

True Holiness

By Henry Mahan

Bible Text: Romans 10:1-10

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This program is heard in most places on the Lord's Day. This is the Lord's Day. And the people of God will meet together today to sing praises to the Lord and to read the Word of God and to pray and to preach the gospel and to worship the Lord. All over the world Gods' people come together today.

Why? Why are they so diligent in this? I'll tell you three reasons. Here is the first one. They worship God because they believe God. I didn't say they believe in God. They believe God. They believe his Word. Like Abraham of old the Scripture says he believed God. And when he was called to go out he went out not knowing where he was going, but God called him and he believed God. Without faith it is impossible to please God. He that cometh to God must believe that he is and he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

And David wrote this. "I believe God. Therefore have I spoken. I believe God. Therefore I worship, I pray, I read the Word, I praise him and I preach the gospel because I believe God."

What I am preaching to you today I believe. With all my heart I believe the truth of God.

Well, the second reason why they are assembled together today, believers, all over the world to worship God is because they enjoy it. They rejoice to do so. As David wrote, "I was glad when the said to me, let's go to the house of the Lord." We don't go out a sense of duty or responsibility or because we have to. We go to the house of God because we delight to go, delight to go.

"I would rather be a door keeper in the house of God," David said, "than to dwell in the tents of the wicked." It is not the place, it is the person. It is not the gifts, it is the giver. The child of God not only enjoys worship, he needs it. He needs to worship his God. He needs the fellowship with the Father and with the Son. He needs to hear and study God's Word. The Word of God, that's the children's bread. Just like your children can't survive without eating bread and food, the child of God can't survive without the Word of God. It's his bread. The Word of God is his comfort, his peace. It increases his faith, enables him to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ.

And then we need fellowship with one another. We need the fellowship of God's people. We need to be encouraged. We need to be exhorted in the faith.

David wrote in Psalm 65, "Blessed is the man whom the Lord chooses and causes to approach unto him that he may dwell in the house of the Lord in the courts of the Lord and be satisfied, happy with the goodness of God's house, happy with the goodness of God's house."

I read a poem years ago. I found it among some old papers that I had. It was written by a person who discovered the difference between duty and faith, a person who discovered the difference in having religion and knowing the Lord. This man discovered the difference in going to church and going to worship. There is a difference. And meeting with other believers. And he wrote this poem. Listen to it. When he was in religion and now he is in faith.

Once it was the blessing, now it is the Lord.
Once it was the feeling, now it is his Word.
Once the gifts I wanted, now the giver I own.
Once I sought for healing, now for grace alone.
Once it was my working, his now it shall be.
Once I tried to use him, now he uses me.
Once the power I wanted, now the mighty one.
Once for self I labored, now for God alone.

It is not just the benefits we seek, it is the beloved. It's not the place. It's the person. It's not the gifts. It is the giver. It is not the benefits, it is the beloved. As Solomon wrote in the Song of Solomon, "I am my beloved's and he is mine." And I enjoy his presence, enjoy his house, enjoy his people.

But there is another reason why, important reason why believers gather to worship, praise God, preach the gospel, pray and...and exhort one another. Not only because they believe God, not only because they enjoy it and rejoice and need it, but the third and important reason also is believers meet for prayer and praise and preaching the Word of God because we want our children, we want our children and our friends and our neighbors and our loved ones to know our Lord. We want them to know the Lord. We want them to have a good hope of eternal life. That is why I come here and preach the gospel over this television station is because I want those who hear me to know him.

This is what John said in 1 John 1. You will recognize this when I read it. John says in 1 John one verse three, "That which I have seen and that which I have heard declare I unto you, number one, that you might have fellowship with us in our wonderful Lord, in the peace and the joy and the hope that we have, that you might be a part of this fellowship. Secondly, that you may have fellowship with the Father and with the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And, thirdly, that which I have seen and heard declare I unto you that your joy may be full."

I tell you. The joys of this earth are temporary. The joys of this earth are fleeting. The things of this earth are passing away. But this joy in Christ is eternal, that your joy, peace, hope might be full. Full is complete. And he said, "That's why what I have seen and what I heard declare I unto you."

Now then, my text today, Romans 10. And this is what Paul, this is how he begins this chapter, wanting not only, he believes God, he loves God, he enjoys the presence of God, but he wants others to know the Lord. And that is the way he begins chapter 10 of Romans. He says, "Brethren," chapter 10 or Romans verse one. "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God is that Israel," and Paul was an Israelite. He says that, "Israel, my people, my kindred, my family, my friends, might be saved. My heart's desire, my cry to God is that they might be saved, that they might be delivered from the kingdom of darkness and translated as I have been into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

Is Paul saying that these Israelites are atheists? Oh, certainly not. Indeed, not. These Israelites weren't...his people weren't atheists. They believed in God. They believed in Jehovah. If Paul is saying that these people don't even believe in God, oh, no. They went to the synagogue every sabbath day and read the Scriptures. They believed in God. They weren't atheists.

Is he saying that these people were not religious? My they were religious. They were circumcised when they were born. They kept the feast days and the holy days and the first fruits and the Day of Atonement and all of these things. They...they went about these things.

Here is the problem, though. Look at verse two, now. Paul said, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for my people, my people Israel, my brethren, my kin folks, my family." He says, "I bear them record. I bear them record. I know them. I bear them record. I was in the same state one time, religious, but lost, very religious in ceremony and ritual and feast days and all these things. I know because I was one of them. I bear them record. They have a zeal of God. They have a zeal for God. But it is not according to knowledge. They have a zeal for God and for religion, but they don't know him. They don't know the true and living God. They know religion, but they don't know God. They know their ceremonies and their laws," he said, "But they don't know God. It is not according to knowledge."

He says, "They are ever learning, but they never come to the truth." He says...our Lord said, "You search the Scriptures. In them you think you have life, but they are they which testify of me and you won't come to me that you might have life." They wouldn't come to Christ.

They have a zeal for God. They are ever learning, never coming to a knowledge of the truth. And they rest in their laws and their rituals and their ceremonies and not in Christ.

See, this is true when our Lord came to this earth. The Scripture says he was in the world. The Lord God was in the world in the flesh made of a woman. He was in the world. The

world was made by him and the world didn't know him. He came unto his own. He came unto the Jewish people. His own tabernacle, tent. I mean, his own temple, his own people. He came unto his own. They received him not.

Christ said to the Pharisees, the very leaders of Israel, he said, "You don't know me. And you don't know my Father."

And here is the clear proof that they didn't know him. Now this is it, Romans 10. Look at verse one. He said, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel, religious people who believe God, who search the Scriptures that they might be saved. I bear them record. They have a zeal for God. They have an enthusiasm for God, but it is not according to knowledge." And here is proof of it. Listen. Here is the clear proof that these people did not know God. And many people today who in religion do not know God. And here is the proof of it. For they—verse three, "They being ignorant of God's righteousness, true holiness, they being ignorant of true holiness they are going about to establish their own holiness, their own righteousness and have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God which is Jesus Christ. That's proof they don't know God, that they are going about establishing their own righteousness and will not submit to his righteousness which he gave to us and provided for us and purchased for us on the cross."

Charles Spurgeon, great old preacher of many years ago, he wrote this about that verse, verse three of Romans 10. he says, "Being ignorant of God's righteousness, of the righteousness which God provides in Jesus Christ which makes a person accepted of God in thought, Word and deed, the righteousness of Christ which clothed us, makes us accepted to God."

Well, these people, these religious people are seeking to establish a means of salvation, a way of life, a holiness of their own to bring to God, to present to God their works and their deeds and their religion. They are making their own way of salvation, their own means of salvation, their own way of holiness and presenting it to God, a way of life and a holiness of their own. And they will not believe on and rest in the blood and righteousness of Christ.

Now listen carefully to me for just a few moments.

You say, "Well, a preacher ought not say that people do not know God. A preacher ought not say that...that people....don't be judgmental."

I am not. But I tell you this. When a person tries to come to God with his own works and his own deeds in place of the righteousness of Christ he doesn't know God.

Now, listen to me. I am going to give you four things. Listen carefully. Number one. Any person who thinks that a holy God can love us and accept us on the basis of our good works and our deeds and our righteousness, he doesn't know this God. God is holy. God cannot be satisfied with anything but perfection. And if I bring him like Cain

brought the fruits of the field, his own works, God almighty cannot be satisfied with that. He is only satisfied with Christ. He said, "This is my Son in whom I am well pleased."

Now, secondly, any person who thinks that anything he does or thinks or says is holy or righteous, he does not know what true holiness is. If he thinks that his good works can present him to God and God can accept him on the basis of those works, he doesn't know God. And if he thinks he has any good works, he doesn't know what true holiness is.

There is sin in everything we do and everything we think and everything we say. We have sinned and come short of the glory of God. If any man says he has not sinned he deceives himself. If any man says he has no sin he makes God a liar.

Now here the third thing. Any person who cannot say, who cannot say, "I am a sinner," doesn't know himself. Any person who cannot say right now where you are sitting, "I have sinned and come short of the glory of God. I am a sinner and in my flesh dwelleth no good thing. In my flesh nor anyone else can please God." Can you say that? I can't say that. You don't know yourself. You don't know yourself. If you think you are...that God, the God of heaven and earth can accept your works in preference to his Son's obedience, you don't know God.

And if you think that your works are good you don't know what holiness is. And if you can't say, "I am a sinner and I have sinned against God," you don't know yourself. And any person who cannot say with Toplady, "In my hands no price I bring, simply to the cross of Christ I cling. Could my tears forever flow, could my zeal no respite know, these for sin could never atone. Christ must save and Christ alone."

If a man can't say that he does not know the gospel. So that is what I am saying. A man can be religious and lost like the Israelites of old. Paul said, "My heart's desire and prayer to God is that these people might be saved. I bear them record. They have a zeal for God, but they don't know God." And I'll tell you why I now they don't God. They are going about to establish a holiness of their own, a holiness of their own. They are bringing their works and their deeds and their sacrifices and all of these things to God and saying, "I kept it." He can't, he won't. It has to be perfect.

They don't know God. They don't know what holiness is. They don't know themselves. And they don't know the gospel.

It is when a person thinks that his religion, his works, his deeds, will enable him to find favor with God and that God will open for him a place in heaven based on his goodness does not know God whose name is holy and reverent. He does not know what true holiness is. It has to be perfect to be accepted. He does not know himself or what happened in the garden when sin passed upon all men for all sinned. And he does not know the gospel.

Now look at verse four. Christ is true holiness. He has not submitted himself to the righteousness of God which is in Christ, for—look at verse four—for Christ Jesus is the

end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth. Christ Jesus is the end of the law for righteousness, for true holiness. He is our holiness for everyone that believeth.

Now what does this mean the end of the law? Well, let me tell you. You listen. It means Jesus Christ is the goal of the law. He is the objective of the law. The law wasn't given to save. The law was given from Sinai to a bunch of people that were at that moment dancing around an idol, a calf, committing all kind of evil when Moses was up there receiving the law.

“Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not bear false...”

When he received that they were down there worshipping a calf. The law wasn't given to save. The law can't save. It was given to shut us up to Christ, to point us to the Son of God, to drive us to Christ as our Savior. The law was given as a mirror to show us what we are, who we are, what we have done, what we haven't done. It shut us up to faith in a Savior.

Secondly, Christ is the end of the law as a covenant. Do this and live. That is what the law said. But we can't do it. We can't attain unto that perfection. So with us it can't be do this and live. It has to be believe and live. That is the new covenant: believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. Christ Jesus, he says that, “He who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” So he is the end of the law as a covenant.

And, thirdly, he is the end of the law as a curse. Galatians says, “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.”

Well, you say, “I have been pretty good.”

All things. If you offend in one point the whole law is gone. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us.

And then, fourthly, Christ is the fulfillment of the law. He said, “I didn't come to destroy the law. I came to fulfill it.” The Lord Jesus Christ as a man didn't come to destroy the Levitical law. He came to fulfill it. Every type, picture, shadow, prophecy is fulfilled in Christ.

When they had fulfilled all that was written of him they took him down from the tree. He fulfilled every jot and tittle of the Old Testament. Not only that, but the moral law. Christ Jesus was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. As a man he prayed to the Father. He said, “I have glorified you on the earth. I have honored your law, obeyed it perfectly to give to my people a holiness, a true holiness, a holiness with which God can be satisfied, which God can receive, accept us in the beloved.”

That is true holiness. It is his.

All right. Verse five. Now listen to verse five. “For Moses describes the righteousness which is of the law.” Here it is. Here is the righteousness which is of the law. Anyone who wants to present a law righteousness to God, here it is, here it is. The only way that a person can find holiness and righteousness before God based on the law is to do it perfectly from the cradle to the grave, not one idle word, not one evil thought, not one exaggeration, not one selfish deed, the law says be ye holy as I am holy saith your God.

Well, that lets every one of us out. If that is the way to be saved nobody is going to be saved. But now verse six says, “But the holiness and righteousness which is ours by faith, by the faithfulness of Christ and by faith in Christ, it speaks on this wise. Don’t say who is going to ascend to heaven to bring Christ down. It doesn’t require any work on your part. Besides that, he has already come. Don’t say in your heart who is going to descend into the grave to bring Christ up. He has already risen. But what does it say? It says believe on him. Believe on him.”

You see, Christ Jesus the God man, the second Adam came from heaven made of a woman, made under the law. He was a man. Just as Adam was made under the law and he fell. He took us with him. Jesus Christ was made under the law and obeyed it and took us with him. As in Adam we die, in Christ we are made alive. As we have born the image of the earthy we bear the image of the heavenly. And Jesus Christ not by hook and crook, but by obedience and faith and blood, he imputed to us a perfect holiness, a true holiness with which God almighty can be satisfied. And on the basis of which he can accept you.

See, he obeyed the law in every jot and tittle. He loved God with all his heart. He loved his neighbor as himself. He died under the judgment for our sins. He is risen from the dead. He ascended to the right hand of God where he makes intercession for us. And he will come again to receive us unto himself.

The truth of Christ—this is what he is saying—this, this righteousness of faith which is in Christ Jesus the Lord is in your mouth and in your heart. It is so plain. It is so clear. It is in the mouth of the preacher. It is in the book for you to read. It is the gospel which we preach.

Now, verse nine. “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth, if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus to be Lord.” That is what that says there. “Thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus.” It is Jesus to be Lord.

Now let me tell you what I confess. I confess that Jesus Christ is my Lord. He is God my Lord. His name is wonderful, counselor, the mighty God, the prince of peace, the everlasting Father. The Father and the Son are one. God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. God was in Christ. That’s right. I confess that Jesus Christ is my prophet. God spoke to the fathers by the prophets. He has spoken to us by his Son. He came preaching the gospel. He revealed the gospel. The Son of God is come and given us an understanding that we may know him that is true. He is the true God. He is everlasting

life. We are in him, the true God. He is my prophet. He is my priest. I have a priest. I have a high priest. He doesn't minister here on the earth. He ministers in heaven. He has entered once into the holy place not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, not with the blood of animals, but with his own precious blood and made intercession and accomplished redemption.

I believe Jesus Christ is my king, my only king. He is my Lord and my God. I like what Thomas said when he fell at his feet, "My Lord and my God."

I confess him publicly in baptism. And why do I confess all this? Because I believe it in my heart. If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus to be Lord and believe it in your heart you will be saved. But don't try to come to God on the merits of your righteousness. You don't have any. Christ is our holiness.

Write for the tape "True Holiness." And until next week God bless you.