which thoughts, words and deeds are pleasing in God's sight and which are not, for the psalmist writes, confessing to the Lord, "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Psalm 119:103-105) And, fellow Christians, let us never forget that 1 John 5:3 tells us, "this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." Thus, we are to be fruitful in the faith of Jesus Christ, striving to show our thanks to our gracious God by living in full accord with His holy Word.

Verses 6-11, ----- (Romans 10:6-11)

In contrast with the righteousness which is of the Law – which demands perfect obedience of God's Law in thoughts, words and deeds – *the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)* Note well that the righteousness which is of faith does NOT require the sinner's own work in seeking out Christ in heaven or looking for Christ to be found still in a grave. NO, SINFUL HUMAN BEINGS CANNOT SEEK OUT CHRIST, FOR CHRIST IS NOT LOST; RATHER, SINFUL HUMAN BEINGS ARE LOST, AND CHRIST SEEKS THEM OUT. Indeed, Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, seeks out the sheep; the sheep do not

seek out the Shepherd, for Jesus plainly states in Luke 19:10, “the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

*But what saith the righteousness which is of faith? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

Realize that faith is a gift of God, wrought in the hearts of human beings by the Holy Ghost through the Word of God – the Gospel of Christ in particular – when preached, for 1 Corinthians 1:21 & 12:3 relates, “after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.” And, the apostle Paul declares in Romans 1:16-17, “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”

Accordingly, the personal righteousness required for salvation is personally received by God-given faith in Jesus Christ, for, “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” — states Acts 4:12.

Realize that God-given faith in Jesus Christ resides in the believing individual’s heart and is NOT mere lip-service. True confession of Christ comes from a heart which beats in love for the Lord Jesus! Jesus Christ distinctly warns against empty lip-service, when He says, in Matthew 7:21-23, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils?

and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” Let us never forget, “the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.”— as 1 Samuel 16:7 relates. Yes, *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.* Indeed, whosoever truly believes on the Lord Jesus Christ as his or her personal Savior shall be saved and shall never suffer never-ending shame in hell.

Verses 12 & 13, ----- (Romans 10:12-13)

Is the salvation God provides in Christ only available to Jews? Or Gentiles? Or black? Or white? Or yellow? NO! For our sermon text clearly informs us: *there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

Take it to heart that the personal righteousness required for salvation is available to ALL people, “For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”— reports John 3:17. The glorious Gospel of Christ is meant for ALL people, for 1 Timothy 2:4-6 informs us that God our Savior is He, “Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”

Verses 14 & 15, ----- (Romans 10:14-15)

Here our sermon text emphasizes the need for sound Scriptural preaching and teaching, proclaiming the Gospel of Christ, the Savior being the Supplier of real peace between God and men. It’s as we read in 2 Corinthians 5:18-21, “all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ,

reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Oh beloved, the Gospel of Christ surely supplies us with *glad tidings of good things*— the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation; yea, the personal righteousness required for salvation!

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As we ponder our sermon text to its conclusion, let us see why some folks fail to obtain the personal righteousness required for salvation.

Verses 16-18, ----- (Romans 10:16-18)

The reason why some folks fail to obtain the personal righteousness required for salvation is that *they have not all obeyed the gospel*. Indeed, it's sad, but some folks fail to heed the gospel call to repent of their sins and to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, *For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?* Yes, it was foretold of old by the prophet Isaiah that some folks would obstinately refuse to believe; and so, it has happened.

We read in Isaiah chapter 53, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are

healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." (Isaiah 53:1-12)

Oh, it's amazing that some 700 years before Jesus Christ the Savior came into the world to redeem the world, Isaiah the prophet foretold of Him and His mission of mercy in such detail, including the fact that Jesus Christ would be despised and rejected by men. Nevertheless, note well again that those who are lost are lost by their own fault! Christ, the Lamb of God, paid for ALL the sins of ALL people, despite the fact that Christ had no sin of His own. Yes, Jesus Christ bore the sins of the whole world and paid for them with His own holy and precious blood which He shed while nailed to the tree of the cross, while two transgressors – two thieves – were nailed to crosses on His right and on His left.

My friends, in regards to personal faith in Jesus Christ, our sermon text clearly states: *So then faith*

*cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* Think of it: the ability to spiritually hear the Gospel and take it to heart comes by the Word of God, for God and His power accompanies His Word. GOD DOES THE SAVING, ALL OF IT. Those who are lost are lost by their own fault, because they wilfully and stubbornly reject the Word of God, for God does NOT force anyone to believe, but rather comes – as He did to Elijah of old – in “a still small voice.” (1 Kings 19:12) Oh beloved, it’s as Ephesians 2:8-10 informs us, “by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”

Son, and Holy Ghost: our Creator, our Redeemer, and our Sanctifier. Amen.

m.e.l.

No one will be able to rightly accuse the Lord of being the cause of their lack of faith when they stand before Him on Judgment Day, for our sermon text concludes by saying: *Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.* Indeed, God’s Word, the Law in its full sternness and the Gospel of Christ in its full sweetness, has been proclaimed throughout the whole world. Therefore, those who are lost are lost by their own fault and NOT because they have not had opportunity to hear God’s Word. It’s as Jesus once said to the unbelieving Jews, as recorded in Matthew 23:37, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!” Hence, it is evident that some folks fail to obtain the personal righteousness required for salvation by their obstinate refusal to take God’s Word to heart and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us daily and sincerely repent of our sins. Let us cling to Christ Jesus in heart-deep faith as our personal Savior and Lord. And, let us go forward in gratitude to God for His grace shown to us in Christ Jesus, realizing that the personal righteousness required for salvation would be had by no one if not for the work of the true triune God— Father,