

Romans 10

By: Charles Stanley

From: On the Epistle to the Romans

The apostle here pauses a little. It is the pressure of his heart's love. "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved." They had a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. He was greatly distressed at the troublers, who sought to pervert the Galatians; yes, even longed that they would cut themselves off. But how he grieved over the mass of deceived Jews. Are we so grieved for the mass around us? Can we say our heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they might be saved?

Verse 3: "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." You will remember the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel. (See Rom. 1:17; 3:21-25.) Thus the Jews who rejected the gospel, of necessity remained in ignorance of that righteousness. And thus it is at this day, all who refuse the revelation, that God is just and yet the Justifier of the ungodly, must, if at all anxious to be saved, seek to establish their own righteousness; and thus refuse to submit to the fact that God is righteous in justifying freely, through the redemption there is in Christ Jesus.

The Father's meeting of the prodigal in Luke 15, will illustrate this subject. The prodigal, like the poor Gentile, had come to himself. The whole parable is most striking: the shepherd had come to seek the lost sheep, yes, He has, as we know, died for it. The Holy Spirit has been sent down from heaven and seeks the lost. And now the father has his full joy in receiving the lost son; he, the father, came to meet him.

Deep exercise of conscience had taken place in the prodigal. A sense that there was plenty in the father's house, and a readiness to confess his sin, this always marks the Spirit's work. But as yet he was ignorant of the best robe. He hoped to be a servant, like every human heart, but totally ignorant of all that was in store. He

had his rags, his guilt, his shame. He owned all this to his father. Had he a robe for the father? He had nothing but rags. Did the father tell him he must make a robe, a garment to fit him for his house? No. The father had a robe for him. Oh, look at the father, "But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him."

This is how God meets the repentant sinner in his rags, without a robe. The father said: "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet." Thus joy fills the heart of God to receive the lost sinner. Not so the elder brother, he prefers to work out a righteousness of his own. What a contrast! Sad and fatal mistake! The prodigal had no robe for the father. He had nothing but rags and sin. The Father had the best robe, the righteousness of God for the prodigal. Yes, and the ring for his hand, everlasting love: and the walk provided for, shoes for his feet. All things new and all of God.

Now Israel, like the elder brother, would not have this compassion, and righteousness of God. Indeed they were ignorant of it. "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." They had followed after the law of righteousness; they had tried to keep the law so as to be righteous. They had tried to make a robe to bring to God; but were ignorant of the best robe that God had to give to them. Is this your case, reader? Are you trying to make out, to work out a righteousness, to bring to God? Do you say, Must I not try to keep the law so as to be good, and fit for the presence of God? Do you not see your mistake? Are you not trying to bring the robe to God? What then is the best robe?

Verse 4: "For Christ is the end of the law, for righteousness to everyone that believeth." Yes, Christ is the best robe — the end of all the requirements, and all the sacrificial types of the law. God has made Him to be unto us righteousness. We need no other, to go into the presence of God our Father. Practical

righteousness before men is another question, but not the subject here. “Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth these things shall live by them.” But the prodigal had not done these things. And we have not done these things: we are guilty and have no righteousness to bring to God. But believing God, He can and does reckon us righteous; and that by a work DONE, not something which has to be done. Christ has not to come down from heaven to die on the cross. He has once been down here and died for our sins. He has not to be raised from the dead, all is done, it is finished.

Just as the father met the prodigal, the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” This was just what Israel would not do. They would not confess that God had made that same Jesus, whom they had rejected and crucified, both Lord and Christ. They would cling to the law for righteousness, and they would not in their hearts believe on Christ as their righteousness before God. How many are doing the same to this day! They will seek to be righteous, but never attain to it. They never know the righteousness of God in justifying them the moment they believe.

Verse 11: Now the apostle quotes, their own scripture in proof. “For the scripture saith, WHOSOEVER believeth on Him shall not be ashamed.” This proves there must be a time when the no difference doctrine should be in force. “For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek (or Gentile); for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Joel 2:32). What a blessed fact is this: all, whether Jew or Gentile, that really come to the Lord, calling on Him, are as sure of a welcome, as was the prodigal. Which of these do you prefer, reader? If even it were possible; would you prefer that you had never sinned, and that you had wrought a righteousness fit to bring unto God, thus bringing a robe to God; or, owning all that you

are, and all you have done, and now as a hell-deserving sinner, confessing with your mouth, and believing with your heart the Lord Jesus, your ever subsisting righteousness before God? We cannot abhor ourselves too much; but oh, that deep compassion to meet us just as we are, and clothe us with the best robe, the ring, and shoes.

And how is this righteousness of God made known? Read verses 14-15 for the answer. By hearing the word, the sent gospel of peace. What glad tidings! Those who sought righteousness by law hated those good tidings and the preachers of the gospel. It is exactly so to this day, by all who say they are Jews and are not. Is it not a most astounding fact that man should hate and reject his greatest good, the gospel of peace? He will try or hope to try some day to make his own peace with God. But he will not have the peace made by the blood of Jesus; the peace preached to them that are afar off, and them that are nigh. Yes, peace proclaimed to all. “But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah saith, Lord, who hath believed our report.” The word of the gospel was preached to all Israel: but they would not believe it. It is preached now, perhaps as it never was before, to all Christendom; but they will not believe it. We shall see the final result of all this in the next chapter.

God has His own, in spite of all man’s perverseness, whether Jews or Gentiles, as Isaiah boldly said, “I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not, after me.” Thus has the apostle proved the two things from their own Old Testament scriptures; no difference, and the sovereignty of God. Whosoever, Jew or Greek, shall call upon the Lord shall be saved — and oh, blessed soul-sustaining truth, He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy.

Was Israel then lost because God was not willing to save them? “But to Israel, He saith, All day long I have stretched forth My hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.” They would not come unto Him: they refused the best robe, the ring, the shoes. May this not be the same with the readers of these lines. He

that cometh unto Him shall in no wise be cast out.

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