

“The Necessity of Faith”  
(The Way of Salvation)

The most important question in life is “How may I be right before God? Or, “what must I do to be saved?” If there is a heaven and a hell and all of us will spend eternity in one or the other, the most important issue in life is making sure that your destiny is heaven!

If this is your concern, then today’s sermon may be the most important sermon you will ever hear, because it deals with this most important question. How may a person be saved?

The book of Romans is about God’s Righteousness

1. The Need of Righteousness: Condemnation  
1-3
2. The Provision of Righteousness Justification 3-5
3. The Practice of Righteousness Sanctification 6-7
4. The Expectation of Righteousness Glorification  
8
- 5. The Vindication of Righteousness Explanation  
9-11**
6. The Practice of Righteousness Exhortation 12-16

In chapters 9-11 Paul answers the question about God’s plan of salvation. If God chose the Jews for salvation, why have so many rejected? and Is there a future for the Jewish people?

Throughout chapter 9 Paul has reminded us that God is sovereign in salvation. He has explained God’s election, Israel’s rejection. But while most Jews rejected the message of salvation through Christ, many Gentiles began to accept it. Today, the church is made up of only a few ethnic Jewish people and mostly Gentiles.

Why did this occur?

## I. GOD HAS PROVIDED ONLY ONE WAY OF SALVATION

It is not a popular message today, as it was not in the first Century, but God defines himself as very exclusive. Modern people tend to imagine God is just like them. Open, tolerant, liberal, and accepting of nearly everything, but that is not what God says in His Word.

When Jesus was here he himself said, "I am The way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father (God) except by me." Now that is a mighty narrow statement. Jesus is not just a way, or one of many ways, he is the only way and if we ignore him or try to bypass Him we will not be acceptable to God! It all comes down to Jesus.

Why did Israel pursuing righteousness by their law, fail to attain it? Paul answers in vs 32 Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it could be obtained by works. There are a number of attitudes and actions that Israel took that caused them to miss eternal life. I would like to suggest that **The same reasons that Israel failed to find acceptance before God are the reasons that many today also are and will fail to be saved.**

Romans 9:32-33 Paul quotes from the OT "they *stumbled* over the stumbling stone." When God sent Jesus into this world He was fulfilling Scripture and laying the great foundation stone for his mighty spiritual temple, the church. Christ is the cornerstone, but the builders (the leaders of Israel) rejected it. Those who believed were like stones that aligned themselves to it and became part of that great Temple in the Lord. Those that rejected Jesus Christ actually

stumble and fall over it and it becomes the cause of their demise. Ultimately Jesus is the STONE that comes from heaven and crushes all before it, all that opposed to it and judges all men.

With the coming of Jesus men had to make a decision about him.

There are just the two options: (vs 33) Believe upon him or stumble over him. He is either going to be “the stone” upon which you build your life by faith in Christ, or the Stone over which you fall and that ultimately falls upon you!

People today stumble over him when they reject Jesus Christ- They are against Christ, opposed to Him, they find him offensive, They are are zealous for their causes as ever any Jewish pharisee ever was! Zealots are everywhere today in our society. The ACLU are very zealous to rid society of every mention of God and especially of Christ. They hate Christ with the same vehemence that the Jewish leaders hated Christ in his day.

**Israel had a zeal for God but not in line with the truth.**

Many Muslims have a zeal for God, but not according to truth. They are willing to kill and to die for their beliefs – they have no lack of zeal and commitment to what they think is true. But it is a lie. They may be sincere- but they are sincerely wrong. You can be totally committed to something...yet totally wrong.

Paul’s love, even for these violent people who are opposed to Christ shines out in Romans 10:1. “Brethren, my heart’s desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation.” He longs that they might be saved and he prays that they might be saved.

***Is that your heart's desire? For whom are you fervently praying that they might be saved?***

But those who stumble over the stumbling stone are not limited to the Christ haters, not for a moment! Paul mentions other reasons why people are not saved.

Vs 3: They don't understand the standard God demands in order to be right with him. They don't know how holy God is and the level of righteousness he demands

Paul says that the Jewish people did not know about God's righteousness. That is not the righteousness he gives, but the righteousness God demands. They just didn't grasp how absolutely high God's standards are. It isn't just "hard" to keep God's Law, its actually impossible. Through the Law of God comes the knowledge of sin.

People today suffer from the same delusion as Israel did. They don't understand how sinful they are and how far they fall short of meeting his righteous standard. They have the idea that they are "not all that bad." As a result they are counting on their works, their good deeds and their own basic goodness to obtain them salvation. rather than by faith in Christ. If you ask them whether or not they are Christians they will answer yes! If you ask them how they expect to get into heaven, they will say something like, "I try to keep the commandments or I am a pretty good person." They are making the same mistake that Israel made. Vs 3 they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. They think, "I'm fine, I don't need it, I am good enough." They don't realize that to get into heaven, they have to be perfect. Tell them about Jesus dying in their place and ask them to believe

in Christ and they argue that they are fine. They will not subject themselves to the righteousness of God - they are too proud. You see—in order to become a true Christian you have to admit that you are a horrible sinner, condemned and unclean before a holy God. This Israel could not bring itself to do and many a person since then will not humble himself to submit to the fact that he needs the righteousness that only Christ can provide.

Ultimately, Israel failed to “get it” they thought the Law was an end in itself, and did not realize the Law found its terminal point in Jesus Christ vs 4. Christ the Messiah was the goal of the Law. God gave the Law to lead us to Christ, the Messiah. God gave the Law to reveal our sin and to drive us in hopelessness to a Savior. Jesus Christ fulfilled the Law. He is the only one who perfectly kept it. The Law drives us to faith-righteousness because it shows that we desperately need it!

The problem for those who try to be good enough by obeying commandments – is that they have to keep them all, all of the time. One failure and you are a lawbreaker. You can go through your whole life and never do one illegal thing, and then get caught just once committing a felony and you’re a criminal. All your good deeds can’t save you from doing hard time over that one illegal act- can it? In just the same way, one sin makes you and me sinners, and if we are honest, we’ve got a lot more than that on our “rap sheet.”

What Paul is saying here is that Personal Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the **ONLY** way God has provided for men to be acceptable to Him. Any other approach will never make us acceptable to God!  
So what have we said so far?

- I. THE WAY OF SALVATION IS VERY NARROW AND EXCLUSIVE; There is only One way of salvation and that way is the way of **faith in the Lord Jesus Christ** 1-5
  
- II. THE WAY OF SALVATION THROUGH FAITH IS NOT HARD! 6-8

The righteousness that is based on the Mosaic Law demands that the individual DO and KEEP ON DOING. He has to keep the whole law AND NEVER FAIL in order to have righteousness. But, The righteousness that is based on faith (in the Lord Jesus) demands that the *individual Believe* in what Christ has already DONE.

What Paul is saying here is that God has never made salvation hard. Whether in the OT or the NT people have always been saved by grace through faith. When Moses spoke to Israel God brought his revelation near. Now, in Christ God has brought his revelation near. The word is near to us rather than far away. God has already DONE what we need our part is to simply receive it!

It is not up to us to DO something like bring Christ down – he has already come down to us in his incarnation and died for us and paid the penalty of our sins by his crucifixion. When Jesus said on the cross, “IT IS FINISHED.” He meant it. Redemption’s Work was DONE! It is up to us to believe and receive it!

Likewise, It is not up to us to DO something like bring Christ *up from the dead* –God has already done that through Jesus mighty resurrection and triumphant ascension.

God offers a way of salvation through a message to believe rather than a work to accomplish. It is something to believe, receive rather than something to earn, work do, accomplish, merit, It is a message that demands FAITH. It is the word *which requires faith* that we are preaching.

THE CONTRAST BETWEEN

Salvation PROVIDED by Grace	Salvation ATTEMPTED by Law
Faith	Works
Accepts the righteousness from God	seeks to establish his own righteousness
Based on Christ’s goodness	Based upon his own goodness
Receives Salvation as a gift	Tries to merit Salvation by his efforts
“I trust in what Christ has DONE”	“I trust in what I can DO”
God’s method	Man’s method
The way of life	The way of death
Demands that we humble ourselves	Develops spiritual pride
Magnifies the Lord	Magnifies the Law

**III. THE MESSAGE OF SALVATION IS THIS:**

If faith is the WAY of salvation, what is the CONTENT of that faith?

Exactly *what must I believe* to be saved?

**A. The content of our message is vs 9**

1. Confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord means that you confess that Jesus is fully God and fully Man. He is the unique God-Man nothing less.
2. That you publicly and verbally identify yourself with Jesus Christ. Outward confession includes water baptism in obedience to Jesus. "If you confess me before men, I will claim you before my father who is in heaven.
3. To believe in your heart that God has raised Jesus from the dead is to acknowledge all that God said of him is true. To be saved one must believe the gospel which is Christ's death for our sin and His physical resurrection.

### **B. The explanation of our message is vs 10 -11**

Paul is not really saying that there are *two parts* to being saved because he subsumes them both under the heading of faith in vs 11. Righteousness and salvation are parallel by Hebrew parallelism. These are not two different things, but two sides of the same coin. Genuine Heart-faith not mere intellectual agreement is necessary. Public identification with Christ is not optional. Biblical faith not only believes, but obeys.

### **C. The Invitation of our Message: vs 12-13**

The invitation of our message vs 12- whoever means *whoever* - both Jew or Gentile are welcome without distinction because the Lord is abounding in riches for all who call upon Him.

## **IV. THE IMPLICATION OF SALVATION: MISSIONS 14-15**