

I was recently asked to preach on Romans 10:8-13 by a church in Florida. Around that same time I was asked to preach on “Jesus: the world’s greatest need” by a church in East Texas. I didn’t have any sermons that fit the bill. I couldn’t adjust any old sermons to match even one of these. So, I built one that put the two ideas together and also have something I feel special about to share with you. This study of the book of Romans has been the most rewarding one for me all year. We will begin with this idea of “Jesus as the world’s greatest need.” This is true whether a person believes it or not. But there may be a more fundamental way of expressing the most basic need of every person:

- I. Righteousness – The World’s Greatest Need
  - a. Yes, it is Jesus, but in a broader sense, maybe a more fundamental sense, each person’s greatest need is to be made righteous before God. Jesus is the means to that end.
  - b. You need Him, the God of all righteousness, the One who can have no party with sin or unrighteousness, to look at you and say: “That is a righteous soul.”
  - c. If we are righteous before Him, though we sin, we can be in fellowship with Him and we can be saved today and have a hope of being with Him forever.
- II. Problem: Not one of us is Righteous
  - a. **Romans 3:9-12, 23** – On our own, without something or Someone – without God’s plan of righteousness extended to us, we are lost forever.
- III. The Israelites Solution: **The Word without Jesus**
  - a. They knew God was in heaven and they need to be righteous to be in fellowship with Him. They knew it would take some plan, some way, in order to be justified.
  - b. So, they adopted a method to be right: **Word w/o Jesus**
    - i. **Rom. 9:31** – “Pursuing a Law of Righteousness”
      1. **v32** – They embraced an Old Law of works and would work their way in!
      2. They knew they still sinned, but thought the RIGHT good works would cover for it and they would justify their fellowship with God.
      3. **Galatians 3:10-13** – The problem was: even one sin was too many
    - ii. **Rom. 10:1-2** – “They have a Zeal for God”
      1. They were very passionate about this! It wasn’t some emotionless do and don’t list. They gave their lives to these laws. It had worked for millions before. But, **Hebrews 9:15** – it was always connected to Jesus.
      2. **Galatians 1:13-14** – They persecuted Christians to protect the integrity of this way, to pursue righteousness through the Law.
    - iii. **Rom. 10:3** – “Seeking to Establish their Own”
      1. Either willfully or just in ignorance, they did not know God’s plan to make them right. They decided to establish their own.
      2. That sounds bad, but remember: their plan involved a 1500 year old law, hundreds of thousands of Jews, and Moses. But... no amount of time, people or numbers could replace “God’s Righteousness.”
      3. **Rom. 3:27-29** – Your plan is boastful. Your plan is wrong.
- IV. God’s Only Solution: **Jesus and the Word**
  - a. **Jesus (Romans 3:21-26** – Righteousness! God’s Righteousness! Through Jesus!)
  - b. Okay, but How? How can Jesus make me righteous? What is the plan?
    - i. Believe that Christ is the end of the Law (10:4)
      1. Not as big a deal for you, but a huge deal in the first century.
      2. **Galatians 3:19, 24** – Until Christ. The Tutor to lead all to Him.

3. In fact, **Gal. 3:16** – Abraham and Moses, all of it, were about leading to the Righteousness of life with God in Christ. “not to abolish, but fulfill.”
- ii. Have Faith that Christ and His Fellowship are Here (10:6-8a)
  1. These are quotes from Moses in Deuteronomy 30. Moses’ point – you don’t have to go to heaven or to the depths of the sea to find the Plan of God for your life. It is right here in front of you.
  2. In this text, the plan to make you righteous is not the old law, but it is not some mystical thing out of reach – it isn’t up in heaven or in the depths of death: Christ has put it here, right in front of you – for you to embrace.
- iii. Receive the Word of Faith into your whole being (10:8; 1:1,9, 16-18)
  1. **Jesus and the Word** – The Gospel, the message, the Truth. This is it. This is how we find Christ. And when we find Him we find Righteousness!
    - a. *Faith in Jesus Christ* – **Romans 1:17**
    - b. *Living Faith in Jesus Christ* – **Romans 1:5**
    - c. *Repenting of Sinful Living* – **Romans 6:1-2**
    - d. *Being Baptized into a Relationship of Righteousness* – **Rom. 6:3-4**
    - e. *Living Faithfully – Instruments of Righteousness* – **Rom. 6:11-13**
  2. In our Hearts and Mouths His will must Live – **Romans 10:9-10**
    - a. Living with Belief – **Rom. 10:11**
    - b. Announcing Him Lord of All – **Rom. 10:12**

## V. The Modern Solution: **Jesus without the Word**

- a. Pursing a Law of Conscience – What we must do is subjective and not substantive.
- b. They have a Zeal for God – No one questions the passion of Belief only people.
- c. Seeking to Establish their Own – Christ without His Word, His Way is not His Plan.
  - i. **Simply Call on the Name of the Lord** – obedience to His word not required.
  - ii. As a result, many believe themselves righteous, but they are not.
- d. **Romans 10:14-17** – Yes, we must believe. And certainly, we must have faith in who He is. But all of it, all faith in Christ, but be hinged to the Word of Christ, the Law of Christ, the Will of Christ, as we hear it, believe it, and obey it.
- e. **Romans 10:18-21** – Surely the Israelites simply hadn’t heard the message – that Righteousness would be through Jesus and available to all who would obey Him?! They had heard, many times. They just didn’t want to believe it.
- f. I pray that is not you. So many today believe salvation is in Jesus, but apart from His law – **Romans 6:1-11** – These passages are all but ignored, in terms of leaving sin, the necessity of baptism, and a love of living righteous and as righteously as we can as a requisite of faith. Never read are passages like **Rom. 11:22** – where our abandoning of our purpose can forfeit our righteousness in His sight. Surely they have not heard? Many have and won’t believe unto obedience. Has that been you?