



Righteousness by Faith

Romans 10:5-13

In the text we're looking at today Paul quotes a lot from the Old Testament. He does so to reveal how the Israelites misunderstood the role of the law in their lives and how the law, rather than leading to a works righteousness, should lead us to a Christ righteousness. If we miss that, we have missed the whole point of the law. As we look at this text this morning we're confronted

with the question, "in whom or in what am I trusting to be made right with God?"

What does a righteousness based on the law require? (Verse 5)

- Perfect obedience
- Verse 5 quotes Leviticus 18:5, "You shall therefore keep my statutes and my rules; if a person does them, he shall live by them..." This is an unattainable standard.
- Part of the problem with the Israelites was that many believed that they could actually accomplish this righteousness (covenant faithfulness) by obeying the law and by being good enough.
- Their own lives should have shown the foolishness of this. The history of their people should have shown the foolishness of this. It even goes back to the very beginning – Adam and Eve couldn't attain this righteousness through perfect obedience.
 - Adam failed to uphold the Covenant of Works/Life (righteousness attained by perfect obedience). Immediately after in Genesis 3:15 God promised that one day, through the seed of the woman, the Messiah, would come who would do what Adam (and every human after him) was unable to do – perfectly obey God's law.
- God has called his people to obey, to conform to his law, and we understand that we can't do this on our own. Every attempt at works righteousness will fail. Why? Because of our sinful nature; our disposition toward rebellion from God and his law.
- If we believe that we can perfectly obey the law of God, that we can please him through our own efforts, then we are either unaware of the depth of our sin or we are deceived about our ability to actually obey God's law, or both.

What does a righteousness based on faith entail? (Verses 6-10)

- Faith in the one who could fulfill covenant faithfulness, perfect obedience, on our behalf
 - The law was never a means by which Israel could be saved. It was a reminder of God's holiness and it pointed them to the need to have someone else do it for them – a righteousness outside of themselves. (It also showed them how best to live – "guardrails".)
 - In the garden Adam failed the covenant of works therefore none of us are able to attain a righteousness through the law. However, Jesus, as the second Adam, obeyed God's law perfectly. He fulfilled the covenant of works – God's righteous requirement. In doing so, he secured a righteousness for all those that would trust in him. By faith in Christ, who fulfilled the law, we have a righteousness that is transferred to us.

- In Deuteronomy 30:6 Moses says that God will circumcise their hearts so that they will love God with all their heart and soul. Circumcision of the heart is a way of describing God giving us a heart of faith (regeneration or new birth). The ability to love God, to obey and follow God, only comes from God working in our lives and giving us the ability through faith.
- “Who will ascend to heaven? Who will descend to the abyss?” (verses 6-7)
 - When Moses wrote that he was referencing God’s law. The Israelites did not need to try to ascend to heaven, or descend to the depths to discern God’s will. He had revealed it through his law which they had already been given.
 - Paul picks up on this and points to the fact that in Jesus, the fulfillment of what the law pointed to was there. The Israelites could not plead ignorance of not knowing God’s will because they had the law. So too, we cannot plead ignorance of God’s will because we have the word in flesh, Jesus Christ revealed to us.
- “The word is near you in your mouth and in your heart.” (verse 8)
 - This is the fulfillment of the promise in the New Covenant, that through God’s spirit, we would be united to Christ, the living word of God. Not only is God’s word near us, it indwells us and enables us to live in conformity to his law.
- “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.” (verses 9-10)
 - Belief in Christ is how we access the righteousness of Christ.
 - Confession is the outward proof, the acknowledgement of that inward reality.
 - Justification and salvation both refer to the same thing – being made right with God through faith in Christ. When we believe, we are justified, declared innocent of our sin. When we confess with our mouths we demonstrate that which is true, we are saved from our sins.

Who is this righteousness for? (Verses 11-13)

- It’s not just for the Jews.
- “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame” (verse 11 quoted from Isaiah 28:16)
 - Being put to shame is a reference to the judgment of God.
 - Not being put to shame is a picture of God’s salvation of us, restoring us, and bringing us into hope and fullness.
 - “Everyone who believes” – this goes back to what Paul says in 10:4 – “Christ is the end of the law to everyone who believes.”
 - It is two different ways to say the same thing. Those who believe in Jesus Christ are no longer under the weight and condemnation of the law. Rather, they are freed from shame and condemnation through the death and resurrection of Jesus.
- There is no distinction.
 - This is not a salvation for a particular ethnic group, economic status, language group, skin color, political party, nation, or any other distinctive markers.
 - God’s salvation is extended to people from every tribe, language, and nation – Jew and Gentile, male and female, young and old.
- The exclusivity of salvation is not in its recipients but in its focus. “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” (Joel 2:32)
 - Salvation is found only in Jesus Christ. There is no other way. All who place their faith in him can have confidence that they will be saved.