

Romans 9:30-10:3
May 17, 2015

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

Q: Besides growing our waistlines, what are some things that you like to see grow? [flowers, plants, children, our business, etc]

Q: What do you do to facilitate the growth? [pull weeds, re-sod, water, marketing, classes...]

Transition Q: Do you still want to grow? If yes, what areas of your life are you hoping to grow?

Q: What are you doing intentionally to facilitate that growth?

I want to grow as a writer, so I write and work with a writing coach. I love communicating through writing. I also want to grow as a teacher, so I listen to strong teachers, and I read books that have been game-changers for me to help me be more effective.

Observation (if applicable): As we listened to each other, did you notice that the areas we feel passionate about are the areas that we intentionally invest our time and resources to grow ourselves?

If you're like me, I bet there are other areas in your life that you'd like to grow, but you're just not sure where to begin or what that roadmap even looks like. When the picture is fuzzy, it's just easier to resist trying and do something you really enjoy. But sometimes, all it takes is for someone to come along who gives you an idea for the next step, and all of sudden, you're making forward progress. This happened to me in the area of cooking. I was bemoaning how old it gets to eat out all the time because I don't like to cook, but if I could grow in the area of cooking, I would be encouraged.

That happened! Ro came along, my dear friend, who is a self-acclaimed foodie. And she encouraged me to start with something simple, like a crockpot. You basically go buy the ingredients and you throw things in the pot and let the food cook while you're at work. I can honestly say through only a few mistakes, I have LOVED growing in the area of cooking. You may not call it cooking, but I do. It counts!

Transition: As we read Chapter 10, you are going to discern quickly that this chapter is all about evangelism and Paul's desire to see the Israelites be saved. When you hear the "E" word – "Evangelism," most people get a little uncomfortable with it, for the same reasons I wasn't comfortable cooking. You just need some direction or an idea or two to help you grow in this area. Just as the kitchen was intimidating to me, evangelism tends to be intimidating to others. It is my prayer that you will walk out of this room with a "next step" that is right for where you are in the evangelism arena. I promise you that today's lesson is not going to be, "You should be sharing the gospel with others often." You already know that. This lesson won't be an attempt to guilt you with, "Why aren't you sharing the gospel more?" That approach is not helpful.

Instead, I want to be an encourager to you and propose that **Every Christian can grow to become effective evangelists by observing the PRINCIPLES Paul used to reach his lost audience.** By

the end of today's lesson, I trust that each of you will know what your "next step" might be to facilitate your own growth. As we begin our study, we are looking for PRINCIPLES to incorporate in our own lives that will help us grow to be more effective evangelists. Let's begin.

BOOK (NIV 1984): [Read Romans 9:30-10:13]

V.30:

- What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith;

V.31:

- but Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it.

V.32:

- Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the "stumbling stone."

V.33:

- As it is written: "See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame."

V.1:

- Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved.

V.2:

- For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge.

V.3:

- Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.

Process Observations/Questions:

Q: What are some principles that you see in these verses that could help us be more effective evangelists?

- 9:30-33 **Deal with people's misunderstandings about the gospel** (Faith vs works)
- Q: What was the main misconception? [Jews expected salvation by works, i.e. keep the Law] **If we want to grow to be more effective in evangelism, then we need to embrace objections and misunderstandings and be willing to help them.**
- Q 9:33: How did Paul help the Israelites understand their plight? (quoted Scripture)
- 9:33 **Anytime you can use Scripture to help someone along, do it! The Word is the "sword of the Spirit."** **If you want to grow to be more effective, sprinkle in more verses as you talk with people.**
- Q: Who is the "stone of Zion?" [Christ]
- Explain v.33: (Witmer) The Israelites did not admit their inability to keep the Law perfectly and turn by faith to God for forgiveness. Instead a few of them kept trying to keep the Law by their own efforts. Consequently **they stumbled over the "stumbling Stone."** The Lord Jesus Christ, "the stumbling Stone" (cf. 1 Peter 2:4-8), did not conform to the Jews' expectations, so they rejected Him instead of responding to Him by faith.
- 10:1 **Evangelism starts with the heart that compels us to PRAY for the lost.** **If you're looking for a "next step" to grow in the area of evangelism, make a prayer list of those whom you believe may be spiritually lost.** I have kept one for years and pray for the lost

every Thursday for sure, but then as certain people are brought to mind throughout the week.

- Q 10:1-13 – Paul explains why Israel rejected Jesus. What were some of the reasons?
 - V.1 They didn't feel a need to be saved. [False assurance of salvation]
 - V.2 They were zealous for God, but their zeal was not based on sound knowledge. [We will meet many who are sincere and devout, but sincerity and devotion will never save the soul.]
 - V.3 They were proud and self-righteous. [Israel was ignorant of God's righteousness, not because they had never been told, but because they refused to learn. They would not submit to God. They were proud of their own good works and religious self-righteousness, and would not admit their sins and trust the Saviour.]

LOOK:

Q: After today's study, do you know what your "next step" is to grow in the area of evangelism?

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today's Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Vol. 1, pp. 545–547). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

God's Grace (Rom. 9:30–33)

Paul moved next from divine sovereignty to human responsibility. Note that Paul did not say “elect” and “nonelect,” but rather emphasized faith. Here is a paradox: the Jews sought for righteousness but did not find it, while the Gentiles, who were not searching for it, found it! The reason? Israel tried to be saved by works and not by faith. They rejected “grace righteousness” and tried to please God with “Law righteousness.” The Jews thought that the Gentiles had to *come up* to Israel's level to be saved; when actually the Jews had to *go down* to the level of the Gentiles to be saved. “For there is no difference: for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:22–23). Instead of permitting their religious privileges (Rom. 9:1–5) to lead them to Christ, they used these privileges as a substitute for Christ.

But see the grace of God: Israel's rejection means the Gentiles' salvation! Paul's final quotation was from Isaiah 28:16. It referred to Christ, God's Stone of salvation (see Ps. 118:22). God gave Christ to be a Foundation Stone, but Israel rejected Him and He became a stumbling stone. Instead of “rising” on this Stone, Israel fell (Rom. 11:11); but, as we shall see, their fall made possible the salvation of the Gentiles by the grace of God.

We need to decide what kind of righteousness we are seeking, whether we are depending on good works and character, or trusting Christ alone for salvation. God does not save people on the basis of birth or behavior. He saves them “by grace, through faith” (Eph. 2:8–9). It is not a question of whether or not we are among God's elect. That is a mystery known only to God. He offers us His salvation by faith. The offer is made to “whosoever will” (Rev. 22:17). After we have trusted Christ, then we have the witness and evidence that we are among His elect (Eph. 1:4–14; 1 Thes. 1:1–10). But first we must trust Him and receive by faith His righteousness which alone can guarantee heaven.

No one will deny that there are many mysteries connected with divine sovereignty and human responsibility. Nowhere does God ask us to choose between these two truths, because they both come from God and are a part of God's plan. They do not compete; they cooperate. The fact that we cannot fully understand *how* they work together does not deny the fact that they do. When a man asked Charles Spurgeon how he reconciled divine sovereignty and human responsibility, Spurgeon replied: “I never try to reconcile friends!”

But the main thrust of this chapter is clear: Israel's rejection of Christ does not deny the faithfulness of God. Romans 9 does not negate Romans 8. God is still faithful, righteous, just, and gracious, and He can be depended on to accomplish His purposes and keep His promises.

THE WRONG RIGHTEOUSNESS

Romans 10

The theme of this chapter is Israel's present rejection. Paul moved from divine sovereignty (Rom. 9) to human responsibility. He continued the theme of righteousness introduced at the end of the previous chapter (Rom. 9:30–33) and explains three aspects of Israel's rejection.

The Reasons for Their Rejection (Rom. 10:1–13)

You would think that Israel as a nation would have been eagerly expecting the arrival of their Messiah and been prepared to receive Him. For centuries they had known the Old Testament prophecies and had practiced the Law, which was “a schoolmaster” to lead them to Christ (Gal. 3:24). God had sought to prepare the nation, but when Jesus Christ came, they rejected Him. “He came unto His own [world] and His own [people] received Him not” (John 1:11). To be sure, there was a faithful remnant in the nation that looked for His arrival, such as Simeon and Anna (Luke 2:25–38); but the majority of the people were not ready when He came.

How do we explain this tragic event? Paul gives several reasons why Israel rejected their Messiah.

They did not feel a need for salvation (v. 1). There was a time when Paul would have agreed with his people, for he himself opposed the Gospel and considered Jesus Christ an impostor. Israel considered the Gentiles in need of salvation, but certainly not the Jews. In several of His parables, Jesus pointed out this wrong attitude: the elder brother (Luke 15:11–32) and the Pharisee (Luke 18:9–14) are two examples. Israel would have been happy for political salvation from Rome, but she did not feel she needed spiritual salvation from her own sin.

They were zealous for God (v. 2). Ever since Israel returned to their land from Babylonian Captivity, the nation had been cured of idolatry. In the temple and the local synagogues, only the true God was worshiped and served, and only the true Law was taught. So zealous were the Jews that they even “improved upon God’s Law” and added their own traditions, making them equal to the Law. Paul himself had been zealous for the Law and the traditions (Acts 26:1–11; Gal. 1:13–14).

But their zeal was not based on knowledge; it was heat without light. Sad to say, many religious people today are making the same mistake. They think that their good works and religious deeds will save them, when actually these practices are keeping them from being saved. Certainly many of them are sincere and devout, but sincerity and devotion will never save the soul. “Therefore by the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight” (Rom. 3:20).

They were proud and self-righteous (v. 3). Israel was ignorant of God’s righteousness, not because they had never been told, but because they refused to learn. There is an ignorance that comes from lack of opportunity, but Israel had had many opportunities to be saved. In their case, it was an ignorance that stemmed from willful, stubborn resistance to the truth. They would not submit to God. They were proud of their own good works and religious self-righteousness, and would not admit their sins and trust the Saviour. Paul had made the same mistake before he met the Lord (Phil. 3:1–11).

The godly Presbyterian preacher, Robert Murray McCheyne, was passing out tracts one day and handed one to a well-dressed lady. She gave him a haughty look and said, “Sir, you must not know who I am!”

In his kind way, McCheyne replied, “Madam, there is coming a day of judgment, and on that day it will not make any difference who you are!”

Witmer, J. A. (1985). Romans. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures (Vol. 2, pp. 479–480). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

B. God’s sovereign choice applied (9:30–10:21).

1. ISRAEL'S STUMBLING (9:30–10:4).

9:30–33. Once again Paul asked his familiar rhetorical question, **What then shall we say?** (cf. 4:1; 6:1; 8:31; 9:14) preparatory to his summation of this situation. His identification of **the Gentiles** (lit., “the nations”) as the ones who **have obtained ... a righteousness that is by** (*ek*, “out from”) **faith** is interesting. As Paul stated later, the church included Jewish as well as Gentile believers (11:1–5), but by the time of Paul’s third missionary journey the increasing rejection of the gospel by the Jews and the predominance of Gentiles in the church led the apostle to speak of “the Gentiles” as antithetical to **Israel**. The latter **pursued** (“kept on pursuing”) **a Law of righteousness, but has not attained it**. “A Law of righteousness” refers to the Mosaic Law (cf. 7:7, 12, 14). To seek to attain righteousness by observing the Law requires that it be kept perfectly (cf. James 2:10). **Why** did Israel **not** attain it? **Because they pursued it not by** (*ek*, “out from”) **faith but as if it were by** (*ek*, “out from”) **works**. The Israelites did not admit their inability to keep the Law perfectly and turn by faith to God for forgiveness. Instead a few of them kept trying to keep the Law by their own efforts. Consequently **they stumbled** (cf. Rom. 11:11) **over the “stumbling Stone.”** The Lord Jesus Christ, “the stumbling Stone” (cf. 1 Peter 2:4–8), did not conform to the Jews’ expectations, so they rejected Him instead of responding to Him by faith. To show that God anticipated this, Paul quoted from Isaiah 8:14 and 28:16 (cf. Rom. 10:11), combining the two statements to indicate the two contrasting reactions by **men** to the **Stone** that God placed **in Zion** (cf. “Zion” in 11:26).

10:1–4. Having stated the fact of Israel’s stumbling in the preceding verses, Paul now explained the reason for that stumbling. But first, in words reminiscent of the opening verses of chapter 9, the apostle expressed his deep personal spiritual burden for the salvation of the people of Israel. Perhaps with his own experience in mind (cf. Acts 26:11; Gal. 1:13–14; Phil. 3:4–6) Paul affirmed, **For I can testify** (pres. tense, “I testify, bear witness”) **about them that they are zealous for God**. Israel was called “the God-intoxicated people.” Paul had to acknowledge, however, that **their zeal is not based on** (lit., “according to”) **knowledge** (*epignōsin*, “intensive, full knowledge”). The Jews obviously had knowledge of God but not full knowledge. Otherwise they would not have stumbled over Christ by seeking to gain righteousness on the basis of works.

Paul continued his explanation of Israel’s failure and their misguided zeal. **Since they did not know** (the participle *agnoountes* means “being ignorant,” here in the sense of not understanding) **the righteousness that comes from God**. The NIV implies that the people of Israel did not understand the God-provided righteousness expounded in this letter to the Christians in Rome (cf. Rom. 1:17). That may be true, even though they should have known from their own Scriptures (cf. Gen. 15:6; Ps. 32:1–2). But here preferably the righteousness in view is the righteousness God requires for people to be accepted by Him, which is God’s own infinite righteousness. The Jews did not really understand God’s own infinite righteousness, which is why they were continuing to seek **to establish their own** (cf. Isa. 64:6). Little wonder then that **they did not submit to** (“place themselves under”) **God’s righteousness**, that is, the righteousness God provides through Christ by faith. The Greek in Romans 10:4 includes the coordinating particle *gar*, “for” (not trans. in the NIV). It introduces a statement that is crucial to Paul’s explanation of Israel’s stumbling—**Christ is the end of the Law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes**. The word translated “end” (*telos*) stands in the

emphatic first position in the Greek sentence. It means that Christ is the designed end (termination) or Purpose-Goal of the Law (cf. Gal. 3:24), the Object to which the Law pointed.

The Law did not and could not of itself provide righteousness before God for individuals (cf. Rom. 3:20; 7:7). But Christ fulfilled the Law (Matt. 5:17–18) by keeping it perfectly during His sinless life (cf. John 8:46) and then gave His life in payment for the penalty of sin and the broken Law (cf. Eph. 2:15; Col. 2:13–14). The Law then pointed to Him as the Source of the God-provided righteousness it could not supply (Gal. 3:24). A godly Jew who trusted Yahweh and followed the Levitical system, including the sin offering and the trespass offering, would most likely be inclined to respond to Christ by faith and would receive God's righteousness (i.e., be justified; Acts 13:39; Rom. 3:24; 4:3, 5). He then could meet the requirements of the Law by the indwelling Holy Spirit (8:4). Conversely, a Jew who sought by works to establish his own righteousness would not recognize Christ as "the end of the Law" and would stumble over Him.