

Eternity Daily Bible Study

Romans 9-16 The Implications of Salvation

Number: 593

Verses: Romans 10:1-4

Topic: A Zeal For God Is Not Enough

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Romans 10:1-4 MKJV *Brothers, truly my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is for it to be saved. (2) For I bear record to them that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. (3) For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. (4) For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness for everyone who believes.*

The Jews are zealous for God, but nevertheless are not saved, because they are trying to "establish their own righteousness", rather than humbly submitting to the righteousness of God.

As we saw earlier God is the one who decides salvation, and who decides who He will adopt into His family. We cannot force our entry into heaven through our own goodness, in fact we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23) and mankind has become so darkened in their mind (Ephesians 2:1-4, 4:18) that unless God is merciful we are all "shut up in unbelief" (Romans 11:32). Thus salvation is impossible through human effort, apart from the mercy of God. As someone once said "The only thing of ourselves that we bring to our salvation is our sin, of which we are forgiven."

The religious system based on the premise that "if you are good enough you will go to Heaven" is called, by Paul, "the law of righteousness". It says that justification, and relationship with God, is dependent on how good we are, on achieving some set level of personal righteousness in conformity to a certain set of rules given by God. Thus many Jews sought to obey the Ten Commandments plus the other 613 laws of Moses set out in the Torah (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy).

This law of righteousness system only brought guilt and condemnation because no one was capable of living up to it, except Jesus, who eventually fulfilled it and brought it to an end on the Cross.

Romans 10:4 *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness for everyone who believes.*

The entire Jewish legal system based on the rules set down by Moses was demolished by the death of Christ, not just the sacrificial system or cultural rules, the whole thing, the whole system of earning salvation through personal merit which no one could achieve:

Romans 7:4-6 MKJV *So, my brothers, you also have become dead to the law by the body of Christ so that you should be married to Another, even to Him raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit to God. (5) For when we were in the flesh, the passions of sin worked in our members through the law to bring forth fruit to death. (6) But now we having been set free from the Law, having died to that in which we were*

held, so that we serve in newness of spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

We are now given our salvation as a free gift and do not have to earn it in any way, through obedience to any set of rules. The "oldness of the letter" - the old system of living by a book of rules, is over and has replaced by "the newness of the Spirit" living by the righteousness of faith, by the work of the Holy Spirit in the inner man.

Romans 6:22-23 MKJV *But now, being made free from sin, and having become slaves to God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end everlasting life. (23) For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

The fact that we no longer have to live by a legal code, does not mean that we can sin freely. The whole purpose of the Holy Spirit's work in the inner man is to make us holy, grace is given not so we can have a free pass to sin more and more, but so we might be strengthened in our inner self so that we might become like Jesus Christ. We are freed from sin so that we might bear fruit to holiness (Romans 6:22 above).

Zeal for religion does not equate to salvation unless you truly accept god's way of righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ. Making up rules that will justify you before God and prove that you are good does not help your case at all - in fact such rules cut you off from grace! Some early Christians in Galatia thought that adding the Jewish ritual of circumcision would make them more like Abraham and more "Jewish" and thus closer to God and to salvation. Sadly it had precisely the opposite effect:

Galatians 5:1-6 MKJV *Stand fast therefore in the liberty with which Christ has made us free, and do not again be held with the yoke of bondage. (2) Behold, I, Paul, say to you that if you are circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. (3) For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do all the Law, (4) **you who are justified by Law are deprived of all effect from Christ; you fell from grace.** (5) For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness out of faith. (6) For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any strength, but faith working through love.*

So we see that "rule-keeping religion" is a serious sin against God!

The attempt to justify ourselves before God on the basis of our own good works and meritorious lifestyle is one way of saying "I don't need help, don't need grace, I will do it myself, I will set aside the grace of God" and thus is a repudiation of Christ's sacrifice on the cross:

Galatians 2:21 MKJV *I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness is through law, then Christ died without cause.*

The "law of righteousness", the system that zealous, sincere good works would win us God's favor and entrance to heaven has been utterly demolished by Christ's work on the cross. Now salvation is a free gift, that is accepted by faith and given by a gracious God.

Ephesians 2:8-9 MKJV *For by grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, (9) not of works, lest anyone should boast.*

The Jews thought they could boast before God, they had the law, the prophets, and the Temple, they lived good clean-living lives, and they were keen and zealous keepers of the rules. But this was precisely the wrong approach! God does not want heaven filled with boastful, strong-willed religious fanatics! He wants Heaven filled with people who are humble, penitent, broken, kind and loving and who receive His free gifts with gratitude and faith!

The problem with rule-keeping is that it puts the self at the center of the process of salvation - "I did this" and "I did that". The personal ego is still intact, and self-achievement and boastfulness is still alive and well. Zeal for God can thus quickly turn into self-preening religious smugness.

Instead we have a new way of being, a 'new and living way' where the rules are put aside in favor of developing a holy, gracious personal walk with God through the inner work of the Holy Spirit.

It is no longer a matter of festivals and Sabbaths, temples and tithes, and of not touching this, or not drinking that.

Colossians 2:20-23 MKJV *(20) If then you died with Christ from the elements of the world, why, as though living in the world, are you subject to its ordinances: (21) touch not, taste not, handle not; (22) which things are all for corruption in the using, according to the commands and doctrines of men? (23) These things indeed have a reputation of wisdom in self-imposed worship and humility, and unsparing severity of the body, but are not of any value for the satisfying of the flesh.*

This is all replaced by righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit!

Romans 14:17 MKJV *for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

Blessings,

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