**No Distinction!**

**Romans 10:4-10:21**

**(Lesson #18)**

***1 Brothers, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. 2 For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God’s righteousness. 4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.***

**Vs 4 -** Now, I want to slow down here in verse 4, I want you to **ponder**, **consider**, **turn-over in your mind** what Paul (in context) is **saying** and **what he means**.

This verse is the culmination of much we have looked at together in Romans, so I want you to have a clear landing place in your own mind, wherever that may be, of what Paul is saying.

The word translated **“end”** is the Greek word: **τέλος** (telos), it means the **termination**, the **limit**, the **uttermost**, the place where **something ceases**, or **the culmination** or **goal**.

The word translated law is the Greek word: **νόμος** (nomos) *nom’-os.*

Paul has uses this Greek word **78 times** in Romans. It seems he has at least three ways he uses this word: The **Mosaic law**, what **God commands**, and a **principle** (the law of gravity).

There are other nuances, but these three are clear and used a number of times.

We could say this: **Christ is the goal and the end of the law for righteousness.**

But what “law for righteousness” is Paul talking about? Let’s look at the larger context of 9:30-10:5.

Paul is saying that the Jews are and have been pursuing a righteousness on their own, through their own works, based on their own merits, based on their keeping of the Mosaic law (9:31 and 10:5), this is unacceptable for two reasons. First as Paul has already stated: no one will be justified by their keeping of the law (Rom 3:20) and second, his point here, it is wrong because Jesus the Messiah has brought the law to its culmination and (as we will see in the coming verses) thereby He has made God’s righteousness available to EVERYONE who believes (Jew and Gentile alike) (Rom 3:21-22).

**Douglas Moo**: *“With the great majority of scholars, therefore, I conclude that nomos refers in this verse, as usually in Paul, to the Mosaic law*.”

**ESV Study Bible** note on this verse: **“***The Mosaic law has reached its goal in Christ (it looked forward to and anticipated him), and the law is no longer binding on Christians (the old covenant has ended). Since Christ is the goal and end of the law, righteousness belongs to all who trust in Christ.”*

**You see Israel’s problem, they had a zeal for God, but they rejected God’s provision of righteousness that was provided to the world in fulfillment of the promises made to Israel of a coming Messiah!**

Many scholars recognize that the use of telos in this place is meant to convey the analogy of a racecourse. In a race, the finish line is both the **goal** of the race as well as the **termination** of the race. The runners are running for the finish line and when reached, the race ends for them.

This seems to be what Paul is conveying. Christ is the “end of the law” in that he is both the ultimate “goal” of the law (it both pointed to Him and anticipated Him) and he is the “end” of the law in that He brings the Old Covenant era to a close.

**Christ consummates one era of salvation history, and at the same time inaugurates a new one.**

**Our relationship with God is in Christ, no longer the law. Our daily behavior is guided primarily by the teachings of Christ and His apostles as outlined in the New Testament, not the Mosaic law.**

The law exposes our need for another way to get into the family. Namely, grace!

*“24 So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian,” (Ga 3:24-25 ESV)*

Now, on this matter of the law and righteousness. The early church was infiltrated with Judaizers, these were men who held to yes, you need to believe in Jesus to be saved, but you also need to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses. While Paul was in Antioch, following the first missionary journey we read this:

*“****1*** *But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."* ***2*** *And after Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and debate with them, Paul and Barnabas and some of the others were appointed to go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and the elders about this question.* ***3*** *So, being sent on their way by the church, they passed through both Phoenicia and Samaria, describing in detail the conversion of the Gentiles, and brought great joy to all the brothers.* ***4*** *When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they declared all that God had done with them.* ***5*** *But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up and said, "It is necessary to circumcise them and to order them to keep the law of Moses."” (Ac 15:1-5 ESV)*

 *The apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this matter.” (Ac 15:6 ESV)*

Peter testifies: 15:6-11, here is how his testimony ends:

*“Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?” (Ac 15:10 ESV)*

*“But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will."” (Ac 15:11 ESV)*

**If circumcision and Sabbath Keeping (forth commandment) were required for the Gentiles, they would have been mentioned here. That was not the final determination!**

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***5 For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them. 6 But the righteousness based on faith says, "Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’" (that is, to bring Christ down) 7 "or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). 8 But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); 9 because, 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. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. 11 For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." 12 ¶ For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. 13 For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."”***

**Vs 5 -** The first and obvious point, the righteousness that is based on law, was written about by MOSES.

In context, is the law that Paul talking about in verse 5 different than the law in verse 4?

In fact, “gar” (for) (conjunction) here is verse 5 is connecting to verse 4 and drawing a conclusion.

**Here is really the bottom line about the law,** and Paul goes back to the genesis of the law.

Moses writes about a righteousness that is “based” the Greek proposition “ek” a righteousness that is **from** or **out of the law** and he quotes Lev 18:5.

*“****4*** *You shall follow my rules and keep my statutes and walk in them. I am the LORD your God.* ***5*** *You shall therefore keep my statutes and my rules; if a person does them, he shall live by them: I am the LORD.” (Le 18:4-5 ESV)*

Paul’s point, Moses wrote about a righteousness that comes from the law and those who keep the law must do so perfectly! **The person who would do them must live by them.**

**The problem, no one does good, the problem, no one has lived by the law perfectly, the problem, all have sinned and are under the judgment of God (Rom 3:10, 5:12, 5:19-20, 7:14, 8:7-8).**

**Vs 6-8 - So you see the conjunction... But what is the message of righteousness that is based on faith say?**

**No need to say, I must ascend to heaven (and go grab Jesus) and bring him down to earth (God did that for us) or descend into the abyss, or the grave, and bring Christ up from the dead (God did that for us too!**

**So that type of super-human effort is NOT required for a righteousness that is based on faith.**

**OK, what effort is required?**

**Vs 8 - The word is near you. It is in your mouth. It is the word of faith, that we proclaim.**

You do not have to fly to heaven and grab Jesus, and you do not have to go down to the abyss and lift Jesus from the dead.

It is easy, lay hold of the of the gospel, the word of faith that Paul and his associates are proclaiming believe it in your heart (all that means) and profess it with your mouth (all that means).

**Now let’s look at the quote:**

*“****10*** *when you obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep his commandments and his statutes that are written in this Book of the Law, when you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.* ***11*** *¶ "For this commandment that I command you today is not too hard for you, neither is it far off.* ***12*** *It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’* ***13*** *Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’* ***14******But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it.”*** *(De 30:10-14 ESV)*

Consider the historical, grammatical context, how the original audience would have understood this...

Do what I tell you to do, follow my laws, my commandments, and my statutes. You do not need to fly to heaven to figure out what I demand. You do not need to travel across the ocean to bring word back from Yahweh to understand what I declare.

What Paul is saying, when he adds to this quote: ***“But the righteousness based on faith” says...*** He is taking this Old Testament statement and seeing the greater application of these points in Christ!

God now brings his word “near” to both Jews and Gentiles alike. They can know God, through his Son, the message, the gospel is very near all of them (Jew and Gentile) alike.

**Vs 8 -** Still quoting Deuteronomy that the word was near then, again Paul reinterprets to show that **the gospel**, the **word of faith** is near them now, that is what Paul is proclaiming and that is to which they are called to respond.

What God requires is not any amazing superhuman actions or Herculean efforts, but **faith in Jesus Christ, trust in the gospel! Believe what Paul and his associates are proclaiming!**

God has made it easy for people, Jew and Gentile alike, to attain righteousness through the gospel!

**Vs 9-10 -** Here Paul **clearly articulates the ease...** **Massive journey to heaven**? NO. Pack a **trip for the abyss**? NO.

**Here is why that is not necessary...** Here it is again, the core elements of the gospel, what we have been calling the **minimum effective dosage.**

**It involves believing and confessing:**

1. **That Jesus is Lord**
2. **That he died for our sins**
3. **That he rose from the grave, victorious for our justification. We are calling people to believe that Jesus rose from the grave! Do not miss this!**

*“3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,” (1Co 15:3-4 ESV)*

**Have you believed?**

**Have you embraced?**

**If not, why not?**

This explains how the Gentiles who were not pursuing righteous could find it and why Israel who was pursing it, but not according to knowledge has failed to find it!

**This is the tragedy of stumbling over the stumbling stone!**

**One more point: Do you see Paul’s poetic A, B, B, A (chiastic) arrangement?**

Vs 9 - Confess and Believe

Vs 10- Believe and Confess

Verses 9 and 10 which tell us how to be saved are open to Jews and Gentiles alike, in fact to Paul’s point, **the idea was buried in the Old Testament scriptures.**

**Vs 11 - Paul is again quoting Is 28:16**, the verse he referenced a few verses ago:

*“therefore thus says the Lord GOD, "Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation:* ***‘Whoever believes will not be in haste.’”*** *(Isa 28:16 ESV)*

Again, Paul reinterprets **“not be in haste”** to **“not be ashamed.”**

**Notice he also changes “whoever” to “everyone” to ensure that we all understand that the gospel is for Jews and Gentiles!**

Here is his point: EVERYONE (regardless of nationality or social standing) who believes in Jesus, enjoys the promise of never being put to shame before the creator of the universe!

Do not miss the irony, a mass of Gentiles have attained, what only a remnant of Jews (at that time) had obtained (in spite of all the advantages God gave to the Jews)!

**Vs 12 -** This is an important point. The distinctions that once existed between Jew and Gentile have been eliminated.

*“28 For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law. 29 Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, 30 since God is one —  who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.” (Ro 3:28-30 ESV)*

*“34 ¶ So Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, 35 but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.” (Ac 10:34-35 ESV)*

*“6 ¶ The apostles and the elders were gathered together to consider this matter. 7 And after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. 8 And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, 9 and he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith. 10 Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?” (Ac 15:6-10 ESV)*

Yes, at one time there was a great distinction and the Jews enjoyed many privileges from Yahweh. That time has ended. The ground at the cross is level and the door is open to all... Jew and Gentile.

And saved (Jews or Gentiles) **receive the riches of God being bestowed upon them! Jesus is Lord of all who come to Him by faith** and He according to Paul, bestows his **untold riches upon them**!

**Vs 13 -** Here Paul draws the thought to a conclusion and to prove this was always the conclusion he quotes **Joel 2:2**, to show us this is, and always was God’s plan!

*“And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the LORD has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the LORD calls.” (Joe 2:32 ESV)*

A great homework assignment, read Joel 2, pay particular attention as you get to verse 28! \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

***“14 How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? 15 And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" 17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.***

**Vs 14 -** So the majority of national Israel has persisted in unbelief. With this as the backdrop, Paul’s argument takes a turn and he asks four rhetorical questions, each starting with the Greek word: **πῶς** (pos), it means **how** or **in what way**?

1. ***How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed?***
2. ***How are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?***
3. ***How are they to hear without someone preaching?***
4. ***How are they to preach unless they are sent?***

**The overarching question that Paul is addressing is taking this form.** OK, but for the majority of Jews who have rejected the gospel, rejected God’s message of salvation in Christ, **have they actually received a fair chance to hear, understand, and embrace the message?**

Paul is acknowledging, for someone to call upon the person in whom they have not believed, **they must hear the message**, and they cannot hear the message **unless a herald is proclaiming the message**.

**Vs 15 -** This final rhetorical question that strings this all together, involves the idea **that there can be no preaching, unless one is sent.**

As it is written, and he quotes Is 52:7:

*“3 For thus says the LORD: "You were sold for nothing, and you shall be redeemed without money." 4 For thus says the Lord GOD: "My people went down at the first into Egypt to sojourn there, and the Assyrian oppressed them for nothing. 5 Now therefore what have I here," declares the LORD, "seeing that my people are taken away for nothing? Their rulers wail," declares the LORD, "and continually all the day my name is despised. 6 Therefore my people shall know my name. Therefore in that day they shall know that it is I who speak; here I am." 7 ¶ How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns."” (Isa 52:3-7 ESV)*

In the historical grammatical context, the passage is about God providing redemption for his people from the oppression of their enemies. That God Himself would reign over them and bring peace and happiness.

Isaiah pictured the messenger running across the mountains of Israel heralding their deliverance from their enemies. (Is 52:1-12).

**Paul understands that the fulfillment of this amazing prophecy of restoration is found in the gospel!**

Notice in the Isaiah passage it is a single messenger, in Paul’s quote and slight retooling, it is the “**feet of those”** who, not bring the good news, but preach the good news.

**Paul’s sees the work of the apostles, in particular to Israel, as the fulfillment of this amazing prophecy!**

So that we do not lose his point. Israel has heard, God has sent heralds. They have no reason, except their own sinful hearts that they have not embraced the gospel!

**Vs 16 – BUT...** This **conjunction is damning**, for it implies before Paul quotes Isaiah, that all the conditions were set for them (national Israel) **to hear and to believe, yet...** ***“They have not all obeyed the gospel.”***

They have not all **obeyed** what they heard! The Greek word **ὑπακούω** (hoop-ak-oo’-o) means to **listen**, to **harken**, to **submit** to.

They have not submitted to the good news and as Isaiah says in a rhetorical question **“They have not believed what they heard from us.”**

Keep in mind, they heard. Keep in mind they should have understood. **This was Isaiah’s testimony of Israel in his day and Paul is leveraging off this and saying this is his testimony as well.**

If Gentiles who knew nothing can hear and understand, how much more so Israel (national Israel)?

Here he quotes Is 53:1:

*“Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?” (Isa 53:1 ESV)*

**Vs 17 -** The “so” is being used here to draw a conclusion from the Isaiah quote. Faith, comes from hearing, and hearing through the gospel or as Paul calls it here the “word of Christ!”

So, in this sting of requirements only one element is missing. We have people being sent. Those sent have the message, the good news.

The good news was preached and Israel has both heard it and should understand it, having heard it and understood it they should have called on the name of the Lord...

**God had done all that was necessary for Israel to embrace the Messiah, because faith comes by hearing.**

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***18 But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have, for "Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world." 19 But I ask, did Israel not understand? First Moses says, "I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation; with a foolish nation I will make you angry." 20 Then Isaiah is so bold as to say, "I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me." 21 But of Israel he says, "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people."***

**Vs 18 -** Faith comes by hearing... But I ask, **Have they heard???**

The word heard is the verb form of the noun form used in vs 17 that Faith comes by hearing... **Has Israel not heard?**

**Indeed they have... Yes, verily they have, Yes indeed they have...**

**He then repackages or at least reapplies Ps 19:**

*“1 « To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David. » The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. 2 Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. 3 There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. 4 Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun,” (Ps 19:1-4 ESV)*

Paul, yes, indeed Israel understood because: ***Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world."***

Jesus came first to Israel, Paul and the apostles started first with Israel. **Israel, has heard from them (their voice and their words) (the apostles and their associates) and they (Israel) are without excuse.**

Much, like the Gentiles were without excuse, except the Jews are much more culpable in their rejection of God’s Messiah!

**Vs 19 -** OK, Paul has built the iron-clad case that **Israel heard! Maybe the problem is they did not understand?**

**Paul goes to multiple quotes from the Old Testament, multiple witnesses from the Old Testament to prove that Israel heard and indeed they fully and completely understood what they heard!**

He starts first with Moses: for Moses says: ***"I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation; with a foolish nation I will make you angry."***

**They understood, but God’s decision to show grace, mercy, peace, and kindness to all nations, like he previously treated them, was not received with joy and excitement, but instead with anger and jealously, as Moses had said it would indeed play out, so indeed it has:**

*“They have made me jealous with what is no god; they have provoked me to anger with their idols. So I will make them jealous with those who are no people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.” (De 32:21 ESV)*

Paul is saying they have heard, they have understood, and in jealousy, they are rejecting God’s message as Moses said they would!

**Vs 20-21 -** Paul now says Isaiah had something to say about these days as well.

Before we look at the quote consider the point. The message is so clear and easy to understand, that even a nation who was not seeking God, has found God through the simple and clear message of the gospel.

*“1 ¶ I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me; I was ready to be found by those who did not seek me. I said, "Here I am, here I am," to a nation that was not called by my name. 2 I spread out my hands all the day to a rebellious people, who walk in a way that is not good, following their own devices; 3 a people who provoke me to my face continually, sacrificing in gardens and making offerings on bricks;” (Isa 65:1-3 ESV)*

**Do you see the indictment against national Israel? Do you see God’s love for Jews and Gentiles?**

God has eliminated all distinctions between Jews and Gentiles, the gospel is available to all alike. God has done everything He could to make the gospel clear and available to national Israel.

**This sets us up for next week with another probing question about Israel.**

**APPLIATION:** The gospel is open to all, Jew and Gentile alike. Christ has died so that men and women of every nation, kindred, and tongue may be saved.

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