

Romans 10

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Tape #8129
Pastor Chuck Smith

Chapter ten is closely tied with the last part of chapter nine. Where Paul declares beginning with verse 30, *What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, (That is through the law.) have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith;* ³¹*but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness.* ³²*Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone (which of course, was Jesus Christ).* ³³*As it is written: "Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."*

Now, because Paul has taken the position that the gospel is open to all men, Jew and Gentile alike. And because Paul dared to take the gospel to the Gentiles, many of the Jews were accusing him of bitterness because the Jews did not receive his testimony. Paul always sought to go to the Jews first. When he would go into a new community, he would first go to the synagogue. And there he would preach Christ to them, always to the Jew first. But when the Jews rejected over and over, finally Paul said, seeing you count yourself not worthy to receive the things of God, I going to the Gentiles. And Paul became the apostle to the Gentiles. Now the Jews accused him of being bitter against the Jews. And so he opened the ninth chapter by saying that he had this great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart because he could even wish himself accursed from Christ for his brethren, his kinsmen, according to the flesh.

At the beginning of chapter ten he again affirms his love for the Jews, his brethren, according to the flesh. And he declares, *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.* Paul is not bitter. Notice, my heart's desire is for Israel to be saved. But not just my heart's desire, but my heart's desire and my prayer. Paul turned his heart's desire into his prayer. In other words he took the things he longed for, his desires, and he turned them into prayer.

I think that that is an important thing for us. Those things that we are wanting to be accomplished. Those things that we want to see done. How important that we make those our prayers. That we turn our desires into our prayers. We want to see God work. We have a great desire to see God's work in members of our family. We need to turn those into prayers. Not just the longing. Not just the heart's desire but make them your prayer!

I think that we need to be spending much more time in prayer. We have given many opportunities here at Calvary Chapel for people to come and pray. We have a ladies intercessory prayer group that meets on Monday morning. We have many prayer groups during the week. We have men who come here all night long every night of the year to pray. We have a Saturday night prayer meeting for the men. And men, I'd like to encourage you to come to these Saturday night prayer meetings. It is folly to think that the church can continue to go on and be a witness and be blessed apart from prayer. We need to pray more and I would encourage you men especially, Saturday night, give yourselves unto prayer.

Come with your desires, your heart's desires. Pray together. The Bible tells us that the effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. The Bible tells us that if two or three of us will agree on earth concerning anything, it will be done. And we would encourage you to come and join with the men, agreement in prayer, to see the work of God done in your children. If ever there was a time when we needed to pray for our children, it's now. The opportunity for evil is so prevalent. My heart goes out to the young people today. Because only by the grace of God will they be able to stand against the wiles of the devil and the opportunities for evil that are there so available to them. Do you have a burden for your children? Are you concerned about their relationship with God? You see Paul took that concern, that burden and he turned it into prayer. My heart's desire and prayer for Israel is that they might be saved. Wednesday mornings we have a prayer breakfast and the men gather and pray on Wednesday morning. Great opportunity to gather with the men at that breakfast. Before you go to work, come and spend time in prayer. My heart's desire and prayer for Israel is that they might be saved.

²*For I bear them witness (Paul said) that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.* In another place, Paul said it is good to be zealously effective for a good thing. Writing to the Philippians, Paul in giving his sort of religious pedigree said that he was a Pharisee of the Pharisees. And concerning zeal, he said, I was persecuting the church. So he is speaking out of personal experience when he said I testify of them, they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. He thought that he was doing God a favor in seeking to destroy the church. He had a great zeal wanting to do God's work, but it wasn't according to knowledge. And of course zeal without knowledge can be a dangerous thing.

You see there are many people who are more zealous in their programs than the Christian is. Now whatever you may think of those that are involved in green peace and I really don't have much of a sympathy towards them personally. But you have to say that these people have a zeal for their cause. They are willing to go to jail for their cause. They are willing to put their little boats in front of great ships, willing to be rammed for their cause. Look at the zeal that the communists had for their cause. Look at the zeal that so many people involved in false religions have for their religion. And so here are the Jews, they are very religious. I testify that they have a zeal for God, tremendous zeal for God, but it isn't according to knowledge. What a tragedy when people are spending all of their energies and this zealousness for false causes, that have a zeal but not according to knowledge! Because they are ignorant of God's righteousness. Now they want to be righteous. They are seeking for righteousness.

As we go back into chapter nine, Israel, or the Jews which followed after the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. They had a zeal. They keep the law zealously. You go to Israel today and you see them, black, long coats, black hats, curls underneath, coming down the sides. You see them at the Western Wall. And you see them with their prayer book and they are bobbing and all. They are going through their prayer book. They have a zeal for God but not according to knowledge. They are ignorant of the righteousness that God has provided through Jesus Christ. And thus, they are seeking to establish a righteous standing before God by their works, by their good works, by their prayers and these things of which they are very zealous to follow them, but their endeavor is to have a righteous standing before God. But their own prophet said (Isaiah 64:6), that our righteousness is as filthy rags in the sight of God! And so they are ignorant of the righteousness that God has provided to us, the righteousness which is of faith in Jesus Christ.

³*For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.* So being ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness. They have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God. What happens to a person when he seeks to develop a righteous standing before God by his good works is that he first of all develops at best, a self righteousness. That's all you can develop by your own good works is self righteousness. But the fruit of self righteousness is pride! One of the deadly sins.

God said six things (Proverbs 6:16) that God hates, yea seven are an abomination unto Him. And one of those is that proud heart. But that's what self righteousness eventuates in--a proud heart. And you get like the Pharisees, who Paul is describing here. Being ignorant of God's righteousness, trying to establish his own righteousness, not submitting to the righteousness of God.

You remember the Pharisee who went into the temple to pray and he said, God I thank that I am not like other men. I'm not an adulterer. And you know, a thief and all. It was a self righteousness. I'm not like that guy over there. A self righteousness.

But the second fruit is judgment or being judgmental. I have this tendency to look around and to judge others as worse than me. And this business of passing judgment, as the Pharisee did. I'm not like this man over here. And that becoming judgmental, again it is the fruit of self righteousness. It's just an outgrowth of it. And so not submitting to the righteousness that God has provided through Jesus Christ, they are trying to establish their own righteousness.

⁴*For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.* Believing in Jesus Christ, I have been accounted righteous by God.

When Paul was listing his pedigree in the fourth chapter of the Philippian letter, he said, Hebrew, stock of Benjamin, circumcised the eighth day, Pharisee of the Pharisees, concerning righteousness of the law, blameless. But those things, he said, which were gain to me, I count as loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus

Christ. For whom I suffered the loss of all things. He lost his position as a member of the Sanhedrin. He lost his respect from his fellow Jews when he embraced Jesus Christ. For whom I suffer the loss of all things, but he said, I count them but refuse that I might know Him and be found in Him. Not having my own righteousness which was of the law, but the righteousness which is of Christ through faith.

Paul looked now at the Jew. He thought, if you only knew. Here you are zealous, seeking after righteousness but not attaining it, because you have rejected the righteousness that God has provided through Jesus Christ. Jesus is the end of the law for righteousness to those that believe! You can never, never be good enough for God by your own efforts, by your own righteousness. You can never make it! And so the Jews did not attain to the righteousness. Why? Because they were seeking it by the law, whereas the Gentiles, they did attain the righteousness because they put their faith and their trust in Jesus Christ. And God accounts that person as righteous.

⁵*For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, "The man who does those things shall live by them."* But the problem is that no man ever did it! No man could do it. When the early church gathered together to find out what they should do about the Gentile believers, because the early church was comprised mainly of Jews. They carried on that Jewish attitude that they didn't know if Gentiles could really be saved. That the Jew was certain that a Gentile could not be saved. The Jew believed that the Gentile was created by God to fuel the fires of hell. They felt that a Gentile could not be saved. And so this attitude carried over in the early church, in the beginning of the church.

When the Lord called Peter to go to the Gentiles, putting down before him this sheet and the animals on it. And He said, rise Peter. Kill and eat. And he said, Oh Lord, I've never eaten anything that wasn't clean. And the Lord said, don't call that unclean which I've cleansed. And having seen the vision thrice, the Lord spoke to him and said that there were some men who were down at the gate, seeking him. He was to go with them not asking any questions. And so Peter invited the fellows in. That was the first breaking down of this tradition because a Jew would never invite a Gentile into the house. But God said don't call that unclean which I have cleansed. So the next morning, Peter went with them. They came up to Caesarea to the house of Cornelius, the Roman centurion. And as he was at the door, Peter at the door. Here Cornelius said, come on in, you know. Peter sort of stood there and said I've never been in the house of a Gentile in my whole life. I think he took a big gulp when he stepped over the threshold. Just, gulp, you know, oooh. Because of this deep seeded Jewish tradition. Zealous for God but not according to knowledge. So he almost apologized for being there. You know it is not lawful for me being a Jew to enter the house of a Gentile, but the Lord spoke to me and told me, you know, not to ask any questions. Just do what I'm told. So I am here. Then, as he was speaking to them and the Holy Spirit came upon them, I think Peter freaked out. He thought what is the church in Jerusalem going to say about this? When they find out I went to Gentiles.

Now he sort of suspicioned something was going on because he took some Jewish witnesses with him so they could bear witness that he didn't do anything overtly to bring them to Christ. I wasn't really trying. And sure enough, the church in Jerusalem called Peter on the carpet. What is this we hear about you going into the house of a Gentile? Peter had to rehearse for the story of his vision and the whole thing. How God called him to that.

But then they decided well, I guess that God has sovereignly reached out to the Gentiles. But yet there were those still who were saying, no, a Gentile can't be saved. Only Jews can be saved. And thus the Gentile believers must adhere to the law. They must be circumcised. They must become a Jew if they want to be saved.

There were some Jews that came from the church in Jerusalem, up to the church in Antioch where Paul had been ministering. And they began to create a division there in the church, telling the Gentile believers, no, you're not saved. You are not saved until you are circumcised and you start keeping the law of Moses. And Paul heard about what these guys were teaching. He called them in and he said, hey, let's get this thing settled. Let's go back to Jerusalem. You say, you know, that you have the authority of the church in Jerusalem. Let's go back to Jerusalem. Let's settle this among the elders of the church. And so they came back to Jerusalem. The first church counsel was called. It would seem that James presided over the first church counsel. It is interesting that Peter was one of the first to give witness to the church counsel. He witnessed how that God had sent him to the Gentiles. How that the Holy Spirit came upon them. And Peter said I recommend that we not put them under a yoke of bondage which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear. Peter recognized that we haven't kept the

law. Now the law said, cursed is the man who continues not in the whole law to do all of the things that are written therein. But who has done that? Nobody!

Of course, we've gotten to that place here in the United States. All of us are law breakers. I mean we have so many laws on the books now, you don't even know. They could knock on your door and man, they could find something where you are violating the law, somewhere. I mean they've got so many laws now.

So it was with the Jews. There was no way they could keep the law. God did not give them the law to make them righteous. God gave them the law to show them their sin. So that they would as David in Psalm 51, "Have mercy upon me Oh God, according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies, blot out my transgression. For against Thee and Thee only have I sinned and done this great evil in Thy sight."

It is interesting that David in his earlier years as he would pray, he would sort of say now, Lord, you know, reward me according to my faithfulness and my goodness and so forth, you know. And that was in the earlier years. But after his sin, oh, how his tune changed! There he sought then the mercies of God. And that was the purpose of the law was to show us our guilt. It was the schoolmaster to drive us to Jesus Christ. And once we have come to Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes! The law has nothing to do with you, who have received Jesus Christ and are walking after him. The law cannot make you righteous. The law can only condemn you. It can only show you where you have come short. There is no power in the law to enable you to keep it. The law only brings condemnation.

So here are the Jews. They are ignorant of the righteousness that God has provided through Jesus Christ. And they are trying to attain to a righteousness through the law. Now in order to do that, they had to misinterpret the law. They had to twist it and interpret it so that we have kept it.

For instance, even to the modern day, according to the Jewish law, you should not purchase anything on the Sabbath Day. They are very strict about that. But, if you use a credit card, it's all right because you are not giving them money. It's sort of weird philosophy. I know a lot of people have that philosophy with credit cards. But I'll tell you, the bill comes around. But you know, interpreting it so that, yeah, we're keeping it. But they weren't. They were violating the spirit of the law.

Though they may have had tried to keep the letter of the law, they were violating the spirit of the law, as Jesus pointed out in Matthew's gospel, chapter five, the Sermon on the Mount. In that section that followed except your righteousness exceed that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you will in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven. And then as He begins to show how they were interpreting the law versus how God gave the law. Interpreting the law so that they were keeping it but according to God's giving of the law, they were violating the spirit of the law all the way through. So Moses described the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which does those things shall live by them. But if you keep the whole law and yet violate in one point, the Scripture says, you are guilty of all. So nobody did it. Nobody could do it.

⁶*But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' " (that is, to bring Christ down from above) (Now he is quoting Moses here, in chapter 30 of Deuteronomy.)* ⁷*or, " 'Who will descend into the abyss?' " (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).* ⁸*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 preach) :* It isn't who is going to ascend into heaven to bring the Messiah down. Or who will descend in the abyss to bring the Messiah up. It isn't the accomplishing of some great work. It isn't the killing of the seven headed dragon and getting the golden apples. It isn't something that man can boast in. It isn't something that man can glory in his accomplishments. Righteousness doesn't come from our good efforts. Our righteousness comes as a gift of God imparted to us through our faith in Jesus Christ, which eliminates boasting. None of us can boast of how good we are or how righteous we are because my righteousness has nothing to do with my good efforts! My righteousness is completely through my faith in Jesus Christ! On Christ, the solid rock I stand. All other ground is sinking sand. My glory is in Jesus Christ. And in that righteousness that He has imparted to me because of my faith and trust in Him. No place for me to glory in myself in my flesh, only in Christ do I glory. The word of faith which we preach, Paul said, is close to you. It's as close as your mouth and your heart.

⁹*that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus (or more literally, that Jesus is Lord. The Lordship of Jesus Christ. Have you submitted to the Lordship of Jesus Christ?*

Jesus said not all who say Lord, Lord, are going to enter the kingdom of heaven. But he that doeth the will of the Father. You see, Lord is not a name. It is a title. People make often a deadly mistake in thinking as though Lord is a name. And they use it as a name rather than a title. When I say that Jesus is Lord, I am saying that He is my master. I am His servant. I am duty bound to obey Him and to follow His instruction. And that is why Jesus said, "Why do you call Me, Lord, Lord and yet you don't do the things that I command you?" He is pointing out that there is an inconsistency here. You call me Lord, Lord and yet you are not doing the things that I tell you to do. So, that's not all who say, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven.

Now we are told that there is going to come a day when every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord to the glory of God the Father. But that day, that confession, will not necessarily be to salvation. It is submitting my life today to the Lordship of Jesus. Allowing Him to truly be the Lord of my life. And if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, but not just you know, an empty confession. Not just saying Lord, Lord.)

and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰*For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.* Now there has to be a consistency between what I say and what I do. If I say Jesus is Lord then to be consistent, I have to be submitted to His will. I have to be obedient to His command. The faith that is of the heart is a faith that transforms our actions, our lives. If a person has confessed Jesus as Lord, but he is walking after the flesh. He is disobedient to the Word of God and the command of the Scriptures, then his confession that Jesus is Lord is an empty confession. It doesn't save. There has to be corresponding submission to the Lordship of Jesus.

¹¹*For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."* But that is, believing is an active verb and if I truly believe it's going to be manifested in my life.

¹²*For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek (That is as far as salvation is concerned.), for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.* ¹³*For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."* Notice the "whoever's" here. Whoever believes on Him. Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. The door is open to all men.

I do not subscribe to the Calvinistic theology that says that there is limited atonement. That Christ only died for those that would believe. I believe that Christ died for the sins of the world. And I believe that the door is open for all men to come. And that whoever believes in Him will be saved. I also believe that believing in Him is a matter of choice. That a person chooses to believe in Jesus Christ or he chooses not to believe in Jesus Christ. And I believe that it is a choice that is made in one's heart and not an intellectual choice. I do not believe that anybody has ever rejected Jesus Christ on purely intellectual grounds. They may declare that they have intellectual difficulties. But that is just their excuse for not believing. The real reason for their not believing is that they don't want to submit to the Lordship of Jesus because of the requirements that He makes of us. To live after the spirit and not to live after the flesh. And because they want to live after the flesh because their hearts are evil, they choose not to believe in Jesus.

I believe that if you choose to believe in Jesus Christ that there is sufficient evidence to show and to prove that you have made a reasonable decision, based upon reason. I believe that the gospel is reasonable and can stand up to reason. I think it is unreasonable to reject the gospel. How can you explain the more than three hundred predictions of the Old Testament concerning the Messiah that Jesus fulfilled? His birthplace, the time of His coming. His betrayal for thirty pieces of silver. The money being used to buy a potter's field after it was thrown down in the temple. His being smitten, spit in the face. The jeering. Hands and feet being pierced. How can you explain the more than three hundred predictions that He fulfilled? You see you don't have any reasonable explanation.

Who so ever believes. But believing is a matter of choice. And I choose to believe because I am tired of my sin. I don't want to go in sin any longer. I want to walk with God. I want to have fellowship with God. I want my life to take on meaning and purpose. I'm tired of the emptiness and the empty pursuit after things that haven't been able to satisfy. I want something that will fill that void in my life. And I choose to believe in Jesus Christ as my Savior. I choose to surrender to Him as my Lord. That He might wash me from my sins. And that He might impart to me a righteous standing before God.

For who so ever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved but, ¹⁴*How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?* If they have never heard of Jesus Christ how can they believe in Jesus Christ?

And how shall they hear without a preacher? Someone to go and tell them about Jesus Christ. ¹⁵*And how shall they preach unless they are sent?* And so this is the basis for missions, for the church having missionaries. Those that we send out to declare the message of Jesus who have not heard of Him, in order that in hearing of Him, they might believe in Him.

As it is written (In Isaiah): "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel (the good news) of peace,

Who bring glad tidings of good things!" Living in this world of turmoil and conflict. Tonight if you go home and watch the ten o'clock news, you are going to hear about an awful lot of conflict in this world in which we live. The whole ten o'clock news will be filled with conflicts, problems. Conflict between ethnic groups. Conflicts around the world. Conflicts in Israel. Conflicts in Bosnia. Conflicts in Los Angeles and in our own community. A world of conflict. And in this world that is filled with conflicts, this good news of peace, the gospel of peace. Man who has been at war with God can have peace with God. Man who has been at war with himself can have peace with himself. The good news of peace! The glad tidings of good things! Oh, sharing the gospel has to be the greatest thing in all the world. It's glad tidings of good things that we have to share with the world!

¹⁶*But they have not all obeyed the gospel.* Here's the good news, but people don't all obey it.

For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?"

¹⁷*So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* So, how can they believe in Him whom they have not heard? How can they hear unless someone tells them? How then can they go and tell them, unless they are sent? Sent with the gospel of peace, glad tidings of good things? Not all will hear.

Jesus said the seed falls on different kinds of soil. Some on the way side. Some on the stony ground. Some among thorns, but thank God some falls on good soil. It brings forth fruit. But faith comes by hearing. How does hearing come? By the Word of God! So faith comes by the Word of God.

Now there is a mistaken notion that we often have concerning loved ones. If they just see a true miracle, then they would, no doubt, believe. And there is that tendency for us to want to see some kind of supernatural evidence to make people believers. And there are people who are running all over the country, to observe some kind of supernatural manifestation, believing falsely, that by observing supernatural manifestations, a person can have faith planted in their hearts. If they just see. And how sad it is to see people running all over, looking for some kind of supernatural manifestation in order to build faith in the heart of a friend.

You remember Jesus told the story in Luke 16, of the rich man, who fared sumptuously every day. And there was a poor man that was brought daily by his friends. He was placed at his gate. And he begged people for funds. And he survived off of the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. The poor man died. And he was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and in hell and in being in torment, he saw Lazarus being comforted in Abraham's bosom. That poor man that was by his gate. And he said father Abraham have mercy on me. Send Lazarus that he might come and dip his finger in water, touch my tongue. I'm tormented in this heat. You remember Abraham's response was, son, remember in your lifetime, you had the good things and Lazarus the evil? Now he is comforted while you are in torment. And besides that there is this gulf that is fixed between us so that those that are here cannot go over there, neither can those that are there come over here.

Then this rich man reasoned, if Lazarus can't come to me then send him to back to warn my brothers so that they won't come to this horrible place. Abraham said, they have the law and the prophets. If they don't believe the law and the prophets, neither will they believe even though one may come back from the dead. You see he was thinking that would spark faith. If they could just see that kind of miracle. Oh, they would surely believe. Send him back! Raise him from the dead! Let him go back and warn them so they won't come here. But Abraham's response is, they have the Word. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. If they

don't respond to the Word of God, they won't respond to miracles. Miracles do not create saving faith. Only the Word of God creates saving faith.

Now it is interesting that there was a certain man named Lazarus, who was a friend of Jesus, who lived in Bethany. And when Jesus was down at the Jordan River, his friend, Lazarus, became very sick. His sisters sent an urgent message to Jesus. It said, come quickly. The one you love is dying. And Jesus did not immediately respond. He stayed there at the Jordan River a couple of days before He began the two day journey to Bethany from the Jordan. So that by the time he arrived at the village, His friend Lazarus had been dead for four days. Martha came running out, leaving the mourners in the house. She came running out down the path to meet Jesus as He was on His way up with the disciples. And she said, Lord, if You had only been here, my brother would not have died. Jesus said, oh Martha, your brother will live again. Oh yes, Lord, I know, in the last days, the Great Resurrection. Jesus said, I am the resurrection and the life and he that believes on Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live! And if you live and believe in Me, you will never die. Martha, do you believe this? Well, yes, Lord, I believe You are the Messiah, the Son of God.

They came to the house. Mary said, Oh Lord, if You had only been here, my brother would not have died. Jesus said, well, where did you bury him? As they were going to the cave toward where he was buried, the people were all wailing and mourning. And Jesus saw that and He began to weep. And they misinterpreted His weeping. And they said, oh look how much He loved him. When they came, Jesus wasn't weeping because Lazarus was dead. He was weeping over the hardness of their hearts. Their blindness. He always wept over that.

When He looked over Jerusalem. He said, Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you kill the prophets and all that God has sent unto you. And now destruction is going to come. And He wept because of the cost of unbelief! The pain and the suffering that unbelief always brings. Jesus weeps over that. He saw now the pain of the human heart because of the lack of faith and belief and He weeps!

When He came to the grave, Jesus said, roll the stone away. And the sisters objected, saying Oh Lord, it's been four days. It'll be pretty smelly by now. But they rolled the stone away and He called, "Lazarus come forth!" And he came hopping out because he was still bound with the grave clothes. Jesus said, loose him and let him go.

What did the Pharisees do? They said, you know, we'd better kill Him. It didn't make believers out of them. They didn't acknowledge that Jesus was the Messiah, but they were determined that we'd better kill him. Because this is a pretty astounding miracle, you know, and people are apt to believe, we'd better kill him. Kill Lazarus as well as Jesus. Kill them both. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God, not by seeing miracles. Not by observing some spectacular, spiritual phenomena.

¹⁸But I say, have they not heard? (Paul answers his question,) Yes indeed:

"Their sound has gone out to all the earth,

And their words to the ends of the world." Now here he is quoting from Psalm 19. Where he talks about the heavens declare the glory of God and the earth shows forth His handiwork. Day unto day they utter their speech. Night unto night their voice goes forth. There's not a speech nor a language where their voice is not heard for it has gone out into the ends of the world. So God has spoken to man. Have they not heard? Yes, but they haven't been listening.

¹⁹But I say, did Israel not know?

First Moses says: "I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are not a nation, I will move you to anger by a foolish nation." The fact that God was going to save the Gentiles was something that Moses spoke about. You see, the Jews are objecting because Paul is going to the Gentiles, saying, you are bitter against the Jews. And Paul is saying, no. God has opened the door to the Gentiles. Opened the door to all men. Whoever you are. Where ever you are. By believing in Jesus Christ, you can be justified of any wrong you've ever done. You can be proclaimed righteous, accounted righteous before God. So Israel should have known that. Moses, who represented their law. A sacred name to the Jews. He said, I will provoke you to jealousy by those people who are not a nation, that is not God's people. And by a foolish nation I will anger you.

But there is also the testimony of their prophet, Isaiah, *²⁰But Isaiah is very bold and says:*

"I was found by those who did not seek Me; I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me." The gospel to the Gentiles.

²¹ But to Israel he says:

"All day long I have stretched out My hands

To a disobedient and contrary people." What a pathetic picture. God, the Creator of the universe, stretching forth His hand to His creation. Inviting them to come and to fellowship. All day long, God says I've stretched forth My hand to the disobedient and gainsaying people.

This is what sets Christianity apart from all of the world religions. The religions of man, the religions of the world, the religions that have been devised by man, always have man reaching out for God. Endeavoring to reach God. The pursuit after God, and man becomes the initiator in man's religion. If I would draw a cartoon, I would draw a round ball, representing the earth and a little stick man standing on it, with his hands raised upwards, trying to touch God. But you would see the very futility of his endeavor. Because you could never start on an earth base and reach heaven, touch God. The finite could not never touch the infinite. And the moment you see it from that standpoint, here's the finite trying to reach and touch the infinite. You realize the impossibility of it the moment you declare the situation. Immediately you recognize the impossible that the finite could ever reach and touch the infinite.

But here is the picture of the Word of God in Christianity. It is God reaching out. All day long have I reached out my hands. God reaching out to touch man! God so loved the world, He gave His only begotten Son. God is the initiator!

Man's religions have man trying to do the prayers and all of the things necessary to reach God. And they have their prescribed ways by which they feel that God can be touched or reached by man, at least his reaching out for God. And you have to fast and you have to do this and you have to do this and you have to do this, in order to touch God.

But Christianity says, it's not by the works of righteousness, that you can touch God. You'll never touch God by your good works! You're righteousness doesn't count! You've got to put your faith and trust in God. And as you put your faith in Him, He'll account that faith for righteousness. Works can never save you. It's your trust and your faith in God that will save.

And so we see the picture, God, with the nation of Israel, stretching out His hands. And in the next chapter, we will see how that one day, God who is so patient. God, who is so long suffering. God, who is so faithful, will one day again work among this nation and those people.

We will see our place as Gentiles in chapter 11. We are wild branches that have been grafted in that we might partake of the strength and all of the tree, the vine. We've been grafted in, contrary to nature. So I encourage you to read ahead into the eleventh chapter as Paul continues with the subject of the relationship of the Jew and the Gentile to God and God's sovereign work among men.

Thank You, Father, for reaching out to us through Jesus Christ, Your Son. And for touching us! Touching our hearts. Touching our lives. And by that touch, transforming us. Lord, we pray that You will keep Your hand upon our lives. To guide us, Lord, in Your ways. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.