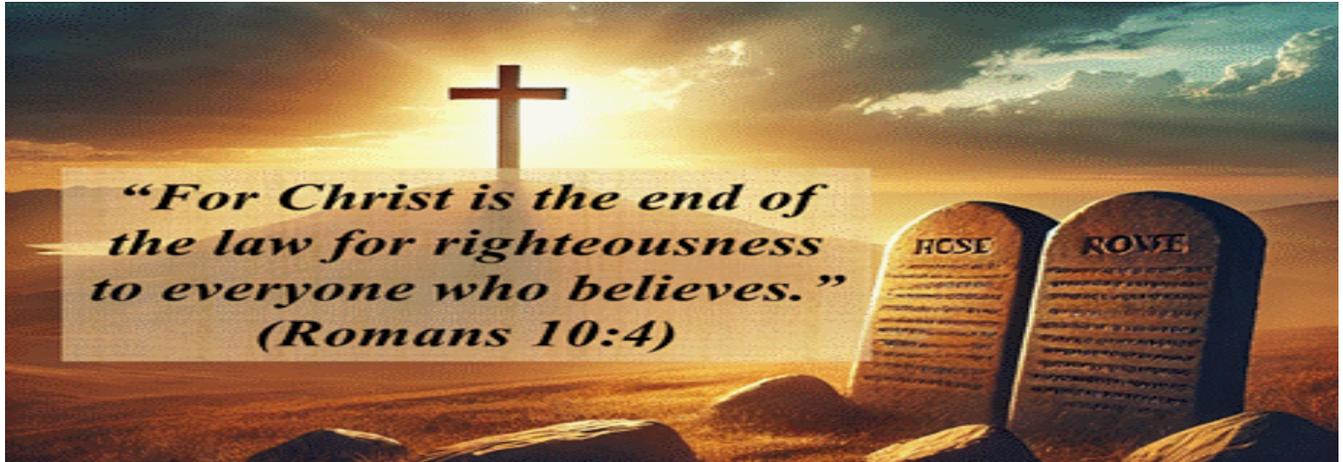


# Ministry of Grace Church

## Romans 10:1-10 – Christ is the End of the Law Sermon Notes



### Introduction

In the previous chapter, the Apostle Paul expressed his great concern for his brothers in the flesh, the nation of Israel. He was troubled by the fact that so many of them were not following the way of salvation. Here's how he expressed it in the opening verses of that chapter:

I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brothers, my kinsmen according to the flesh, (Romans 9:1-3)

Paul had been accused by some of his countrymen of deserting his Jewish upbringing in favor of this new sect of Judaism called Christianity. The early church referred to it as "The Way." He starts off the current chapter with a declaration that not only has he not turned against His Jewish brothers, but that he has a strong desire for them to be saved. He then declares that this salvation must be received through faith, not through works.

Paul loved his fellow Jews and was deeply grieved by the fact that they rejected Jesus as their Messiah, the One for whom they had been waiting for centuries. He went on to show that God has chosen some of them for salvation but not others. He also showed that God has called some of the Gentiles to salvation over his Jewish kinsmen.

But - you may ask, if Paul truly believed that God is the one who chooses who will be saved, why was he so intent on evangelizing the Jews, calling on them to accept Jesus as the Messiah? The answer is in the Great Commission. All Christians are commanded to preach the gospel. We don't know who God has chosen, but whoever He has chosen must believe God's promise in order to be saved.

### Romans 10:1-4

**Brothers, 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 according to knowledge. For not knowing about the righteousness of God 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.**

After praying for his fellow Jews, Paul tells us, “For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God.” You see, a lot of the Jews of Paul’s day showed outward signs of seeking God. Paul’s witness was driven by the fact that not only had he been that way himself, but he had also personally known many devout Jews who were earnestly seeking after God and His righteousness. Unfortunately, this zeal was focused on their own personal attempt to reach God by deeds of righteousness, instead of humbling themselves before God to receive righteousness that only comes by faith.

As part of his calling from God, Paul declared the facts of salvation through faith in the Messiah, Jesus Christ. He wants his countrymen to have knowledge of their Savior so that they might accept the truth and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. He knows that many of them are ignorant of the truth. And - because of that ignorance, even though they were very passionate about God and His righteousness, they were going about it all wrong. You see - the Israelites did not understand God’s righteousness or the fact that we, mortals, cannot attain such righteousness because we are spiritually flawed by our sin nature.

Not only did they not understand God’s righteousness, the Jews tried to establish their own form of righteousness based on what the Law told them to do. They firmly, even zealously, believed that by keeping the whole Law they could become righteous in God’s eyes. But, as Paul will tell us in the next few verses, there is only one person who can completely fulfill the Law and that person is Jesus Christ. The reason that Christ was able to keep the whole Law without sinning is twofold; first of all, he doesn’t have a sin nature and secondly, because He is God, He can’t sin.

Finally, and listen very carefully to this, Paul tells us here that the Israelites could not obtain the righteousness of God because they had not submitted themselves to God’s righteousness. These Israelites who had a great zeal for God were trying to obtain that righteousness by their own means instead of humbling themselves before God and allowing Him to grant His righteousness to them.

There are many professed Christians today who are still trying to earn righteousness when what they need to do is to submit themselves to God. Instead of working hard to obtain righteousness we need to submit to Him, and to His will, and receive His righteousness by grace through faith.

The Law and the Prophets prescribed what was required for anyone to satisfy God’s righteousness. However, the Law is much more than just the Ten Commandments. Anyone who has read through the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy is aware of all the ceremonial practices that the Jews were required to perform in addition to all the legal practices. Included in these was the annual Passover sacrifice of the Pascal Lamb whose blood covered over the sins of the people.

If you compare the Passover rituals to what Jesus Christ went through, you will see that He perfectly fulfilled what the Law required of the Pascal Lamb. In fact, the practices prescribed in the Old Testament were an image, a foreshadowing, of what the real Sacrificial Lamb would do for the people. But that’s not all. You see, Jesus completely fulfilled all the requirements of the Law. Not only did He live without sin, but He offered His blood as the payment for all of our sins. Recorded in [Matthew 5:17](#) we find what Jesus Himself said in the Sermon on the Mount:

“Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill.

Now, Paul tells us in the current passage that **Christ is the end of the law**. The word translated “end” is *telos* which means “the design or object of something.” Christ fulfilled this meaning of the word because He is what the Law had in view as the object when it was first given. So, we see

that not only was the death of Christ foreseen and foreshadowed by the Law, but His death was the full satisfaction of it in every way.

### **Romans 10:5-7**

**For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of law: “The man who does these things shall live by them.” But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way: “Do not say in your heart, ‘who will go up into heaven?’ (that is, to bring Christ down), or ‘Who will go down into the abyss?’ (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).”**

Paul begins this section by quoting from **Leviticus 18:5** which says, So you shall keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does them, he shall live by them; I am Yahweh. Paul Also quoted this same passage in his letter to the Galatians who had tried to combine works of the Law with faith.

His point is that the zealous Israelites who went about to establish their own righteousness by keeping all of the Law, were trying to fulfill the command of God who declared that the person who has kept all the commandments of the Law throughout his or her life will live in them. The problem is, as Paul told us earlier in this letter, that no one can keep the whole Law. Remember back in **Romans 3:23**, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. But, as Paul told the Galatian Christians, it's not sufficient to keep most of the Law most of the time.

So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer. For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse, for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the Law, to do them.” Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident, for “The righteous shall live by faith.” However, the Law is not of faith; rather, “He who does them shall live by them.” (**Galatians 3:9-12**)

In order to receive future life (that is, eternal life) from the Law, one would have to keep the entire Law for his entire life, which is not possible for any man with a sin nature. But since the only man to ever live without a sin nature is Jesus Christ (as Paul explained earlier), it is impossible for any of the rest of us to fulfill the entire Law.

Therefore, no one can attain the righteousness of God by keeping the Law. And no one can get saved by following any methodology of any church, or by going through any kind of classes taught by a church, or by partaking of any sacraments of any church. You see, salvation (and God's imputed righteousness) can only come through faith, that is, believing in the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross to pay for our sins. Salvation comes from believing in the perfect, sinless, Lamb of God who was slain for us imperfect, sinful, human beings.

Now, since Paul is contrasting the righteousness which comes from obeying the Law with the righteousness which is a result of faith, he makes a statement about the righteousness of faith. This is roughly taken from the book of Deuteronomy, which says.

For this commandment which I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it far from you. It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will go up to heaven for us and get it for us and make us hear it, that we may do it?’ Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will cross the sea for us and get it for us and make us hear it, that we may do it?’ (**Deuteronomy 30:11-13**)

In this passage, Moses had just warned the Israelites what will happen to them if they turn from Jehovah and serve other gods. He then tells them that if they turn back to Jehovah, even while they are in the land of their captivity, He will once again bless them. The message Moses is giving is not one of “obedience produces life and disobedience produces death,” it is a message of

“faithfulness produces life, leading to works of obedience and unfaithfulness produces death (spiritual), leading to works of disobedience.” As Moses continues in **Deuteronomy 30:15**, he says: **See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and calamity.** He does not say “prosperity and life” because prosperity does not produce life, he says “life and prosperity” because only spiritual life produces true prosperity.

The Israelites were confused. As we have said before, they thought that obedience would produce righteousness. Moses, on the other hand, taught that only faith produces righteousness. In today’s verse, Paul says that works, even a work as great as ascending into heaven to bring Christ’s righteousness down to us, doesn’t produce righteousness.

This part of Paul’s reference to the Old Testament is not quite the same as what is contained in Deuteronomy (either in the Hebrew version or the Septuagint), but the sense of it is the same. Moses referred to going to the region beyond the sea. In the time when Moses made this statement, sea travel was very difficult, and to travel to the region beyond the sea was a nearly impossible task. Also, the ancients believed that the ocean was bottomless. Moses was telling the Israelites that the commandment (that which could bring righteousness) was not far away from them, and it did not require a huge effort to obtain it. He was referring to faith, not a task to be done.

However, instead of talking about going to the region beyond the sea. Paul talks about going down to the abyss. What he is saying about the righteousness of faith is essentially the same thing; it is not far away and it does not require huge effort to obtain it. However, since sea travel in Paul’s day was far easier than in Moses’ day, a direct quotation of Moses would not carry the impact that it did in Moses’ day. Instead, Paul uses the concept of descending into the abyss. Paul’s statement is that we don’t have to do some huge, gigantic, impossible task in order to obtain righteousness. The monumental task of bringing Christ up again from the dead could not produce righteousness. In fact, it’s just the other way around, only the righteousness of God in Christ could raise Him from the dead.

It is interesting to note that the two primary attacks against our faith today are in regard to these two aspects of Christ. Attackers say that He is not God (He did not come down from heaven) and they say that He is not alive today (He has not been raised from the dead). We can’t prove these two facts, we can only accept them by faith, the faith which produces righteousness.

### **Romans 10:8-10**

**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; for with the heart a person believes, leading to righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, leading to salvation.**

Paul now continues with his quotation from **Deuteronomy 30:14**, the end of which says: **But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.** The meaning is that the doctrine was already so familiar, and so well understood, that it was actually in their mouth, that is, their language, their common conversation. Paul is saying that the righteousness of faith, which comes by the Word of Faith (the gospel), is something that the Jews had been talking about and learning about ever since Moses delivered the Law. In fact, this righteousness of faith has been spoken of among the Jews ever since Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him as righteousness. This righteousness comes from believing in the Messiah. The problem with most of the Jews, however, is that they were so hung-up on obeying the Law that they totally missed the

Messiah. They were trying to obtain the righteousness by works, instead by the righteousness of faith.

The Word of Faith which Paul has been proclaiming is that the Messiah (the Christ) has come and has paid the price of salvation by fulfilling the Law and then offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for our sins. He is the Paschal Lamb that the Jews commemorated every year. This Paschal Lamb is the Jewish Messiah; He is the Christ, the anointed Son of God. All we have to do is to believe this gospel (good news) and openly declare that we believe. That's how we obtain this righteousness of faith, and in the next verse Paul will state this very plainly and succinctly.

This verse and the next comprise another of the pinnacles of the book of Romans. This may, in fact, be the highest of the peaks. Paul proclaims here how the righteousness of faith is obtained. Remember, he has told us that all of us are sinners. **for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (Romans 3:23)** And that the result of sin is death, that is, separation from God. **For the wages of sin is death, but the gracious gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)** Now, Paul tells us that the way to gain the righteousness of God, that is, the way to be saved from the death that sin has caused, is to confess and believe.

Putting this all together, we see that Paul is telling us that we need to agree with God that Jesus is the supreme authority over us. That is, He is our Lord, which requires submission on our part. We also need to believe that God has raised Jesus from the dead, which is proof that He is the sinless Son of God, and that His death was sufficient payment for our sins. If we do these things Paul says that we will be saved.

If we do not do both of these things, that is, if we do not submit to Jesus' supreme authority or if we don't believe that He is risen from the dead, then we will not be saved. All those people who believe that Jesus was a good man, perhaps even a prophet but who is now dead, will not be saved. Those who believe that Jesus was raised from the dead but do not believe that He is lord, will not be saved.

Therefore, the things required for salvation are belief and confession. It's as simple as that, and yet not so simple, for I fear that there are many who profess to be saved who really aren't. They may claim to be Christians, they may even believe themselves to be Christians, but they really aren't. Let's see why.

Paul says here that **"with the mouth he confesses, leading to salvation."** In the previous verse he told us what it is we must believe: **"believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead"** The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the proof that He is more than mere man. It is proof that He is God in the flesh. Implied in the belief in His resurrection is the belief that He died on the cross to pay the penalty for your sins and mine, for the sins of all of mankind. Also implied is the recognition that we are sinners and in need of salvation. Why is all this true? Because if He was resurrected from the dead, then He is God and everything that He said is true and, therefore, everything that is written in the Bible is true.

But what does Paul mean by believing with the heart? This means more than mere head knowledge. It implies more than an act of understanding. It takes in the consent of the will, an inward, hearty, sincere, and strong consent. Notice that I said consent of **the will**. This belief requires submission of our will to His. If we truly believe that Jesus is God, then we must recognize that we are the creatures whom He created and He is far above us in power, intellect, holiness, majesty, and glory. We are His subjects, not the other way around. We are here to do His will. He is not here to do ours. If we have not subjected our will to His, then we don't really believe that He is God.

When we believe, according to what Paul told us in the earlier portion of this letter, God freely grants to us the righteousness of Christ. That is, in God's record book we are recorded as being forever without sin! But the second half of this verse says that **“with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”** Does this mean that if you believe with your heart but don't confess with your mouth, you won't be saved? Let's think about this. If you truly believe with the heart, then a verbal confession is the natural outcome. When we first get saved, we want to tell others, especially other Christians. None of us who has any kind of exciting news ever wants to keep it to ourselves. We want to tell others! This is the case when we get saved, we want to confess it to someone; we want to tell others that we have been born again.

### **So What?**

We are told to hate sin but to love sinners. We are told to proclaim the good news of God's promise of salvation through the blood of Christ. We do not save sinners, only God can do that. We are to pray for sinners and proclaim the gospel. And - we are to be a witness for God by the way we live our lives. Are you fulfilling the Great Commission?

There are many who call themselves Christian today who are very passionate about God. But instead of seeking God through faith, they are trying to earn His favor. Some would call them devout, but their devotion is to their church or to living up to some set of standards. Some of them even believe that they can reach a point of sanctification in which they no longer sin. That, however, is a works-based religion; it is not walking by faith.

Being zealous is a good thing. Being devoted to a good cause or to a church is wonderful. But it's not the way of salvation. Salvation only comes through faith in the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. Only through living by faith can we please the One who is our Heavenly Father. And we can only live by faith if we have knowledge of the truth. That's why it is so important that we read and study the Bible!

Are you still trying to prove to God how “good” and righteous you are? Are you still trying to obtain your own righteousness by obeying all the rules and ordinances of the Bible? Or are you humbled before the hand of Almighty God and completely submitted to His will?

Paul tells us that the righteousness of God is a reality only for those who believe in the sacrificial death of Jesus as the Lamb of God. He says that this righteousness is applied to everyone who believes God's promises. No one who believes in Christ will be left out. However, for those who don't believe in Christ, righteousness cannot be achieved no matter how hard they try and no matter how zealous and sincere they are. They can't achieve it by works and they are still responsible for their own sins. They will stand before God condemned instead of forgiven! How will you stand before God?

The Apostle Paul tends to hammer on a subject from every possible angle until there is absolutely no wiggle room for others to argue against him. That's what he has been doing with regard to righteousness. We can't earn it, we can only receive it by faith. We can't satisfy God's righteousness by obeying the Law or all the rules of any church. His righteousness is only granted by faith to those of us who know we don't deserve it.

Jesus Christ is God in the flesh. He is 100% God and He is 100% man. As such, he completely satisfied God's law of righteousness and then voluntarily gave his life for us, proving His righteousness by rising from the dead. Amen!

Let's pray