

Good morning and thank you so much for joining us. We're continuing our verse-by-verse study in the book of Romans, so would you please turn to Romans 10?

If you recall, chapters 9-11 all deal with Israel. Remember, Paul had an incredible burden for his Jewish brothers, his utmost desire was to see them saved. Now as we study these verses, we'll see that God's not done with the nation of Israel.

The title of this morning's message is God's plan for Israel

Let's pray

Back in 1990, a revolutionary lifesaving product's TV commercial swept the nation. **SHOW PIC** A company called Life Alert had a riveting add that showed an elderly lady who fell to the floor, and you hear her high-pitched cry, "I've fallen, and I can't get up!"

CLOSE PIC

At the time the book of Romans was written, the same might be said of the nation of Israel. The Jews had fallen, would they ever get up?

1 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel[fn] is that they may be saved. At the time Romans was written, the Jewish people were the most religious individuals on the planet. Yet Paul, a Jew himself declares that the Jews weren't saved, reminding us that religion doesn't equal salvation.

2 For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. A person can be super sincere about wanting to be near to God, while still being sincerely wrong how they go about doing it. And this is what happened to Paul himself. Before He met Jesus, with great zeal, Paul persecuted Christians! But his life forever changed when he met Jesus.

3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. remember being righteous means being right in the eyes of God, having no faults.

Without Jesus, people seek righteousness by their own works, rules and standards. They compare themselves to others and say-'I know I'm not perfect, but I'm not a bad person, I don't do what those guys do.' They think they know the difference between right and wrong.

NO matter how strict the guidelines humanity imposes on ourselves for holiness, our standards will always fall short of God's requirements.

Isaiah 64:6 But we are all like an unclean thing,

And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags;

We all fade as a leaf,

And our iniquities, like the wind,

Have taken us away.

This is the error of trying to parade our good deeds or moral accomplishments before God, like 'look what I did.' Filthy rags!!

4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. Laws and rules can never make a person righteous. With all of our sin and failures, only one thing can make us right with God-faith in Jesus Christ. God imparts His righteousness to us through faith in Jesus, and we can never improve on that!

5 For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, "The man who does those things shall live by them."^[fn]

SHOW PIC About 30 years ago there was a series of commercials for the financial company called Smith-Barney. The actor John Houseman had a famous line at the end of each ad saying “We make money the old-fashioned way. We earn it.”

CLOSE PIC

And this was the Jewish way of trying to obtain God’s approval—they tried to keep the OT law. And of course, the problem is no one can fully keep the all the law. **James 2:10 For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.**

And

Romans 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

6 But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’ ”[fn] (that is, to bring Christ down from above) 7 or, “ ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’ ”[fn] (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). We don’t have to work to get Jesus. We don’t have to climb the highest mountain or try to reach the lowest depths as if that’s the only way to gain access to Jesus. No to receive the righteousness we need it’s much easier than that...

8 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): 9 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.

When we believe, we receive! We gain righteousness by confessing and believing in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

The word confess has the idea of agreeing with. When we confess Jesus is Lord, we’re agreeing with what God said about

Jesus, and with what Jesus said about Himself. Confessing means we recognize that Jesus is God, and that His work on the cross is the only way to heaven.

Yet please notice it's not enough to believe that Jesus lived. We must also believe He died and rose again. Why? Because the resurrection proves that Jesus is who He says He is.

And notice the 2 steps needed. Confession with the mouth and belief in the heart. Why are both needed?

10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Why doesn't it say believe in your mind, why must the belief be in the heart?

Because the Lord is after our heart first. Mark 12:30 'And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.'^[fn] This is the first commandment.^[fn]

Our minds can be swayed very easily. We're convinced about something—until we get a new set of facts and change our minds. How many times do we have an opinion one day and then we flip-flop the next?

But if something is in my heart, I don't change my mind about it daily.

11 For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. Everyone receives salvation the exact same way. God is just as eager to save a Gentile as to save a Jew.

And how is salvation received?

13 For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved." The emphasis in Chapter 9 was God's sovereignty, that salvation

is up to Him! But now in Chapter 10 it's mankind's responsibility. The word whoever means, whoever! And whoever trusts in Jesus will be saved.

14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? People can't receive and believe and until they've first been told the good news! This is why just living out our Christianity is not enough. We all have the responsibility of sharing the gospel.

SHOW PIC OF ARCTIC RIVER It's been said "Too many Christians are like the Arctic river, frozen over at the mouth."

CLOSE PIC

Often times when we read the great commission, we think that Jesus is talking to someone else. But God does mean me and He does mean you! We only have 1 life on this earth to tell others the good news of Jesus.

15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written:

"How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace,[fn]

Who bring glad tidings of good things!" **SHOW PIC** when we think of beauty we might think of picturesque views, breathtaking artwork or heart stirring poetry. Things like that. **CLOSE PIC**

But feet being beautiful? **SHOW PIC OF FEET**

Feet are utilitarian! They're made for getting around!! **CLOSE PIC**

But the bible says the feet of those who spread the gospel are beautiful because they bring the good news!

So even though the gospel has been preached to Israel...

16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “LORD, who has believed our report?” If salvation is so simple, available to all who trust in the person and work of Jesus, then why does Israel seem to be cast off from God? Because the Jews refused to trust in God’s word through Isaiah and other messengers of the gospel.

17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. I recognize our fellowship does not have the pizzaz of other churches. I know you don’t have a pastor who’s cool and edgy like other churches. I get all that. But folks this is why we go verse by verse. It’s not faith comes by hearing and hearing by latest fad or trend. No, it’s the word of God.

The term in verse 17 translated as word isn’t logos, which often refers to Christ-the living word. No it’s rhema, the spoken word of God.

Saving faith comes through hearing by the word of God.

18 But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed:

“Their sound has gone out to all the earth,

And their words to the ends of the world. Israel heard the word of God, but still denied Jesus as their Savior.

Paul now quotes Moses and Isaiah to elaborate on Israel’s denial of their Messiah.

19 But I say, did Israel not know? First Moses says:

“I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are not a nation,

I will move you to anger by a foolish nation.” God told Israel that He would bring others close to Him and make the Hebrews jealous.

20 But Isaiah is very bold and says:

“I was found by those who did not seek Me;

I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me.”

21 But to Israel he says:

“All day long I have stretched out My hands

To a disobedient and contrary people.” Isaiah’s bold prophecy was a warning that Israel ignored. It was prophesied that Israel would deny the messiah, and the Messiah would save the gentiles.

Chapter 11

Now in chapter 11, we come to God’s future dealings with Israel. God made certain promises to the nation of Israel, which He will fulfill. In the end all Israel will be saved

1 I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. Paul’s question makes sense at this point in Romans. If Israel’s rejection of the gospel was somehow both consistent with God’s eternal plan and Israel’s own choosing, then does this mean that Israel’s fate is settled, and there is no possibility of restoration?

Paul’s points to himself as an example. His personal faith in Jesus as the Messiah proved there were some Jews who embraced the gospel.

Paul was simply a shadow of what will happen to the entire nation prophetically. Paul points to himself and says, “Is God through with Israel? Consider me and my conversion as an example of what will happen eventually.

2 God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, 3 “LORD, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life”?[fn] If you remember the account of Elijah in 1 Kings, he stood up to 400 false prophets, yet Queen Jezebel’s threats caused Elijah to then hide in a cave. Elijah then cried out to God saying I’m the only person left who’s been faithful to God.

4 But what does the divine response say to him? “I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.”[fn] 5 Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. Despite what he thought, Elijah wasn’t the last faithful follower in all of Israel-God said there 7,000 other faithful followers who refused idol worship.

And just as there was a remnant in Elijah’s day, there will always be a believing remnant in Israel.

6 And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace.[fn] But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work. Grace is getting what we don’t deserve. Grace is the free gift of God, and has nothing to do with our performance. You cannot mix good works and grace-if works are involved, then it’s not grace.

7-10

7 What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded.

8 Just as it is written:

“God has given them a spirit of stupor,

Eyes that they should not see

And ears that they should not hear,

To this very day.”[fn]

9 And David says:

“Let their table become a snare and a trap,

A stumbling block and a recompense to them.

10 Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see,

And bow down their back always.”[fn] These quotes from both Isaiah and Deuteronomy 29 illustrate God’s hardening of unbelieving Israel. We talked about hardening a lot last week if you recall.

11 I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. You’ve heard of door-to-door evangelism, street evangelism, life-style evangelism... Well, God created another form of evangelism, “jealousy evangelism.”

12 Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness! If the world’s been blessed because of the Jews stumbling, how much more will the world be blessed when the Jews stand in belief and submit to Jesus Christ at His return!?

This will happen when Jesus comes back to rescue the people of Israel in the face of destruction at the end of the great tribulation.

13 For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, 14 if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them. Remember Paul was a formerly pharisee—he was a Jew of Jews. And now he recognizes that his ministry calling is to Gentiles, and his desire is that his message to the gentiles will cause Jews to surrender to Jesus.

15 For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? Whenever a person accepts Christ, there is eternal life where there was once eternal death!

It will be a glorious time as the Jews will come to salvation by accepting Christ, their messiah.

Paul now uses an illustration to explain what's going to happen with the nation of Israel

16 For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches. 17 And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, With the picture of the tree and the branches, Paul reminds the Gentile Christians that it's only by God's grace that they can be grafted into the "tree" of God – the "root" of which is Israel.

18 do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you. In case Gentiles think of themselves as superior to Jews, Paul also reminds them that the root supports the branches – not the other way around.

We must never forget that Israel has given the world the Word of God – both the Written Word, the Bible, and the Living Word, Jesus. Jesus was a Jew. Every Gentile owes Israel a debt of gratitude. How could Christians ever be anti-Semitic?

Yet, the last 2000 years of human history has shown the Church has often been the number one enemy of the Jewish people. Christians should love, and support, and pray for, and witness to the Jews.

19-22

19 You will say then, “Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in.” 20 Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. 22 Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness,[fn] if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.

Rather than spurn the Jews, Christians need to learn from them. The Jews failed to persist in their faith. They didn't continue in God's goodness. And if we repeat their mistake, we'll also reap disastrous consequences.

These verses are clear that it's not enough just to have faith, but to continue in faith. Faith is like a plant. Starve it and it dies. Feed it and it lives, and bears fruit.

This leads to the question that sometimes gets debated-once saved always saved? Is it possible for someone to lose their salvation?

Ephesians tells us as Christians we are sealed with the HS. Jesus said in **John 18:8** Jesus answered, “I have told you that I am He. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way,” 9 that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, “Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none.”

But this verse in Romans 11, along with several others, describe the necessity of Christians to persevere in their faith.

So, what about those who profess Christ, then live a lifestyle that flies in the face of Jesus, or even publicly denounce Him-what happens to those people? Much like the issue of Election and man's responsibility, there are scriptures that support both urgings.

I don't know. I know that I am eternally secure because of my faith in Christ. I know I don't have to question if I'll go to heaven. But I also know I have to continue in my faith.

23 And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. Here's good news! As long as a person's breathing there's hope of salvation!

24 For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? If the Gentiles seemed to be grafted into God's "tree" easily, we know it won't be hard for God to graft the natural branches back into the tree, speaking of the Jews.

25-27

25 For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. What is the fullness of the Gentiles? It's when the full number of Gentiles are saved. In other words, there is or will be a Gentile somewhere on the earth who is the last one to be saved. When that person acknowledges Jesus Christ as Savior, the fullness of the Gentiles will be complete, and at that moment, we'll be raptured.

26 And so all Israel will be saved,[fn] as it is written:

"The Deliverer will come out of Zion,

And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;

27 For this is My covenant with them,

When I take away their sins."^[fn] One day, when Jesus returns in power and glory every Hebrew alive will put their faith in Him and be saved. One day all Jews will be Jews for Jesus! **Zechariah**

12:10 “And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.

When Israel sees the Savior's scars, they'll realize their mistake. They'll repent of their sin, and put their trust in Jesus.

28 Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. Even though it seemed that in Paul's day the Jews were enemies of God and were against Jesus, they are still beloved – if for no other reason, then for the sake of the promise that God gave to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

29 For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. Why will God save Israel? Because His calling is sure. He didn't change His promise about Israel. Nor does God change His promises about us.

2 Timothy 2:13 If we are faithless,

He remains faithful;

He cannot deny Himself.

30-32

30 For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, 31 even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. 32 For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all. If God used the disobedience of Israel for the good of Gentiles, He can also use the mercy shown to Gentiles for the mercy of Israel.

33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! As Paul considers God's great plan for Jew and Gentile alike, he breaks into spontaneous praise

It's wisely been said "The Bible is shallow enough for a child to stand in without fear of drowning, yet deep enough for a theologian to swim in without ever touching bottom."

For hundreds of years theologians have speculated and picked apart these words, and frankly twisted them to say that Christians have replaced the Jews in God's plan of redemption. But that's just not so. God still has a plan for Israel!

34 "For who has known the mind of the LORD?

Or who has become His counselor?"[fn] I love the ole adage, "What's over my head is still under God's feet.

35-36

35 "Or who has first given to Him

And it shall be repaid to him?"[fn]

36 For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

For 2,000 years, many generations before ours studied this section of Romans and thought, We hear what you say, Paul—but where is Israel today?

We're so blessed because we don't have to say, "Someday, Israel is going to come together." No, we can say, "We've already seen it happen, Lord.