



Sermon Text: Romans 9:30-10:4

Sermon Date: December 13

After seven weeks of staring at God's sovereignty in salvation (Romans 9:6-29), it is surprising how quickly that reality recedes back beneath the surface of the text. All at once, without any hint of tension or contradiction, Paul focuses on unbelieving Israel's failure to attain a right standing with God. It is because they twisted the Law, pursuing righteousness by works and not by faith. They were/are at fault. This was the first initial point Pastor Justin stressed—**the reality of human responsibility**. As a church, we must uphold both God's sovereignty AND man's responsibility, not pitting them against each other as arch rivals. Both are true, and Paul emphasizes both in Romans.

Paul's primary purpose in our passage was to focus on Israel's failure in attaining righteousness with God. Where did they go wrong? What was their grave error? Pastor Justin made three points.

1. **They Misunderstood the Law.** Unbelieving Israel pursued righteousness by works instead of by faith. They viewed it as a job application, a way of demonstrating their goodness and moral qualifications. Through the Law they sought to earn righteousness. But that approach won't work. We will never be good enough. Instead they should have seen the Law as a doctor's prescription, a continual reminder of their sickness and need for mercy (that is what the constant sacrifices should have shown—they always depended upon grace!). Yet, we act similarly when we think our standing before God rises or falls on our religious performances, confident only when our 'job application' of good works is in proper order.
2. **They Stumbled over Christ.** Since they sought to establish their own righteousness, they saw no need for Christ. They were offended by him. They thought they were good enough, and so the gospel message was loathsome in their sight. The gospel message of saving-mercy in Christ alone IS insulting to the person who does not think he needs mercy.
3. **Christ is the End of the Law for Righteousness.** The Law finds its fulfillment and end in Jesus. He alone fulfilled its requirements fully. He is the only one who can (and has) achieved right standing with God through his obedient works. And he is the one to whom all the many Old Testament sacrifices pointed. He is the pure, spotless lamb slain as a substitute so that God's presence could be made safe for sinners. It is only by believing in him—his sinless life, sacrificial death, triumphant resurrection—that anyone will be made right with God. That good news is the point of the Law, the promise of God, and the proclamation of Paul—"And whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."

Discussion Questions

- 1) What stood out to you from the sermon and the biblical text from this Sunday?
- 2) Are you prone to turn the commands of God into a job application? What are the effects of making your religious performance the basis of your standing before God?
- 3) Obedience to God is important and necessary (see 1 John 2:3-6) [We can't fall into the opposing pit of lawlessness!]. How does the gospel compel obedience?