

The Righteousness We Need in the Message of Christ

Romans 10:4-8

Romans 10:4–8 (NKJV)

⁴ For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

⁵ For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, “*The man who does those things shall live by them.*”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*)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):

Introduction

A couple of weeks ago, John MacArthur preached a message regarding the most hated doctrine which he correctly identified, that man is a sinner, and evil in his nature. Men absolutely despise that reality and will do everything within their power to redefine and rationalize away their evil.

Mankind has always elevated itself by creating a false standard of Righteousness while simultaneously reducing God to a manageable deity that winks at sin and is not as Holy as the Bible teaches He is.

Ignorance of the Biblical God is an eternally damning reality. Creating a god of your own imagination is no small matter.

Because men refuse to accept and believe the God of Scripture and His diagnosis of man's sin and evil, they will see no need for the solution to their evil in Christ.

They believe they are better than they really are and refuse to believe God is as Holy as He really is, and as a result remain in a state of unbelief and self-righteousness and are unsavable.

Matthew 9:10–13 (NKJV)

¹⁰ Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, *that* behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples.

¹¹ And when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said to His disciples, “Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

¹² When Jesus heard *that*, He said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. ¹³ But go and learn what *this* means: ‘*I desire mercy and not sacrifice.*’ For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”

This was Israel’s problem, as it is with most of humanity....

Review

Romans 10:1–3 (NKJV)

Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. ² For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. ³ For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their

own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.

The idea that even the most ardent Pharisee was unable to keep God's law and was therefore cursed was unthinkable to Jews. Many Jews believed they were acceptable to God *simply because they were Jews*, members of His chosen race through physical descent from Abraham. In their thinking, the most reprobate Jew was more pleasing to God than the most upright Gentile.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1991). [*Romans*](#) (Vol. 2, p. 69). Moody Press.

⁴ For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

- I. The Impossibility of Righteousness by the Law
- II. The Imminence of Righteousness in Christ

I. The Impossibility of righteousness by the Law

⁵ For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, *“The man who does those things shall live by them.”*

Since the Jews would have always appealed to the Law for the basis of their righteousness, Paul appeals to Moses and the impossibility of perfect Righteousness thru the Law.

Paul quotes,
Leviticus 18:5 (NKJV)

⁵ You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I *am* the Lord.

The point is, that if you keep my commandments and does them, you will not die, you will live.

If you don't keep them....all....you will die

Galatians 3:11–13 (NKJV)

¹¹ But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God *is* evident, for *“the just shall live by faith.”* ¹² Yet the law is not of faith, but *“the man who does them shall live by them.”*

¹³ Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “*Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree*”),

Paul is telling us in Romans 10:5 that in order to live by keeping the law, we have to keep all the law, all the time, all of our life and never break one single law. We must be perfect.

Luke 10:25–28 (NKJV)

²⁵ And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”

²⁶ He said to him, “**What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?**”

²⁷ So he answered and said, “ ‘*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,*’ and ‘*your neighbor as yourself.*’ ”

²⁸ And He said to him, “**You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.**”

We all know that this is not possible.

James 2:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one *point*, he is guilty of all.

It is absolute impossible for a man to live a life of total obedience to the law, because he is fallen and unable to do so.

Why?

Romans 8:7–8 (NKJV)

⁷ Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. ⁸ So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Romans 3:10–12 (NKJV)

¹⁰ As it is written:

“There is none righteous, no, not one;

¹¹ *There is none who understands;*

There is none who seeks after God.

¹² *They have all turned aside;*

They have together become unprofitable;

There is none who does good, no, not one.”

But the external self righteousness of Israel blinded them to this and made them unsavable.

Matthew 19:16–25 (NKJV)

¹⁶ Now behold, one came and said to Him, “Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?”

¹⁷ So He said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one *is* good but One, *that is*, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.”

¹⁸ He said to Him, “Which ones?”

Jesus said, “ ‘*You shall not murder,*’ ‘*You shall not commit adultery,*’ ‘*You shall not steal,*’ ‘*You shall not bear false witness,*’ ¹⁹ ‘*Honor your father and your mother,*’ and, ‘*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*’ ”

²⁰ The young man said to Him, “All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?”

²¹ Jesus said to him, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”

²² But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

²³ Then Jesus said to His disciples, “Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. ²⁴ And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”

²⁵ When His disciples heard *it*, they were greatly astonished, saying, “Who then can be saved?”

Romans 2:17–23 (NKJV)

¹⁷ Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God, ¹⁸ and know *His* will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, ¹⁹ and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, ²⁰ an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law. ²¹ You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? ²² You who say, “Do not commit adultery,” do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? ²³ You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law?

Romans 9:31–32 (NKJV)

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.

Israel did not understand a basic biblical truth. The law was never given to give life, but rather to show us that we needed a Savior.

Romans 3:19–20 (NKJV)

¹⁹ Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. ²⁰ Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

Acts 13:39 (NKJV)

³⁹ and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.

Galatians 2:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ ... a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

Anyone who is not utterly self-deceived realizes the impossibility of never stumbling even in the smallest

way. And the foolish person who does presumptuously rely on his own obedience to the **law** will attain only the imperfect and unacceptable **righteousness** that his imperfect obedience merits. In God's sight, such righteousness is wholly *unrighteous* and can never remove sin or earn divine favor. "That no one is justified by the Law before God is evident" (Gal. 3:11).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1991). [Romans](#) (Vol. 2, p. 69). Moody Press.

I. The Impossibility of righteousness by the Law

II. The Imminence of Righteousness in Christ

5 For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, "*The man who does those things shall live by them.*"

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*) **7** or, " 'Who will descend into the abyss?' "

(that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).

6 But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way,

He personifies the Righteousness of Faith to speak as the the law would speak...

The Righteousness by the law says this
but
Righteousness by faith says this...

The Law says, obey every rule, every word perfectly to be righteous

But
Righteousness by faith says, trust Christ who is our righteousness. Believe every word, trust every word.

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*)

7 or, “ ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’ ”
(that is, to bring Christ up from the
dead).

This is a most amazing statement by Paul and is a quotation from Deuteronomy 30:12-14 and is not an exact quote of the Hebrew or the Septuagint.

“The material in Deuteronomy was part of Moses’ charge to the generation of Israel about to enter the land of Canaan. This exhortation was the conclusion of Moses’ prophetic description of God’s dealing with Israel. **Blessing** was promised for faith and obedience, and **chastisement** would result from rejection and disobedience. If Israel forsook God, Moses said, she would face worldwide dispersion and affliction. When the people then finally do turn to God in faith, He will restore them to blessing, prosperity, and prominence among the nations (Deut. 30:1–10)”

Witmer, J. A. (1985). [Romans](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 480). Victor Books.

To see this and why Paul brings this up, we need to look at Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy 30:5–20 (NKJV)

⁵ Then the Lord your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. ⁶ And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

and on those who hate you, who persecuted you.

⁸ And you will again obey the voice of the Lord and do all His commandments which I command you today. ⁹ The Lord your God will make you abound in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your land for good. For the Lord will again rejoice over you for good as He rejoiced over your fathers, ¹⁰ if you obey the voice of the Lord your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this Book of the Law, *and* if you turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

¹¹ “For this commandment which I command you today *is not too* mysterious for you, nor *is* it far off.

¹² It *is* not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ ¹³ Nor *is* it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’

¹⁴ But the word *is* very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.

¹⁵ “See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, ¹⁶ in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess. ¹⁷ But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, ¹⁸ I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong *your* days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess. ¹⁹ I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; ²⁰ that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He *is* your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which

the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.”

Intermingled through out this text are clear calls to obedience to the Law, but also the are clear calls to believe God, to trust His Word, to have faith in what He says.

Like,

5 Then the Lord your God will bring you to the land and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers.

6 And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

7 “Also the Lord your God will put all these curses on your enemies

9 The Lord your God will make you abound in all the work of your hand, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your land for good

16 I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His

commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess.

²⁰ love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life

All of these commandment to do and believe seem extraordinary, beyond doable, beyond believable

But that is why Moses says

11 “For this commandment which I command you today *is* not *too* mysterious (difficult) for you, nor *is* it far off. ¹² It *is* not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ ¹³ Nor *is* it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ ¹⁴ But the word *is* very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.

____ You don't need to figure out how to do this, how to achieve this, or how to believe this. GOD will give it to you.. It will be in your heart

How do I know this.... Because of Moses' teaching on Sovereign Grace to Believe and do. This was not pull your boot straps up and do it own you own. This was divinely enabled faith in God and divinely enabled obedience to God.

First there is the recognition of your inability to be righteous and your unworthiness of His blessing.

Deuteronomy 9:4–6 (NKJV)

⁴ “Do not think in your heart, after the Lord your God has cast them out before you, saying, ‘Because of my righteousness the Lord has brought me in to possess this land’; but *it is* because of the wickedness of these nations *that* the Lord is driving them out from before you. ⁵ *It is* not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart *that* you go in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations *that* the Lord your God drives them out from before you, and that He may fulfill the word which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. ⁶ Therefore

understand that the Lord your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you *are* a stiff-necked people.

Second, any abilities they have, has come from God.

Deuteronomy 8:11–18 (NKJV)

¹¹ “Beware that you do not forget the Lord your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes which I command you today, ¹² lest— *when* you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell *in them*;⁷ then you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.’

¹⁸ “And you shall remember the Lord your God, for *it is* He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as *it is* this day.

Third, any ability to understand and believe God comes from God by his grace....

Deuteronomy 29:2–4 (NKJV)

² Now Moses called all Israel and said to them: “You have seen all that the Lord did before your

eyes in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land—³ the great trials which your eyes have seen, the signs, and those great wonders. ⁴ Yet the Lord has not given you a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear, to this very day.

Deuteronomy 30:6

⁶ And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

So in Moses words it is by faith and obedience to be blessed of God, saved and without faith and obedience there is cursing and death. All are a gift by God

Sovereign Grace...

So it is in the Pauls words.

Righteousness is a gift of God thru faith in the obedience and death of Christ to save us.

It too is all a gift from God. Sovereign Grace

So Moses says

11 “For this commandment which I command you today *is* not *too* mysterious (difficult) for you, nor *is* it far off. ¹² It *is* not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ ¹³ Nor *is* it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ ¹⁴ But the word *is* very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.

___ You don’t need to figure out how to do this, how to achieve this, or how to believe this. GOD will give it to you.. It will be in your heart

How do I know this.... Because of Moses’ teaching on Sovereign Grace to Believe and do.

Paul picks up on this comparison and says

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*) ⁷ or, “ ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’ ” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).

In other words, don't think as in Moses day that they would have to go far and wide to find the ability to fulfill all that God commands.

No...

We don't have to ascend to bring Christ to us

We don't have to descent to bring Christ to us.

In other words,

Christ is our Righteousness. He is our obedience. He is our perfection.. He is the means by which all the righteous requirements of the Law are fulfilled.

You could read it this way if it helps..

6“*Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’*” (that is, to bring perfect Righteousness down from above) ⁷ or, “ ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’ ” (that is, to bring perfect Righteousness up from the dead).

We don't need to go anywhere else or pursue any other religion, All is in Christ who has already come and died and rose again.....

In fact we have the message we need to believe for perfect righteousness

Picking up on the Deuteronomy 30 passage again, Paul says.

8 But what does it say? *“The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart”* (that is, the word (rema) of faith which we preach) (kerusso):

Romans 10:9–10 (NKJV)

⁹ that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus 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.