

Romans 10:1-10

PREVIOUS

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Modified from Irving L. Jensen's excellent work " Jensen's Survey of the NT "				

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Romans 10:1-10
Righteousness Is A Precious Possession-Pt 2
 by Dr. Wayne A. Barber

The word "**righteousness**" is used 35 times in 30 verses in the book of Romans. - Ro 1:17; 3:5, 21, 22, 25, 26; 4:3, 5, 6, 9, 11, 13, 22; 5:17, 21; 6:13, 16, 18, 19, 20; 8:10; 9:30, 31; 10:3, 4, 5, 6, 10; 14:17

The word is **dikaioisune** (word study). It refers to the standard of conduct that God requires of all mankind. This conduct can only be produced by the Holy Spirit of God. It is not something a man can do in his own strength. The righteousness only comes by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now why is that? Because Jesus is the only man who ever lived righteously on this earth. His righteousness was demonstrated when He came and lived a sinless life and particularly when He died on the cross for our sin. He met the demand of the law. Remember, Galatians 5:14 says that the Law is fulfilled in one word. It goes on to say, "And man shall love his neighbor as himself." Not a single person born of woman on this earth can do that. Why? Because we have a depraved nature as a result of Adam. Anything that we call love is conditional. It is selfish and manipulative.

But what God does is inherently pure. Therefore, His love, His righteousness was demonstrated when He came and lived that sinless life and when He died for others on the cross. He didn't die for Himself. He took sin upon Himself. He died for those who did not deserve it. When we put our faith into who He is, Jesus Christ, the God-man, and we put our faith into what He did for us, then

righteousness, His righteousness, is now written to our account. You cannot be righteous in yourself. To think that you can earn your way into heaven is to put yourself on equality with God, and you cannot do it. The only man who ever did it was the God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ, putting our faith into Him. Then His righteousness and His life come to live in us. Now He can produce through us what we could have never done ourselves.

Two kinds of righteousness

There are two kinds of righteousness that Paul discusses in the last part of chapter 9 and in chapter 10. We just looked at the true righteousness, but there is another kind. There is the kind of righteousness that man foolishly thinks he can produce in the energy of his own flesh. Somehow if he is good enough, then he can gain the approval of God. It is this false righteousness that Israel pursued. They did not pursue by faith this righteousness that only God can provide. They pursued it by the works of the law. And because they did not seek righteousness by faith, because they thought they could somehow gain the approval of God by their own efforts, they did not attain it.

Romans 9:31-32 says, "but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone."

That was the Lord Jesus Himself. They stumbled over Him. But in contrast, he goes on to say that the Gentiles did receive it.

Here were a people set apart for God. God said, "You are My people," but Israel missed it. They pursued the approval of God by their own energy, by their own strength. But the Gentiles, who weren't even looking for a relationship with God received it. Why? Because they were willing to receive it by faith. You don't have to convince many Gentiles they are sinners. As a matter of fact, they weren't looking for it. The idols that they served fell far short of what God would require. The gospel was well received and welcomed by the Gentiles. Whereas Israel should have been the first and rejected it, the Gentiles received it by faith.

Look at the church today. The church is filled with Gentiles. Why?

Romans 9:30 says, "What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith."

Israel didn't understand. They did not have a comprehension of what they had right in front of them. Their prophets had told them that Jesus would come, that the Messiah would come. They said He would come and He would have to be wounded for our transgressions, that He would have to be crucified. The picture of the crucifixion is all through the prophetic announcements of the Lord Jesus Christ. But Israel missed it. They didn't have a knowledge that comprehended what God demanded.

Paul says in Romans 10:2, "For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge."

The word "knowledge," **epignosis [word study]** means that they didn't have a comprehension of what God had put before them.

Ro 10:3-5 say, "For not knowing about God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness."

In other words, if you think that you can be good enough and you can obey the law, then God says, "Okay, you are responsible for every bit of it." You don't obey one law at a time. You have to be obeying all of the laws at one time.

No man can do that. So in effect, they condemned themselves. They did not pursue what God wanted for them. They did not pursue it by faith. That is the only way righteousness ever comes. As a matter of fact, they complicated a pretty simple issue.

I want us to look now at the accessibility of righteousness. I want you to see how clear and how accessible God has made the offer of righteousness to people who will put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Don't complicate it. The accessibility of righteousness can be found in Ro 10:6-10. It is kind of interesting what Paul does here. He personifies the righteousness by faith as if it was a human being. He says, "Come on forth, righteousness by faith, what would you have to say to us? What would righteousness by faith have to say to you and me?"

Beginning Ro 10:6 Paul says, "But the righteousness based on faith speaks thus, 'Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down), or 'Who will descend into the abyss?' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). 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 are preaching."

Now you have to understand what Paul is doing here or you will get lost. The Apostle Paul does this all through Romans, particularly in chapters 9, 10 and 11. He goes back to the Old Testament and takes a context that they would be very familiar with.

His goal is not to quote that context verse by verse, but to use the idea of the Old Testament writer to bring forth what he is trying to say now in presenting the gospel. He is just simply remembering back to Moses in Deuteronomy 30 and applying something Moses said there to what he is trying to say to the Jews.

Let's go back to Deuteronomy 30:11 12 13 14 and see what he is talking about here. That's the basic context of where he gets that you can't go into heaven and bring Christ down or go into the abyss and bring Him out. Of course, that is not exactly what Deuteronomy 30 says. He is just using the thought. Look at the thought of Moses in 30:11: "For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it out of reach." There is your thought right there. It is not too difficult for you. God is not asking you to do something you cannot do. It is not out of your reach.

Ro 10:12 goes on, "It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will go up to heaven for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?' Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will cross the sea for us to get it for us and make us hear it, that we may observe it?' But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it.'"

What Moses is saying here is the knowledge of God's commandment is near you. It is accessible to you. It is clear. It is not out of reach. You can do it and really have no excuse for not doing it.

Now, what commandment is he referring to in Ro 10:11?

Deuteronomy 30:16-18 reads, "in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the Lord your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it. But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you today that you shall surely perish. You shall not prolong *your* days in the land where you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess it."

Moses is saying, "You don't have any reason to disobey this. This is clear. It is very accessible to you. I am telling you to obey the Lord your God. Love Him with all your heart and your mind and your soul." There is something in this that you have to be careful not to miss. Moses was not just saying to obey God. The Jews could say, "Hey, we obey God." But he says it is out of a loving relationship with Him that he wants them to obey Him.

Go back to Deuteronomy 5:29. God had already said this to Moses. You have to capture the whole thought of what Moses is bringing out in Deuteronomy 30. Moses has already told them that God wants a heart relationship from His people Israel. We know this from the Old Testament. We also know it from the New Testament because he says back in Romans 9 that all of Israel is not Israel. It is those who are by faith. Faith comes out of the heart. It is by the heart that man believes. This is where God wants a relationship with His people. Many people who are related to Abraham do not have that relationship by faith. He says in Deuteronomy 5:29,

"Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me, and keep all My commandments always, that it maybe well with them and with their sons forever!" God is speaking to Moses. He said, "Oh, that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me."

You see, Israel could say, "Wait a minute, we obeyed." But this is where they missed it. They obeyed outwardly but not from the heart. That is what God required out of Israel in the Old Testament, and that is what God requires in our life. Someone asked Jesus, "What are the two greatest commandments?" He answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength; and love your neighbor as yourself." It has to be a heart thing. It has to be a loving thing.

The obedience was not just rote obedience, but it was something out of the heart. In Deuteronomy 6:5 God not only wanted them to know it but He wanted them to teach it to all the generations how He required not only obedience, but obedience out of the heart. This is clear throughout the Old Testament. Israel was not Israel just because they were descended from Abraham. You will never find a time in the nation of Israel that they were not rebellious towards God. But if you look to find the remnant that God had, you will always find a heart obedience from those folks. It said, "Caleb obeyed God wholly out of his heart." This is what God was looking for. This is what Abraham did. This is what Isaac did. This is what Jacob did. And it formed the root of the tree of faith and of grace in the Old Testament that we will look at in Romans 11.

Deuteronomy 6:5-12 says, "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them

when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and

on your gates. Then it shall come about when the Lord your God brings you into the land which He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you, great and splendid cities which you did not build, and houses full of all good things which you did not fill, and hewn cisterns which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, and you shall eat and be satisfied, then watch yourself, lest you forget the Lord who brought you from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."

"...you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams," he says in Deuteronomy 13:3, "for the Lord your God is testing you to find out if you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul."

In Deuteronomy 30 Moses is summing up what he said in chapters 5, 6, 13 and all the way through. He is saying, "It is right there in front of you. You absolutely can do what God has told you to do. It is clear and accessible, and you ought to be ashamed if you don't do it." It is right there in front of you. Don't complicate what God is saying.

Now the Apostle Paul picks up on that thought and says, "This is what I am trying to tell you. The same thing that Moses was trying to tell them, I am trying to tell you. The gospel is being preached right in front of you and it is simple. It is accessible. It is possible. Don't complicate it. Respond in faith." He says, "No one has asked you to ascend into heaven (that is to bring Christ down)." What kind of man could do that? That is what Jesus told Nicodemus. No man can ascend into heaven. But Christ descended to earth.

Then Paul goes on to say, "No one has asked you to descend into the abyss (that is to bring Christ up from the dead). You are not God. But God did these things. He is the one who came down out of heaven. He is the one who died and went into the abyss and came out of the abyss, resurrected. He is the one who did it for you. God is not asking you to do something that is impossible. God has made it simple for you. Christ, as a man, did for you what other men could not do, what you cannot do."

Paul is using the thought of Deuteronomy, that would be familiar to his readers, to get across his point that righteousness that God requires is not impossible. It is accessible, but it must be by putting your faith into the One who did what you could not do. That is all he is saying. He is just simply saying, "Moses got his point across by telling them that God didn't ask you to do something that is impossible. He made it clear and He made it accessible. So the gospel has been put right before you, Israel. It is clear. It is accessible, and it is not something you cannot do. It is something He did for you. Put your faith into Him and receive the righteousness which comes by faith."

Romans 10:8 goes on to 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 are preaching."

That is exactly what he is saying. He said, "Just like Moses spent 30 something chapters telling you this, I have also been preaching it to you and it is near you. It is right here. It is in your mouth. It is right here at your heart. All you've got to do is respond to it." He said, "Israel, it is not as complicated as you have made it. It is accessible. Receive it by faith."

Now isn't it incredible how simple that message is? But how many people can sit and listen to it and then get up and walk out and think they can be good for God and miss the whole thing when it has been laid right in front of them? It is clear. It is accessible. It is by faith. That is the only way that righteousness can ever come. It is by faith.

Not only does this apply before you get saved, but also after you get saved. I can't produce righteousness as a believer, but by faith in Him, He continues to produce righteousness through me. Always it is that way. It has never been any different. It will never be any different. That is why He lives in us, to do through us what we cannot do ourselves.

Well, the righteousness that God requires is accessible to anyone who puts their faith in Christ. God kept it simple and makes it accessible. Now look in verse 9. Here is what Paul is preaching and here is the message, simple and clear, accessible to everyone: "that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved." Now that is as simple as you can put it. It involves two things and I want to break it down.

First of all, there is confession with your mouth, and secondly, there is belief in your heart.

Now, before you get lost in what I am doing here, I want you to connect Ro 10:8 with Ro 10:9. Go back to verse 8: "But what does it say? [What is "it"? The gospel.] 'The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart.'"

That is also referring to what Moses said in Deuteronomy. Now watch. Put a parenthesis around the phrase "that is, the word of faith which we are preaching." He is preaching exactly that same thing. "That it is right near you. Israel, you don't have to go out here to get it. It is right there in front of you. And it is in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, the stumbling block which you dashed your foot against, the rock of offense that is standing in front of you. Israel, it is right there!" It is near you.

Now, connect Ro 10:9 to Ro 10:8: "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 are preaching), that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved."

That is what Paul is preaching. That is what is near them. That is what it should be in their heart. Paul is saying that what we are preaching—righteousness by faith—is clear. It is very clear. It involves two things: confession and belief. These are the two requisites of obtaining righteousness of salvation.

I want to just slow down and take some time to talk about this. First of all, we are to confess with our mouth Jesus as Lord. Some people say, "All you have to do is just say it. Go on and say, 'I believe Jesus is Lord.' Okay, you are saved." Now that is about as much nonsense as I have ever heard in my life. First of all, do you understand the word "Lord," *kurios*? What does it mean? Well, first of all, it is a little different than "despot." That is an absolute ruler, and it is also used of God and the Lord Jesus, but **kurios [word study]** has more of a caring aspect of Lord. In other words, He is a God, a Lord, an owner, a Master who cares about the people He lords over. That is built into the word. It means owner. It means master.

When you understand that He is Lord, it involves several things. Number one is recognizing His authority to the full extent that He is Lord. In other words, He is exalted above the principalities and powers. Go back and study Ephesians 1:18-2:6 (notes) and you will find out that we are seated with Him. But He is seated far above all principalities and powers. Number two is understanding that the angels are subject to Him. He commands the angels. He could have called a legion of angels when He was on the cross, but He chose not to. Thirdly, all power in heaven and in earth is committed to Him, that He is our Lord. This confession includes the acknowledgement of Christ's universal sovereignty and sincere recognition of His authority over us.

You understand He is God who came in the flesh. Nothing more and nothing less. That is who He is. And when you understand it, friend, there is an automatic bowing to who He is. It is automatic. You don't have to tell somebody to bow in the presence of the Lord.

Go back to Isaiah 6:1-note. "In the year of King Uzziah's death," Isaiah said, "I saw the Lord." And what did he do? He fell on his face and cried out, "I am a man of unclean lips and of a people of unclean lips."

What does it mean to confess Jesus as Lord? Involved in that confession is an understanding of what Lord is, not to the degree that you will understand it 20 years from now. You will grow in that understanding, not in the degree that you have fully figured out everything He requires of you. You will grow in that understanding. But the fact that He is God who came into flesh to do for you what you could not do, for man could not live up to the law. He did not come to destroy it. He came to fulfill it, and did, as a man, what men could not do but was required of man. When we put our faith into this God-man, then all that He did is attributed to us. That is involved in it.

Look at 1Corinthians 12:3:

"Therefore I make known to you, that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, 'Jesus is accursed'; and no one can say, 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit of God."

It is not some kind of trite confession. It is not some cheap experience. It is what the Holy Spirit of God has revealed in a person's heart, that Jesus is God.

Why did He come? All of that is involved in the fact that He came as a man, the God-man, for one purpose, to die for me and for you in order that this righteousness that is required of all men could be met in a man. When we put our faith in that God-man, then He credits it to our account. That is what He came for. That confession has got to be on the lips of people who say that they are believers.

Acts 11:20 reads, "But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who came to Antioch and began speaking to the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus." Another way to read that in the Greek is, "preaching that Jesus is Lord."

In Romans 14:9 we read, "For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living." Perhaps the confusion comes when people think that you have to understand it all. No, but as the Holy Spirit reveals truth to you, He has got to start by revealing that Jesus is God. He came to this earth, born of a virgin, to do one specific thing, to die on the cross for you and me. That is a revelation by the Holy Spirit of God and once that belief is there, the confession is made.

Secondly Paul says, "and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead." What did Paul mean by that? Well, remember, the word "believe" has the idea of willingness to obey. You say, "I don't believe that." *Pisteuo* is the root word for faith or belief. It means to be so overwhelmed with something that you have now comprehended that you are willing to literally surrender and bow down to. That is what the word *pisteuo* means.

It is used in Hebrews 13:17. It talks about obeying your leaders. Do you know what that word means? It is the word *peitho*. It means to be so confident that your leadership is being led by God, that you are willing to be fully persuaded and get up under them and obey them.

Out of the word **peitho** comes the word **pisteuo**. That is the word for "believe." And out of the word **pisteuo** is the word **pistis**, which is the word for faith. You cannot disconnect them, folks, you cannot do it. It is not something you comprehend alone. It is something that you have now comprehended to the point of willingness to surrender and bow down to and obey. It is all built in. It is adhering to something. It is not just comprehending it.

So he says, "and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead." What does the resurrection of Christ from the dead mean to you and me as believers? What do we have to believe about this? You know, a lot of people can say, "I believe that Jesus is God." Talk to them about the resurrection. If they have a problem with the resurrection of Christ, they have a problem with the fact that He is God, because the resurrection publicly acknowledged Him to be all that He claimed to be. What man ever lived on this earth, told His disciples, "I am going to die, but I will see you back here in three days," and then met the appointment? No man. And that is the thing that stands as a rock of offense to this world, to all false religions, even to Israel: that Jesus Christ, the God-man came and lived, died on a cross, but He resurrected from the dead. For some reason, they try to push that away and ignore it.

The empty tomb is the crux of what Christianity rests itself upon. If He didn't resurrect, there is no hope. But He did. That vindicated everything He ever said that He was, everything. But not only that, it showed that God publicly accepted what He did for you and me on the cross.

Do you realize that Jesus had to go back to the Holy of Holies in heaven with His own blood? The Bible says that He entered in with His own blood and God accepted Him. Yes, He is God, but He had to go back in as a man. And the blood that He shed as the God-man was what allowed God to say, "I am satisfied. Now You have been the propitiation for their sins. You are the Lamb that came to die for all mankind. You resurrected. You ascended."

There are people in this world today who worship a crucified Savior. Thank God we worship a resurrected Lord. That is the key. And when that is revealed, believed, then confessed that He is God, deity, owner, Lord, then salvation occurs.

Paul says this is the clearest thing in Scripture. Israel, it is right in front of you. It is as clear, it is accessible as ever before. But they will not believe that He is the Christ. He is saying, "Israel, it is right there in front of you. Right here in your mouth. Right here in your heart. Go on, go on, look at Him. Trust Him. Believe Him and you shall be saved. It is that clear. Like Moses was saying in Deuteronomy, I have said it to you, clarified it for you, there is no excuse for you if you don't do it." Paul is saying, "I have said it, I have clarified it. There is no excuse if you are not going to do it. It is clear. He didn't ask you to do something you cannot do. He asked Jesus to do something He could do. Now you just put your faith into Him and what He did for you is now put to your account."

Do you realize if the resurrection of Christ is not believed a person is not saved? 1Cor 15:12-17 says,

"Now if Christ is preached, that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain. Moreover we are even found to be false witnesses of God because we witnessed against God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins."

It comes at a point that the Holy Spirit reveals something to a man's heart. We have already studied in Romans that no man seeks after God. God seeks after man. Jesus said, "No man can come to me except My Father draw him."

So salvation is more than saying, "I don't want to go to hell." Do you understand who He is at whatever level you can understand that? Have you been willing to believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead? Therefore, the confession is in your mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord, *kurios*, owner, master, God. He says, "Believe in your heart." Ephesians says the heart is equated with the inner man. It is an inward believing and receiving and resting upon Christ alone for salvation. The God-man.

You just get so excited when you get into Romans. It is just so beautiful what He did for us. But so many people are still like Israel, confusing what has been so simply put before them and they are trying to complicate it by masking it in religion. We think we can be good for God, but there is no possible way at all.

Verse 10 says, "for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."

He shows how the belief effects the confession, the result being salvation. Belief is the key, but an inward belief that effects an outward confession. Belief with intent to obey, remember, not just comprehension. Belief and confession. This is what Paul preached to the Jew and Gentile alike. He did not change his message to either one of them. It was clear, it was possible, it was accessible and it is still is today. Don't complicate it.