

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

Why Isn't Being Good Enough - Good Enough?

Romans 9:30-10:15

1 Years ago, when the upper peninsula of Michigan was a wilderness, two men set out to find a mining camp. It was the middle of winter and, on the way, they were caught in a snow storm. When the storm was over they noticed that their tracks had disappeared. They continued on, sure that they knew their way.

By and by, they came upon two sets of tracks going in their direction. They picked up their step hoping to catch up with the other two men. Soon, however, they came upon an old Indian who shook his head when he saw them. Pointing to their tracks in the snow he said, “White man lost! Go ‘round’ and ‘round’.” Sure enough, their journey had taken them in a broad circle known as the “Death Track”.¹

When you don’t have standards in your life, you just walk around in circles! The Bible calls you lost.

A few years ago I sat next to a bank executive at a local Chamber of Commerce event. As we talked

¹ “The Death Track”, Our Daily Bread, Romans 10:1-13, February 9.

about our lives and what we did in our vocations, the conversation got around to spiritual things. She was absolutely convinced she was going to heaven when she died because she was living a good enough life. That's the way she put it.

The questions I asked her, I believe, got her thinking more seriously about this subject. "Where is the line you cross in life that says you are good enough? Do you have the right to decide where that line is? Does our culture? Did your parents? Does the President of the United States? Who decides where the line is?" The truth is, only God, Who created you, has the authority to set that standard! He did just that. The standard is called The Law of Moses. Supposedly, if you kept that standard flawlessly you would be "good enough". The human problem, historically, is nobody ever did; except the Lord Jesus!

Romans, Chapter 9, verse 30 through chapter 10, verse 15, point out three reasons why you can't have a relationship with God on your own terms. [2](#)

What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the “stumbling stone.” As it is written: “See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”

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Brothers, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God’s righteousness. Christ is the end of the law so

² Romans 9:30-33.

that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.³ ⁴

Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law: “The man who does these things will live by them.” But the righteousness that is by faith says: “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down) “or ‘Who will descend into the deep?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).⁴ ⁵

But what does it say? “The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,” that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.⁵ ⁶

³ Romans 10:1-4.

⁴ Romans 10:5-7.

⁵ Romans 10:8-10.

As the Scripture says, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile — the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”⁶₇

How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”⁷₈

You can’t have a relationship with God on your own terms . . .

⁶ Romans 10:11-13.

⁷ Romans 10:12-15.

I. Because You Think More of What You Achieve Than What You Believe! – 9:32 ⁹

Because you think more of what you achieve than what you believe! Verse 32, **Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the “stumbling stone.”** ⁸ ₁₀

Verse 5 tells us if you could have obeyed the standard, the Law of Moses, it could have brought you life. ⁹ ₁₁ Leviticus, Chapter 18, verse 5 says, **Keep my decrees and laws, for the man who obeys them will live by them. I am the LORD.** ₁₂ But to be justified by that standard, you would have to obey it perfectly! James, Chapter 2, verse 10, **For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.** ₁₃

Law keeping tends to develop an attitude of selfishness and arrogance, not dependence and love.

⁸ Romans 9:32.

⁹ Romans 10:5 - Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law: **“The man who does these things will live by them.”**

Remember the two guys praying in the Temple courtyard. The self righteous Pharisee prayed thanking God for making him so good. He wasn't like some of the bad guys he knew as he recited some of the good things he was doing. The tax collector, a bad guy, simply asked God for mercy. ¹⁰ A sincere Jew knew, deep down inside, he didn't live a good enough life to keep the Law. ¹¹ ¹⁴

What you believe, expressed in your actions, does bring life! ¹⁵ Look at verse 8, **But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,"** ¹² The word ¹³ is the gospel message; the story of the Lord's life, death, burial and resurrection. ¹⁶

Now, verses 9 and 10, **That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified,**

¹⁰ Luke 18:9-14.

¹¹ Romans 7:14-25.

¹² Quote from Deuteronomy 30:14.

¹³ τὸ ῥῆμα.

and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

How do you benefit from the message “Jesus is Lord”? **Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved . . .** ¹⁴ ₁₇ You trust in it and you make it true in your life. ¹⁸ You proclaim it at your baptism and in your witness to others. ¹⁹ This message is called in the Bible “The Good Confession”. ¹⁵ ₂₀

Who is it for? Verses 11 and 12, As the Scripture says, **“Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”** For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile — the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him . . . ²¹ Salvation is for everyone who trusts in the Lord Jesus. ¹⁶ ₂₂ “Everyone” means you! ²³

How is this salvation to be obtained? Verses 13 through 15 answer that, **Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.** How, then, can they

¹⁴ Joel 2:32.

¹⁵ I Timothy 6:12-14; Hebrews 4:14; 10:23; Philippians 2:11.

¹⁶ See also Isaiah 28:16.

call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news! ²⁴

This saving message must, first, be presented. ¹⁷ ²⁵

Next, the saving message must be heard, understood and trusted in. ¹⁸ The story is told of a beggar who stopped a lawyer on the street to ask him for money to buy a meal. The attorney looked at the beggar closely and recognized him as a former classmate from college. Without hesitation, the lawyer wrote him a check for \$500.

Tears came to his eyes as the beggar walked to the bank nearby. As he looked through the clear glass into the spotlessly clean room at the well dressed

¹⁷ v14-15 - And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

¹⁸ v14 - And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard.

tellers he thought to himself, “They won’t accept this. They’ll think I forged it.” So he turned away.

The next day the two men met again. The lawyer saw the beggar in his filthy clothes still begging on the street. He exclaimed, “What did you do with my check? Did you gamble it away? Did you drink it up?” He pulled the check out of his pocket and confessed why he didn’t cash it.

“Listen, friend”, said the attorney, “what makes that check good is not your clothes or your appearance, but my signature. Go cash it!” You need to trust that when Lord Jesus went to the cross, He paid the total price for your sin. You must understand and trust that fact. ¹⁹ ₂₆

Then, the Lord of that message must be called upon.
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A minister was getting a shave and haircut at the local barber. The barber stated that he couldn’t believe in a

¹⁹ “Cash that ‘Check’”, Our Daily Bread, Romans 10:1-13, April 22.

²⁰ v13 - “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

God Who would allow so much evil in the world. “There’s so much poverty. People walk by in front of my shop addicted to drugs, dressed in filthy rags and hungry. How could a loving God let that happen?”

The minister waited awhile until a beggar with unkempt hair and a stubby face appeared. “You’re not a very good barber”, the minister said. “How can you allow a man like that to walk around with unkempt hair and needing a shave so badly?”

The reply, “Why blame me for that man’s condition? I can’t help it if he looks like that. He never comes in to my shop. I could make him look like a gentleman if he would only give me a chance!” ²¹ ₂₇

Lord Jesus offers you salvation as a free gift. He paid the price for your sin on the cross. You’ve got to reach out and take it. Surrender your life to Him as Lord. Cash the check!

²¹ “Whose Fault is It?”, Our Daily Bread, Romans 10:12-17, March 9.

II. Because You Make a Stumbling Stone

Out of the Rock of Ages! – 9:33 ²⁸

You can't have a relationship with God on your own terms because you make a stumbling stone out of the Rock of Ages. Verse 33 continues, **As it is written: "See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame."** ²⁹

In verse 4 it says, **Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.** Lord Jesus provided the way of escaping the standard; the Law of Moses. ³⁰ Colossians, Chapter 2, verses 13 and 14 states, **When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.**

Not only did he provide the way of escape, He lightens the load for those of you who would pick up that cross! ³² Lord Jesus said, **If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.** ²² ³³ **For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.** ²³ ³⁴

When you reject what the Lord did for you, you are automatically going back to the old standard; trying to be good enough on your own steam to please God. You are rejecting the grace, the free gift, God has provided for you! The rock God provided to save you, Lord Jesus, becomes a stumbling stone ²⁴ for you, a trap ²⁵ to you. ³⁵ Verse 4 says that **Christ is the end of the Law.** But He is only the end of the Law for you if you trust in Him! ³⁶

²² Matthew 16:24.

²³ Matthew 11:30.

²⁴ v33.

²⁵ Isaiah 8:14 and 28:16.

It's interesting to know, in this regard, that the symbol for "righteousness" in Chinese is the symbol of a lamb and the symbol for "I" or "Me"!

手 + 我 = 義

III. Because You May Have Plenty of Steam

But No Direction – 10:1-2 [37](#)

The final reason why you can't have a relationship with God on your own terms is because you may have plenty of steam but no direction!

Verses 1 and 2 read, **Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. For I can testify about them that they are**

zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. ³⁸

You could be the fastest person on the track team but never win a race if you're running in the wrong direction. It's like the time in the Special Olympics when the player on the soccer team got so excited about getting the ball that he kicked it into the wrong goal. It may take a lot of effort to do that but you don't get the points! ³⁹

Before Christ God's will was not fully revealed. Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes. ²⁶ ⁴⁰

The Old Testament, three quarters of our Bible, didn't present the whole story. You need the New Testament, the last quarter, to fully understand God's plan! ⁴¹

²⁶ Romans 10:3-4.

Here is the perfect example of the **Work-Your-Way-To-Heaven-On-Your-Own-Efforts Method**. ⁴² The Jewish faith today accepts the Old Testament, but rejects the New Testament. It still believes that the way to life and to see God is to continue obeying the Law of Moses. ⁴³

When Lord Jesus died on the cross, the old standard, the Law of Moses, was fulfilled ²⁷ so that the New Testament, salvation by God's grace, could come into affect! ⁴⁴

How is your way of getting to heaven? This is important because only one way will work! Lord Jesus said, **I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me!** ²⁸

<http://biblelifemessages.org/>

²⁷ Colossians 2:13-14.

²⁸ John 14:6.