

Romans: The Crown Jewel of Salvation

51- “Your Religious Activity is Still Empty”

Romans 9:30 – 10:4

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Why do so many reject the free offer of salvation in Christ Jesus? Why isn't this Good News attractive to more people than it is?

Romans 9:30 – 10:4

I. You Just Might Not Think You *Need* to be Saved

Until you've thrown yourself willingly, humbly, and completely into the category of 'sinner,' there's no hope for you because you won't be interested in the remedy of the Gospel.

II. You Might Already Be Caught Up In a Flurry of Religious Activities

That's what kept the Jews from seeing their great need for a Savior! They were already so busy doing religious things that they missed God when He arrived in flesh!

Romans 10:2 “For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God”

- Is that a good thing to have a zeal for God?

Yes! But it can still be a dangerous place to be in your life because zeal for God can create a lot of heat and activity that could actually keep you from submitting to the knowledge of God and who He really is.

You could be zealous and sincerely wrong about who God really is!

Paul acknowledges that in their zealousness they had lost God in a forest of religious activities.

- Do you know God?
- Or are you just cranking your way through a list of religious activities, traditions, and things I should DO and NOT do?

We're not talking about religion. We're talking about eternal life. Whenever you talk about eternal life you're talking about knowing God through His Son – Jesus Christ!

John 17:1-4 “Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.”

We reach God through Jesus Christ- not through any of our good works or zealous activities!

2 Cor. 4:3-6 “But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus’ sake. For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

The Jews that fought with Jesus weren’t living like there’s NO God but they still didn’t KNOW God. They were misdirected like so many millions of others around the globe that think somehow their religious fervor and service is going win them favor with God.

But it’s a lie that gets in the way of someone embracing the free offer of the Gospel – in Jesus Christ!

- What about you? Has there ever been a time in your life that you moved from RELIGION to RELATIONSHIP?

That was the apostle Paul’s own testimony! He knew what it meant to be zealous for God, but still not know God. Until Paul met Christ on the road to Damascus, his zeal for God was consumed with the Law and the traditions but he was still lost in a flurry of religious activities.

Galatians 1:14-16 “And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood.”

Paul describes his experience in a way that humbles us because it makes much of God because it has God on the move as the active and primary change agent while we are simply recipients of God’s good gift!

Romans 5: 17 “For if by the one man’s offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.”

You only get eternal life through the One – Jesus Christ. There’s no other way.

If the heart and soul of what you’re trusting in to be made right with God doesn’t have Jesus at the center, Jesus on the edges, and Jesus from start to finish then you are trusting in a lie no matter how zealous you are!

Here’s what amazed Paul- the casual Gentile, who’s not necessarily looking for God, finds God, while the religious fanatic with all his zeal misses God in the midst of heat and activity that all looks so religious.

Paul said the reason the Jews missed it was because they were trying to establish their own righteousness and bring it to God.

If you’re consumed and with working on your OWN righteousness, your hands aren’t empty and your eyes are focused on all the wrong places- namely yourself! It’s all about what you’re doing!

You miss the free gift of God – which is the righteousness of Christ given to you by grace alone, through faith alone, plus nothing.

Romans 9:30-33 “What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. As it is written: ‘Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, and whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.’”

Righteousness is found in God’s Son, Jesus Christ! That can be a hard pill to swallow because we have to swallow our pride and admit that all our religious activities that we thought were putting us ahead are actually empty, worthless, and don’t impress God.

How do you get the righteousness of God?

Romans 3:21-22 “But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed... even the righteousness of God which is **through faith** in Jesus Christ to all and on all who believe...”

If you haven’t experienced the righteousness of Christ being applied to your account before God so He sees you as clean, forgiven, and justified, then look to Christ today. Place your hope completely in Him!