



Finer Grounds Bible Study

Romans

Lesson 16: Romans 10:1-21

As we come to chapter 10, Paul is continuing the thought he began in chapter nine. In fact, many scholars propose that 9:30-33 should have been included in chapter 10, and that this is in fact an example of a bad chapter break. Remember that in 9:2 Paul shared with us his inner turmoil and anguish over his Jewish kinsmen rejecting the gospel. He will continue with that thought as we approach our next section.

Additionally, Romans 10 is used frequently for false teaching. It is important to keep in mind the recent context (chapter 9) as well as Paul's larger context when we approach the text. For instance, Paul spent the majority of chapter six describing the purpose and importance of baptism, and chapter nine establishing the context of explaining how the Jews and Gentiles each fit into God's plan. The greater context of a passage must be kept in mind to fully understand God's word and expectations of us.

Before you begin, read Romans 10:1-21 and mark any key words or phrases.

Read Romans 10:1-2

Who is the, "them," that Paul is referring to?

How do we know that the desire of Paul's heart is for these to be saved?

Many of the Jews have rejected Christ and have rejected the new covenant. Not only that, but we have numerous New Testament accounts of these Judaizers following Paul around to undermine the gospel. Yet what is his desire?

Paul wants these individuals to be saved because they are zealous for God. If they are zealous for God, what's the problem?

There is a saying, "When you win an argument you lose a soul." Sisters, I'm afraid that for too long the church has been focused on winning arguments rather than winning souls. These individuals were zealous, they were just zealously wrong. This sounds like many of our loved ones in denominations. When it comes to our areas of difference, particularly regarding salvation, our conversations can't be about winning an argument or a debate, our priority must be that person's soul. Paul is a tremendous example of this, as he made his love for the Israelites clearly known, even as he pointed out their error.

I believe one reason we struggle to approach those we care about in love is that we become defensive. And I believe that oftentimes we become defensive because when our beliefs are challenged, we are unprepared to explain why we believe what we believe (1 Peter 3:15.)



Finer Grounds Bible Study

Do you agree or disagree that this is a problem, and why?

What is Paul's heart's desire and prayer? Is ours the same?

What was wrong with their zeal?

Are there areas that your zeal is not based on your own knowledge and Bible study, but rather what you have been taught by others? If so, make a list of these areas and begin to study out your convictions (Romans 14:23, 2 Timothy 2:15).

Read Romans 10:3-4

Some argue that the meaning of the word, "ignorant," in this text could refer to being willfully ignorant. Paul had made the message of the gospel available, yet they had chosen to ignore it in favor of establishing their own righteousness (Pollard 355). This understanding fits with Paul's statement that they did not submit to God.

While it is easy to criticize them harshly for this, I do believe that we at times struggle with the same thing. Speaking for myself, if I am not very conscious and intentional it is easy to simply skip over difficult texts, rather than putting forth the time and effort to understand what God has said. It is also easy to justify or excuse away passages

that are difficult or that teach things that would require painful change in ourselves or a loved one. We must remember that just as this attitude jeopardized the souls of the Jews, this attitude will jeopardize our souls as well.

As we continue in the text, verse four is absolutely pivotal to the Christian faith, "For Christ is the end of the law of righteousness to everyone who believes." Christ is the end; he has fulfilled all that was necessary for our reconciliation with God. He is the way, the *only* way to righteousness. Who for? Those who believe. But what does it mean to believe? Scripturally speaking, belief and obedience cannot be separated. If I believe that a chair will hold me up, yet refuse to sit in that chair, would anyone think I really trusted it? The same goes for Jesus. If we say that we believe in him yet are unwilling to do what he asks of us, that is not true belief.

When you approach Scripture do you do so intentionally with an open mind and an open heart?

What were the Jews ignorant of?

What is the righteousness of God?

How do you demonstrate your belief in Christ on a daily basis?



Finer Grounds Bible Study

Read Romans 10:5-7

This is the sixth time we have seen the word, “for,” in this chapter. Paul is using this conjunction to tie everything he has been saying together, and to emphasize the connection between belief, faith and righteousness. He is quoting Leviticus 18:5 which states, “You shall therefore keep my statutes and my rules; if a person does them, he shall live by them: I am the Lord.” The problem is that the Jews demonstrated over and over again that it was impossible for man to keep all of the statutes and laws, therefore it was impossible for them to be made righteous by the law.

In verses 6-7 Paul is referencing Deuteronomy 30:12-14. In his earnestness for the Jew’s to come to Christ, Paul is reminding them and his Gentile readers that Jesus and His word are right in front of us. We don’t have to search for Truth (John 1:1), the Truth has already come to us. God isn’t harsh or unfair to expect us to live in obedience to Him, He hasn’t hidden his laws or expectations to make it difficult or trip us up, but rather he has ensured that His word is “near us.”

How does Paul compare and contrast a righteousness based on the law and a righteousness based on faith?

Read Romans 10:8-13

While this is a larger section than we normally approach at once, it is important to keep all of Paul’s thoughts in context.

Verse 8 - Paul reminds them that they already have access to the knowledge they need, because

it is what the apostles have been proclaiming from the beginning.

Verses 9-10 - The word is near your mouth, “because if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” Keeping in context, Paul is writing this to those who do not want to accept Jesus, and who are trying to earn their salvation with works. These verses are often used to teach the idea of the “sinner’s prayer,” however there are multiple things we need to consider.

Most people acknowledge that repentance is also necessary for salvation, yet repentance is not mentioned in this text. This means that this verse is not a “one-stop shop” for salvation. Are belief and confession necessary for salvation? Absolutely! But so are repentance (Acts 2:38), baptism (1 Peter 3:21, Romans 6:1-11) and faithful living (Romans 6:12-14). In addition to: making disciples (Matthew 28:18-20) and continuing to grow (Hebrews 6:1). Scripture must be taken in its entirety. When it comes to our salvation it is not a matter of, “is it faith *or* baptism,” but rather both.

Verses 9-10 are written in a chiasmatic literary structure (Pollard 362):

A1 - “if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord”

B1 - “and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved”

B2 - “for with the heart one believes and is justified”

A2 - “and with the mouth one confesses and is saved”



Finer Grounds Bible Study

With a chiasm, the emphasis is on the information in the middle, which in this case is the condition of our heart before God. This fits with the greater context of Paul's teachings, because the Jews were content to have a works-based faith in which their heart was far from their God (Matthew 15:9).

Verse 11 - Those who truly believe will not be put to shame.

Verse 12 - Paul once again points out that he is still talking about the relationship between the Jews and the Gentiles. He is making it clear that both have an equal share in the Kingdom of Heaven if they are willing to call on him (Acts 22:16).

Verse 13 - If we call on the name of the Lord we will be saved. Interestingly, Acts 22:16 tells us what calling on the name of the Lord looks like, and it is not what is frequently described. "And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name." The doctrine of calling on the name of the Lord is absolutely biblical; however, this text tells us that this is actually done through the act of baptism.

Do we have an "either or," or "both and" approach to Scripture when it comes to salvation?

Many people today speak of the "sinner's prayer" or "prayer of salvation." Is this prayer found in Scripture?

What is "the word" that Paul is referring to in this text?

How many times do we see the word "belief" in this text? The world typically defines "belief" as a mental acknowledgement or statement of fact. What does our study in Romans thus far teach us about the meaning of biblical belief, and how it should manifest?

How many aspects of our faith are tied to being saved in this passage? Can we skip any of these steps and be saved? How does this tie to Mark 16:15-16 and 1 Peter 3:21?

Read Romans 10:14-16

Paul breaks our calling as Christians down so nicely here:

- You can't call on someone you don't believe in
- You can't believe in someone you've never heard of
- You can't hear without someone preaching
- People can't preach unless they are sent

How beautiful are those who preach the good news! Why? Because without the preaching no souls will be saved! Sisters, those beautiful feet should be ours! Acts 8:4 tells us of when the first century Christians were scattered due to the persecution facing the church, "Now those who were scattered when about preaching the word."



Finer Grounds Bible Study

This could be literally translated, “as they were going.” Everywhere they went, even though they were fleeing for their lives, they spread the gospel.

If the cloud of witnesses who has gone before us (Hebrews 11) were willing to risk their lives to share the gospel as they went about their lives, why are we not more evangelistic?

What does verse 16 teach us about obedience and belief?

What does it mean to, “obey the gospel,” as Paul states in verse 16? (Refer back to chapter 6.)

Read Romans 10:17

Verse 17 tells us exactly where faith comes from, the word of Christ! The truth is that we cannot have faith unless that faith is founded on Scripture. My husband once asked the question, “If I could go in and erase all of the biblical knowledge you have gained from other people: every sermon, Bible class, devotional, lectureship lesson, what would be left?” What a sobering question. While we can and should learn from each other (Colossians 3:16), everything we learn from others is pre-chewed food. We would not want that to go into our physical bodies, and we must be careful using pre-chewed food as our spiritual sustenance. If we want to know Christ, we must spend time in his word.

Read Romans 10:18-21

This section is why Paul’s heart is breaking for his kinsmen. They have heard. They have been taught. They even understood what they had been taught. Yet they continue to reject the truth.

Verse 21 is a heart-wrenching visual of our Savior standing with hands outstretched to a people who continuously ignore and reject him. His people. Those he physically descended from and spent generations preparing for his arrival. Those who killed him.

But sisters that describes us also. God has preserved his word for us perfectly throughout the millennia. He has given us everything possible to believe in him, and to know how to call on his name according to Scripture. The question that naturally follows is; how have we responded to all he has done for us? Like the Jews who are breaking Paul’s heart, or like the Gentiles who eagerly embraced obedience?

Pollard, Paul PhD. (2018). Truth for Today, Romans an Exegetical Study. Searcy, AR. Resource Publications.