

Romans 9:30-10:13

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 10 March 2019

[0 : 00] Do you have your Bibles? Turn with me to the book of Romans. Romans chapter 9. Romans chapter 9. I'm going to start in Romans 9 verse 30 and going to read through to Romans chapter 10 verse 13.

Romans 9 verse 30 to Romans 10 verse 13. Something that we're not always very comfortable with doing, that is, moving from one chapter to another without stopping at those big numbers there that cause us to pause and break, but understanding that Scripture was written as a letter.

It was not written in chapter and verse format. It was just written as a letter from one individual to the next as moved by the Spirit of God and moved by the presence of God. So we're reading this letter that Paul wrote to the church at Rome by way of encouragement of how to be sure in their faith, and we've been looking at it for some time now, as the foundational doctrines of our faith.

What it is our faith rests upon. So we're in Romans chapter 9, starting in verse 30 and reading to Romans chapter 10 verse 13. If you're physically able and desire to do so, I'm asking you to join with me as we stand together and we read the Word of God, starting in Romans 9 verse 30.

Paul writes to the church at Rome, What shall we say then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith.

[1 : 24] 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, just as it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, and he who believes in him will not be disappointed.

Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation. For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. 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.

But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows. 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, that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

[2 : 39] For with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. For the scripture says, whoever believes in him will not be disappointed.

For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek. For the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on him. For whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much for this day you've given us. God, we rejoice in the opportunity we have had to gather together and lift our voice up in song.

Lord, to take a moment and to consider the price you paid on the cross, and what we remember in the offering is that song has so clearly depicted, your body and your blood. Lord, we praise you for the opportunity we have come to now, where we can read your word.

And Lord, I admit my own weakness, my own insufficiency, to be able to clearly open it up. But Lord, I cry out to you and say, oh God, would you help us to see it as it is? Would you help us to know it in our hearts and minds?

[3 : 43] Lord, may its truth grip us. May it move us. May it shape and conform us. And Lord, in the end, may you be glorified through us. And we ask it all in the sweet name of Jesus. Amen.

You may be seated. Romans 9, verse 30 through Romans 10, verse 13. We have been gradually making our way through this great book of Romans as Paul wrote to the church at Rome, a church meeting in various locations, not just in one building, a church which did not know him by face, a church that only knew of him by word of mouth.

He wrote to this church in the midst of his missionary travelings as he was starting and encouraging other churches and raising up other pastors. And his chief concern everywhere he went would be that the church would be what it was called to be.

That the church would be the church. That it would be built upon the foundation truths that Christ had given. The things that he had learned, as he says, spent three years in the wilderness of Arabia being taught of Christ himself.

No one went to a better school than Paul. No one graduated from a better seminary than Paul. Having hung out with the risen Savior and learned the truths of the gospel message. Having learned the fulfillment of Scripture.

[4 : 53] And he would take these truths and he would build churches upon them and encourage a church that was already begun to rest upon them. And that is what we have been looking at going through the book of Romans.

We are now in this center section of the book, Romans 9, 10, and 11, in which Paul, we have said, is not shifting gears, but is rather changing illustrations. He is showing us the chief end of Romans is that you are saved by faith and by faith alone.

It is justification by faith. That it is nothing you can do, nothing that you have done. Rather, it is what you have trusted in. That is Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. The work has been finished.

It has been completed. And all the call of the gospel is that you would place your faith and hope and trust upon the finished work of Jesus Christ. He is using the illustration of the nation of Israel in the three chapters in the middle of the Bible here.

He is using them to illustrate the principle of God's purposes. That God can keep those whom he has called to himself. You remember that great truth we read about and we saw in Romans 8.

[5 : 57] It is often called the security of the saints. That once you are in the hand of God through faith, that you are always in the hand of God, that nothing can take you out of the hand of God, neither powers or principalities of the air, nor forces of darkness, nothing created which includes yourself, can take you out of the hand of God, that you are eternally secure.

And we saw how the great argument among the church at Rome would have been, well, what about those people whom God called to himself in the Old Testament, namely the Jewish people? So he begins to illustrate how God's purposes did not fail concerning the Israel people, the nation of Israel, throughout the Old Testament pages and even throughout contemporary times.

Romans 9, 10, and 11 are very rich texts. And in the middle of them we see the thing of God's supremacy. We see that God is supreme, starting in Romans 9.

We see God is sovereign, that he calls individuals to himself, and that he is a God of salvation. And now Paul kind of stops midway through this illustration.

And he extends an invitation. And it is probably one of the most important portions of the book of Romans. I said last week that if there was one message that I wish that everyone that ever sat in a pew at War Trace Baptist Church would be in attendance to hear, it would have been last week's message, the sovereignty of God.

[7 : 21] And I still stand by that one because I think that is one that we often misconstrue and confuse at times. But I think if there is one message that desperately needs to be heard in the world today, it is this message.

And it is the invitation of salvation. Now he will pick back up with his illustration, starting in Romans 10, 14. And actually he would just kind of carry this on into Romans 11.

And he speaks about God's eternal purposes with the nation of Israel. And he will speak not only about what he is doing present day while Paul was writing, but what he will do in future events. And we come upon passages such as the fullness of the Gentiles and things that really, to properly understand them, we have to put them together with writings in the book of Revelations.

But we'll get to those if the Lord allows us to. But this morning, I want you to see this foundational doctrine of the church. That is the invitation of salvation.

Knowing that God is supreme, knowing that what God plans to do, he will do. Okay, that's the supremacy of God. That God's plans do not fail. When the people would have argued and said, well, most of the Jewish nation rejected you when you came.

[8 : 32] That is an argument, right? He came to his own and his own received him not. Right? They would say, most of them rejected you, so your plan has failed. And he says, oh no, God is so much greater than that. His plan has not failed because do not forget.

But to those whom he gave the right to be called children of God, those he called to himself. His plans are supreme. They are so much further above our understanding. And also understanding that God is sovereign, that he knows all and is above all and is in control of all.

And he is absolutely right in all that he does. Now he comes to this invitation. This great invitation extended from a supreme, sovereign, loving God.

And my friend, it is one that is extended to me, it is one that is extended to you, it is one that is extended to all men, and one that it does us well to pause and to consider often, not only for the people around us, but for our own selves.

Because in it we rightfully understand salvation. We see here in these passages, three negatives and one positive. Okay, so there will be four points this morning.

[9 : 34] There will be three negatives and one positive. Because we could really get to the positive aspect of salvation's invitation, we have to understand the negative side of that. That's something that kind of goes along with Paul's writings as well.

He spends an insurmountable amount of time talking about the problem we have so that he can introduce us into the plan God has provided, right? He introduces to us first our problem because we always need to properly understand the problems we face so that we can understand the offer he extends.

If we think that we're okay and we think that we're doing all right, we would think that we need no savior. Those who do not know their loss do not need a savior, right? So that's why he spends a lot of time talking about the problem of mankind.

And when he comes to this invitation that is being extended from God, he just kind of assumes that this is something that all men long after. Not only in Paul's day, but also in our day.

Now to put it in context so that we rightfully understand it, Paul is writing to the church at Rome. The church at Rome is sitting in a very paganistic society.

[10 : 38] He is writing to a church where the emperor of Rome, that is Caesar, would be residing. Probably one of the most ornate and beautiful cities in all of the world at its time.

A city that was lit with gas streetlights for over a mile in one aspect. A city in which every building for that same mile was overlaid in marble and gold. A city beyond all comparison.

A city that itself was the result of the spread of the gospel. God used the city of Rome and the infrastructure that Rome provided in their road system for Paul to travel down those roads.

The old saying, all roads lead to Rome, is something that is very accurate. Because what the Roman Empire did is they began paving roads, extending from the city throughout the region of their conquering.

Some of those roads you could still drive on today. They are still in existence. It is marvelous what the Roman Empire did. And it was these roads that all led to Rome, which made Rome the center of the world at that time.

[11 : 36] It was not only the political powerhouse and the military powerhouse, it was the thinking powerhouse. They were influenced by Greek cultures. They were influenced by all the different cultures around them, Greek gods and mythology and all these things that were going on in this city.

Rampant sins, much like what we see today going on in the world. But one thing Paul knew, all men of all places at all times are seeking for something eternal.

They are. The Bible tells us in the book of Ecclesiastes that God has set eternity in the heart of all men. That we just know there's something inside of us that tells us there is more to life than this temporary state of existence.

That God put that there intentionally so that man would have a longing for the things of eternity. And that longing that resides within all men, and some, I mean we want to be fair, some deny that longing and suppress that longing and say, well I only live once, this is all I have, I'm going to live it up.

And they're suppressing that, trying to fill this life with eternal things, knowing that it's not possible. Others seek to fill that eternal vacuum through a number of other religions, another of other promises and practices, and all types of different things around the world.

[12 : 55] But each is looking for the same thing, and that is to be introduced to something to save me from this temporary state of suffering, that I may live eternally in the state of promise.

And this is what Paul is introducing to us here, this invitation that God has extended for us to enter into that. And with those things in mind, we see the first thing that we must understand was going on, not only with the Jewish people in the days of Paul, but each of these have application to a number of people in the day in which we live.

And I know this is a long introduction, but we must also be careful that they do not have truth in our own lives that we live. This is not a message so much about others as it is a message about us.

As he begins to speak of salvation and the invitation God has extended, he talks first of all about the vain pursuit of some. The vain pursuit of some.

Look at what it says. What shall we say then? Every time we come across this phrase, I read from the New American Standard Bible. Every time we come across this phrase, what shall we say then? We see it in the ninth chapter several times.

[14 : 06] Paul is using it to introduce a counter-argument to something that he just knew would rightfully come up. Because right before this, he has just said that God has chosen the rejection of the Israelite nation to be the thing that welcomes in the Gentiles, that is the rest of the world.

And the argument was that just doesn't seem fair. And he shows us why this doesn't seem fair. He says, What shall we say then? That Gentiles, by the way, unless you are of Jewish descent, Gentiles includes you.

Okay? Gentiles is everyone else in the world but the Jewish nation. If you are half Jew, if you are three-quarters Jew, then you're still considered Gentile. Unless you are 100% of Jewish descent, you are a Gentile.

Okay? That's just how it is introduced here. So it says, Everyone else. What shall we say then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith.

So he introduces the problem to us. He has just told us, in the ninth chapter here, preceding this, that God has chosen people from around the world to come to salvation through him.

[15 : 09] That God has chosen, outside of his own people, the Jewish people, people from around the world. And he gave the illustrations, how that is illustrated all throughout the Old Testament. Let no one tell you that the Old Testament is just about the Jewish people.

The Old Testament is how God uses the Jewish people to reach the world, right? That's exactly what it's about. And that's a good way to go. Yes, you're right. Amen, Pastor. I've seen that a couple of times because it's all throughout there that you are a light, a revelation to the Gentiles.

And I will use you to draw other people to myself. It is always God's intended purpose to draw the world to salvation through his people. Still application today, by the way.

Still longing to draw the world to himself through his people. We just have a new definition of who his people are present, that is the church. But we see this, that Paul has introduced this, God's purposes have not changed.

God has chosen the Gentile people for salvation as well. Now the argument would be, well, that just doesn't seem fair. Now we've been introduced to this other times in Romans 9, and we need to be careful where we look at God and say, God, that's not fair.

[16 : 16] Because we are trying to set the limits on what fairness is, and that's just impossible because we don't have a right understanding of what is good. We can say something is pleasing, but we cannot define what is good because only God can declare something good or very good as we see throughout creation.

But what we see here is man will say, well, that's not fair. And the reason it's not fair is because God called a people to himself, that is the Jewish people. He called Abram out of the land of the Ur of the Chaldeans and made this covenant promise to Abraham, Abraham, I will be your God, you will be my people, I'll raise a great nation out of you.

God didn't choose anyone else, he just chose Abram. And from Abram, he raised up the Jewish people, the nation of Israel. And these are his people. But what you're telling me is that God put all of these standards and all these regulations on his people, told his people to live in this right way, gave them all of these things, and then he gave the promise that he first extended to them to someone that never chose to live that way.

That doesn't seem fair. You mean God set a standard and said you're going to do this, you're going to do that, you're going to do this. In my personal study, I'm reading through the book of Exodus right now. Tonight we'll be looking at Exodus chapter 20.

That should all of a sudden set a light bulb off for you. That's the Ten Commandments or the Decalogue, right? And it's the old Ten Sayings of Christ. And then you get to Exodus 21 where it talks about if you strike your father and mother, you shall be killed.

[17 : 36] If you do this, all these different things. And he gave them this standard. And then you're going to say they lived this whole time by this standard. And then he gave the promise to those who never lived by that standard.

That's not fair. Just in case we think this is a problem during Paul's day, it's the same argument that we have today. You would be surprised how many people I have had come up to me and says it just doesn't seem fair to me that I could live my life, go to church, give my money, give my time, spend my time in prayer, read my Bible, do all of these things.

And at the end of life, God can give the same promise to a man at his very last breath, calls out for forgiveness, and God gives him heaven just as much as he gives me heaven. That's not fair.

Well, let me just stop right here and say you've completely misunderstood what you're doing presently. Because what you're doing presently is not to attain those things he's given you.

What you're doing presently is a result of because he gave you those things already. And that person, my friend, is going into the same promise but missing out on the opportunity to do the very things you get to do today.

[18 : 42] Totally different viewpoint. It's a totally different viewpoint when we look at it like that. But we come back to Paul's invitation. Because he says it doesn't seem fair. Why? Because the Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness, think about this, the Gentiles who were out there coming up with all these Greek gods, the Gentiles who were out there with all this great philosophy and all this great thinking and all this great stuff, all these Gentiles who were doing their own thing, God gives them the same thing.

He said he just gave it to them. But Israel, it says in verse 31, pursuing a law of righteousness did not arrive at that law. Why is that? Well, the reason would be is that it is the vain pursuit of some.

Because the gift we're talking about is the gift of eternal life. It is the gift of salvation. And we're looking at how to attain that gift of salvation the way that invitation comes to us, how we may receive that gift.

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. We'll get to that, right? And he's introducing to us how we can attain that gift. And here's the first thing we need to understand, this vain pursuit.

The Gentiles received that gift by faith, right? They just, they were given that gift by faith. And it doesn't seem fair to man that the Jews who were pursuing that gift didn't get it.

[20 : 02] But wait a minute, let us see how they pursued that gift. Look at what it says. Read your Bibles carefully because it means something. But Israel, the New American Standard puts it like this, pursuing a law of righteousness did not arrive at that law.

Now friend, what were they pursuing? A law of righteousness. What did they not attain?

That law that makes them righteous. Here is what we find among God's people throughout the Old Testament. One thing that we find even among God's people today, and this is what we find among the people of the world.

It is this vain pursuit. It is this understanding. And now I will agree with you that not many people around the world are doing this if we want to be completely honest, but some are. And I fear that there are many more in the church doing this than what we would very readily acknowledge.

It is this vain pursuit. It is that the Gentiles heard the news of the gospel. They heard about Jesus Christ and all of a sudden they said, that sounds right to me and they began pursuing Christ and they attained this gift of righteousness.

[21 : 16] While this other group of people knew God's standards and they began to pursue a law of righteousness, which means they knew there was more to life than this. There is something inside of their hearts that tells them there is a holy God and this God has to be appeased.

This God must be pleased. He tells us throughout the Old Testament what He is like, that nothing impure or unclean can ever stand in His presence. that if we are going to be welcomed into His presence we must be perfect.

So they say, if I have to be perfect I am going to pursue a law that will make me perfect. That is the key. I am going to find something that I can do that will make me perfect.

And the danger in that is they never found it. today there are a number multitude of people around the world.

Now Christianity is still the leading religion around the world but we must be careful. We must be careful how we define that because in a number of countries you are required to state your faith and you are to state your faith just as much as you are to state your citizenship.

[22 : 23] So they claim Christianity as a faith though they do not live out Christianity as a practice. Okay? Here is what you have to choose from. Pick one and whichever one you want that is yours. Okay? Biblical Christianity I would say is not the leading faith around the world but right behind that is Islamic faith.

Okay? Islamic faith and I am not trying to pick on this because really every other world religion has to do with this. But if we are talking about a vain pursuit every other world religion is if you do this you will be pleasing to God.

And if you will do this, this, this and this then you will be accepted into his presence. It is a pursuit of a law of righteousness.

Among Christianity let's just pick on ourselves for a minute. Among Christianity it is stated like this. If you will fast, if you will pray, if you will give, if you will read, if you will do this a number of days, if you will do this, if you will make sure there is 10% going into play.

All these things are good. But if you will do this, you will be pleasing to God and he has to let you in to heaven. If I can check all the boxes on my checklist, if I can make sure I do everything he commands me to do, if I can do it all, then he has to let me in.

[23 : 38] And friend, I want to tell you something. It is a vain pursuit because there is not a law that will make you righteous. There's not.

There's not a standard. There's not a code. There's not an effort. And we'll dig into this just a little bit further. But look at what it says. Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works, they were saying, surely if I can do it good enough.

We'll get into it just a little bit more. If I can do it good enough, he has to accept it. The problem there is the I that is in there. If I can do it, if I can pursue it, but as though it were by works, they stumbled over the stumbling stone.

Behold, it says, just as it is written, behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone, a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense, and he who believes in him will not be disappointed, that is Jesus Christ. When the New Testament authors look back at the Old Testament promises and they began to see this stone, this cornerstone, this stumbling stone, this rock of offense, they began to see this and they understood that what the Old Testament writers were writing about was Jesus Christ himself.

The problem you have with pursuing a law of righteousness is you keep tripping over Jesus. You know why you keep tripping over Jesus? It's because it doesn't matter how good you do your works, Jesus did them better.

[24 : 58] It doesn't matter how much you love your enemies, Jesus loved his more. It doesn't matter how much you obey the Father, Jesus obeyed him better. It doesn't matter how much you give, Jesus gave more.

Every time you try to attain a law of righteousness and every time you try to fulfill the works of righteousness, you keep tripping over Jesus because you make and compare yourself to the people beside you in the pew.

You make and compare yourself to the people beside you in the world and you may be doing a better job at a law of righteousness than them, but my friend, when you look at Jesus, you don't do anything that compares to him.

You keep falling short and you keep messing up and if the standard of perfection, if the standard of living is Jesus, then I keep tripping over Jesus every time I think I'm okay.

And he becomes a stumbling stone. He becomes this constant reminder that my pursuit of righteousness is vain indeed.

[25 : 57] It's the vain pursuit of some. We move forward. Not only is there the vain pursuit of some, there is the misguided passion of many. There is the misguided passion of many. Look at what he says.

Moving to chapter 10 now, verse 1. Brethren, my heart's desire, my prayer to God for them is for their salvation. Again, Paul reveals his heart to us. He says, I really long for my brethren, my brothers according to the flesh, as is the Jewish people, to be saved.

I want them to be saved. I'm not trying to pronounce condemnation upon them. I'm trying to extend to them an invitation for, look at this, for I testify about them that they have a zeal for God.

Now, Paul was not saying that these people are lazy, they're going out doing whatever they want to do. This is where we have to pay attention, especially inside the walls of the church. Paul didn't say, you know what, they're living life to the fullest, they're out there living rampantly, they're just doing all these abominable sins, they're doing everything that they want, they're pleasing the flesh, they're going after the desires of their own heart, and they're falling short and I want them to be saved.

No, rather than that, Paul says, they are zealous for God. I mean, they really want to please God. He is talking about the Pharisees here, the people who would not walk over a certain number of steps on the Sabbath, the people who would not carry over the equivalent of two pounds on the Sabbath, the people that, up to more modern days, would not even turn a light switch on in their house on the Sabbath because it looked as if they were doing works.

[27 : 20] A good practicing Jew would have to hire someone to stoke their fire on the Sabbath because they couldn't touch the wood to put on the fire on the Sabbath because that's doing too much work.

I'm talking about people to the utmost and all they want to do is not to appear right, they really want to please God. Let us never misconstrue their thoughts, never misunderstand their passion.

Their passion is to please God. Their passion is to be accepted by God. Their zeal, Paul says here, is to be welcomed into His presence.

But it is a misguided passion because we need to understand it is not a matter of how much we want to be in His presence.

Look at what it says. He says, they did not get there because, for I testify about them, they have a zeal for God but not in accordance with knowledge.

[28 : 19] Now this may blow your mind, okay? And I don't want it to really to be, I don't want it to sound anti-biblical and I don't want it to sound wrong and I try to say this just as tenderly and lovingly as I can.

when God looks down at mankind, at humanity, God is not looking at those who have the greatest zeal and the greatest passion to be with Him.

As long as you're passionate about it, as long as you really want to be here, as long as you really want to be in my presence and I'll let you in, it's not a matter of man's passion. Rather, it's a matter of the truth and the way He has set.

Do you know you can be absolutely passionate about a wrong thing? I mean, you can be absolutely passionate about a lie and your heart can be bent and you can be on fire and you can have a zeal like none other for something that is completely false.

We have a saying around our house and maybe some of you have understood it. It is amazing to us, we have a boy genius in the house, Brayden knows everything.

[29 : 36] The boy just does. He knows everything and he'll argue with you about anything but I love the way Brayden argues because if you say Brayden, that's blue, he'll say no, it's red.

I'm like Brayden, that's blue. No, it is red and he'll argue and argue and argue. Daddy, I'm telling you it's red. I know it's red. I'm looking and it's red and it's clear as the noon day. You can look at it and see that it's blue and he will argue and he'll argue and he'll argue and when you finally stop and you say whatever, Brayden, he'll say it's red.

Isn't it daddy? Like I think I'm right. Wouldn't you agree with me? I don't know Brayden, you're the one who knows everything, you tell me what it is. He is passionate about arguing.

He's not passionate about whatever the truth is, he's just passionate about arguing and that's okay, some of us are like that, right? We're good arguers, it doesn't matter. That strong willed child, some people say they'll just bury things in the ground just to see how far they can go.

It doesn't matter what they're arguing about, they just want to argue. But it is absolutely possible to be passionate and to be wrong. And what Paul is saying is my brothers, according to the flesh, they have a zeal for God, they have a greater zeal probably than I do.

[30 : 46] And my friend, do not this one because the good practicing Judaistic individual has a greater zeal and a greater passion than just about anyone else I know. But it's not according to knowledge.

And it is a misguided passion. Because what is it, to answer these first two things, what should we be pursuing and what should we be passionate about? Well, it is not pursuing a law to make us right or passionate about what we can do to be right.

We ought to be pursuing Christ and be passionate about Christ. Christ. And that is it. And now we see the third thing. We see the unattainable practice of perfection.

Because now Paul is going to introduce to us what Moses says. He's going back to the Old Testament. Verse 5, well, verse 4 tells us, for Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

There is the passion and the pursuit of the believer. We are passionate. And it does not mean Christ has ended the law. When it literally says Christ is the end of the law, it means Christ is the fulfillment or the completion of the law.

[31 : 48] In Christ the law is full. It's been filled up. It's been every commandment, every requirement, every desire of the law has found its completion, its end result in Christ. And that's why we ought to be pursuing him.

We ought to be passionate about him. 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 the law shall live by that righteousness.

Here it is. here is the impossible, impossible practice of perfection. It is unattainable. He's given us three negatives before we get to the positive and we're about to get to the positive but I want you to see this.

If we are pursuing a law to make us righteous, if we are passionate that we may be made righteous based on something we do, then he says wait a minute. Moses says however you start is how you have to finish.

If you are practicing the law of righteousness in the Old Testament, then that is the standard of conduct that you must live by for the entirety of your life. Which means that you can't just fulfill some of it, you have to fulfill all of it.

[32 : 52] You can't just say well I'm doing pretty good at this, this, and this but the rest of it I'm struggling with. Paul says that's not an option. If you're pursuing the law of Moses then you gotta live by the law of Moses. And when I read the law of Moses it doesn't matter how far we go in our practice.

It doesn't matter how far we go even in our own self sacrificial desires. It doesn't matter how far we go in our effort. I always find something I'm not doing. And Paul says you have to fill up the whole law.

You can't fall short at any part. It is an impossibility. If we begin to live as if we can be pleasing to God, if we begin to live as if God is gonna welcome us into his presence because of something we do, if we're gonna live as if our works can earn us a way into God's favor, then Paul says if that be the case, then you better do it all.

Because until you do it all, you're not getting anything. And all of a sudden we begin to understand how impossible it is. It is an impossible practice of perfection.

My friend, listen to it. None of us are perfect. And we know that. And it is impossible for us to pretend like we are.

[34 : 06] It is really futile to act as if we could ever be perfect. Because it's not gonna happen. The standard of God is too tall, too high, too far above us.

God's holiness is greater. We either find our end in Christ, or we attempt to find our end in our efforts.

And if we're trusting in our efforts, we will fall short. Now let's come to the good news. Because we're looking at salvation's invitation. Paul says, many men, most men, just about all men, desire salvation.

Some attempt to come to salvation by a pursuit of a law. Some attempt to come to salvation by a passion for God.

Some attempt to come to salvation by a standard of perfection. I don't know how you attempt to come. But I want to lean on this last one and look at the amazing promise of God.

[35 : 16] The amazing promise of God. Look at what it says. But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows. Do not say in your heart who will ascend to heaven, that is to bring Christ down, or who will descend into abyss, that is to bring Christ back 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. Paul says, this pursuit, this desire, this ambition, it's as close as the word in your mouth.

You don't have to strive, you don't have to make effort, you don't have to put forth any ability, you don't have to try and try and try and hope to find it, you don't have to go to the highest of the heavens or the lowest of the earth, you don't have to look for it, he says it's right near you, it's so close it's even in your own mouth.

Because look at what it says, here's this amazing promise of God. Verse 9, many of us are very familiar with verse 9 and following, let us read it with fresh eyes, that if, there's the big word right, if, that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, let's just stop right there, because we're looking at this amazing promise of God, that if you confess with your mouth, make a public proclamation Jesus as Lord, notice it does not say in scripture, that if you confess Jesus, that if you just say, oh Jesus, that if you call on Jesus, and I know we understand this, that whosoever calls on the name of the Lord Jesus shall be saved, or whosoever calls upon Jesus shall be saved, but let us be careful what the scripture says, that if you confess, make a public profession a confession, something that is audible, I'm not saying you have to stand in front of everyone and you have to make all this herald of preaching and things of that nature, but this is the seriousness of what God is offering you, is it free?

Yes. Is it uncomfortable? Absolutely. Does it kind of unnerve you? Yes. But this is so simple, but yet it is so profound, look at what it says, that if you confess with your mouth, Jesus as Lord.

[37 : 23] Paul does not say that if you call on Jesus as Savior, he does not say that, that if you'll confess Jesus as Lord.

Now, there's not a big dispute, but I've had believers come to me and want to question me about these things and we'll talk to them.

Is it possible for Jesus to be your Savior and to not be your Lord? I'm just going to go ahead and tell you that according to Romans 10, 9, no. I will say that there are a lot of people who desire a Savior but want nothing to do with the Lord.

And I will say there are a lot of people who ask for a Savior because they understand the position of their life, because God has allowed trials and temptations and struggles to be a testimony to the state of affairs in which we exist.

And there are a lot of people who want a Savior because really, who doesn't want to spend eternity in the sweet flowing milk and honey of heaven? I mean, really, when it comes down to it, I've heard people say, well, I'm glad I'm going to hell.

[38 : 29] All my buddies are going to be there. But when you really understand hell, and I'm not trying to make light of it, no one wants to go there. Okay? It's not a party. It's eternal isolation, separation, suffering, eternal death.

I mean, that just sounds awful. And I don't want to scare anybody into that, but I have yet to find someone that rightly understood it, wanting to go there. Anybody that just kind of, just a little bit understands heaven desires to go there.

And I've found a lot of people who want a Savior. They want to be saved from hell so they can go to heaven. But Paul says, if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, as Lord.

Now, who is he writing to? The church at Rome. Who has a seat in the city of Rome? Caesar. What is required of Caesar in Rome?

That you look at him and say, Caesar is Lord. And if you don't say Caesar is Lord, Caesar has a way of making you say it, or at least killing you so you don't not say it anymore.

[39 : 36] He has a way of taking care of that. A lot of times, you know, heads will roll, literally. That's just kind of what happened. A lot of people were executed for this lack of saying, Caesar is Lord. Why? Because Caesar desired and longed for and the peace of Rome, the Pax Romana, depended upon the lordship of Caesar, that he would have the right to govern the principles of everyone underneath him.

And what Paul is saying is salvation, this promise of God, begins with this. You say, Jesus is Lord.

Now, just in case you think, well, I know how I'd handle it, I'd say, Jesus is Lord over here, and they go over here and say, Caesar is Lord over here. You can't do that. Because you're lying somewhere.

Because you can only have one Lord. You can only have one master. You can only have one dictator. You can only have one leader. You can only have one person moving you.

And either Caesar is Lord, or Jesus is Lord, or we'll come on down to our lives, either we are Lord of our lives, which is really just a lie, or Christ is Lord of our lives.

[40 : 45] Because, and thank you, unless you think, I can't remember the name of the poem right now, the captain of my own ship, I'm on destiny, I am in control of my own life, and all these things come to me, and it's this great classic poem where I'm just the leader of my own life, and I get to determine the steps I take.

Oh, that's a bunch of baloney. There's nothing wrong with that. Either the devil is Lord of your life, or Jesus is Lord of your life. You're under the control of someone. And if you will not profess with your mouth Jesus is Lord, then I'll go ahead and tell you that Jesus has already professed that Satan is your Lord.

You say, that sounds rough. Well, yes it does, but Jesus says, I tell you that if my father is not your father, then the devil is your father. But he said. So it begins with this first principle.

I come to him as Lord, and by the way, that changes everything. Because if he is Lord, then he has rights. That means all rights, all authority, all power, all persons.

So if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. This is this amazing promise. You notice there are two key elements to this promise that you will be saved.

[41 : 53] First, you have to confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead. The resurrection is critical to salvation, right? Your salvation and the gift of salvation that God extends to you hinges upon the reality of the resurrection.

That you're not coming to a dead man, you're not coming to a dead individual, you're coming to someone who was dead and is now alive again. Which, again, it's one thing to have Caesar as Lord, and then Caesar dies, and you're like, okay, we're about to come upon the Ides of March.

That's tomorrow, right? The Ides of March. You know what the Ides of March are, right? All you Shakespeare people, the Ides of March, you wrote a play about it, my daughter knows, because I questioned her on it the other day. You know, Julius Caesar was killed on the Ides of March.

Come on. A historical thing that William Shakespeare wrote a play about, okay? So, the Ides of March. What happened is, people didn't like Caesar as Lord, so they killed him. That's a good way to do it, right?

So now I have me another Lord. I have, Augustus can now be my Lord, and I can change my Lord, and all these different things. Well, if you're coming to a Lord who's already died and come back again, that doesn't work.

[42 : 56] Because he's already defeated death, hell, and the grave. So he's going to be Lord all the time. And there's no getting out from under his Lordship. He's an eternal Lord.

He'll be your Lord today. He'll be your Lord tomorrow. He'll be your Lord at the end of your life. He'll be the Lord at the beginning of your next life. He'll be the Lord. He is always Lord. Here's this promise.

You will be saved. It's not that you might be saved. Not that you can be saved. Not that you may be saved. It's you will be saved. And he bases it, and I'm wrapping up here, on these Old Testament quotes.

Look at what he says. Verse 10, For with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. For the scripture says what? Whoever believes in him will not be disappointed.

For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, and the same Lord is Lord over all, abounding in riches for all who call on him. For, again, another Old Testament quotation, whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.

[44 : 02] My friend, I'm wrapping up, and I'm closing. But I want to ask you, which invitation of salvation did you respond to?

One that said, as long as you pursue a law that makes you better, one that, as long as you pursue a code of ethics, as long as you are passionate, as long as you're excited, as long as you put forth the effort, as long as you do this, you do that, you do that, as long as you are perfect, God will accept you?

Or did you respond to an invitation that said, you know what, Jesus, I've seen all those others, and I can't do them. So I just want you to be Lord. I want you to have control.

Because you alone have already done it. You've completed it. You've fulfilled it. It's over. And I'm giving it to you. And I'm trusting you. The Bible says, whoever will believe on him will not be disappointed.

Now, the word believe doesn't mean just to go, yeah, yeah, that's who it is. It's to cast all of your hope upon him. Whoever will call upon him in that desperate moment.

[45 : 09] And what an invitation. What an invitation. God says, it's not by your efforts. It's not by your abilities. It's for anyone who is willing to let me be Lord, the resurrected Lord, his or her life.

Where are you at? And when you know where you're at, then you know how to pray for others who are not there yet. Let's pray. God, we thank you. I thank you so much.

Lord, that you've given us an opportunity to gather together as your people. But Lord, I also understand there may be some of us here that we've never come to that point. daddy daddy daddy daddy daddy Maybe we can do a way to make a plan.

Maybe we can do a passion without being done. So we're going to want to do a year on life. I don't know what we're going to do with that. So I'm going to have to do a year on the earth.

What is the future? And there was four years of hope. And there was three years of hope.

[46 : 19] The brother of the children. And I want you to do it. And you pray in the same way. You're going to have a promise.

You're going to have a promise. I want you to do it. I want you to do it. I want you to do it. I want you to do it. I want you to do it.

Thank you.

Thank you.