

Romans 10:5–9

The Law Taught Righteousness by Faith

Monday, December 25, 2023 • Read Romans 10:5–9

Questions from the Scripture text: In whom did those who sought righteousness by works of the law (cf. 9:32a) think they were trusting (v5)? What sort of righteousness were they hoping for? How did they think they could get it? But what righteousness had they missed out on (v6, cf. 9:32b)? How does it speak (cf. Deut. 32:12)—what are they not to say? To what does the apostle liken attempting to ascend into heaven? What else are they not to say (v7)? To what does the apostle liken descending into the abyss? What does the righteousness of faith say (v8)? To what does the apostle liken the Word being near (v8)? What does the Word of faith, which the apostle preaches, look like in their mouth (v9)? What does it look like in their heart? What will surely happen, if it is in both of these places?

Had God offered His people to earn life by works? Romans 10:5–9 prepares us for the sermon in the midweek prayer meeting. In these five verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **God has always presented Himself as His people's salvation, not upon a principle of works, but always upon a principle of faith in Him.**

In 9:31, the apostle had mentioned those Israelites who pursued a law of righteousness, but did not attain to it. His answer for why their pursuit failed was that they did not seek it by faith but by works of the law (9:32). If by the Spirit's grace they would have pursued the law by faith before Christ came, then when He came and presented Himself as the LORD our righteousness, they would then have acknowledged Him as the LORD and hoped in Him from righteousness (by the same Spirit!).

However, they were accustomed to reading Moses as saying that doing this merits life. They would quote Lev 18:5 as if it supported their pursuit, by works, of the law of righteousness. In God's good providence to us, we are still working through Leviticus in the Lord's Day evening preaching, and chapter 18 is fresh in our minds. We remember how the chapter as a whole is about how YHWH is the One Who makes a difference in His people, how He prefaces it by His saving them and binding them to Himself, just as He had preface the Ten Commandments with the same announcement of grace (cf. Ex 20:1–2, Deu 5:6).

So, in God's providence, we have been well-prepared to come to Rom 10:5 and not read the apostle as if he is asserting that Lev 18:5 presented some republication of the covenant of works or even some "works principle" for the relationship between God and Israel. No, if they were going to walk in the manner that enjoyed life and laid hold of life, it was going to be by the grace of the same Lord Who had come near them already in His Word.

The apostle answers the wrong way of reading "those who do them shall live by them" is to refer them to Deu 30, where the Lord had also said, "I have set before you today life [...] keep His commandments [...] that you may live" (Deu 30:15, 16). It is the same principle in both passages! Not a works principle in one passage and a faith principle in the other. We have already seen that the obedience and life in Leviticus 18 did not operate on a works principle but a faith principle. Now, the apostle chooses a parallel passage in which the faith principle is even clearer.

In vv6–8, he quotes and explanation Deu 30:12–14, which immediately precede the offering of life that parallels' the Israelites' quote from Lev 18:5. And the apostle's explanation clearly mirrors Deu 30:11, which presents the commandment as being something accessible and near: not something difficult that they are to produce for God, but something that God brings so near as to put in their hearts Himself and to put in their mouth Himself; this is the key to doing it (v8, cf. Deu 14).

The logic of faith that was already there in the law in Deu 30 is even plainer in the Lord Jesus. In Deu 30:12, the Lord points out that He has brought His Word from heaven to earth; they did not have to go retrieve it. Now, the apostle makes the same point in an even greater way in v6. You can't contribute to your own righteousness any more than you could contribute to bringing Christ down from heaven in the incarnation!

In Deu 30:13, the Lord points out that His Word is not far away so that they would have to brave the depths of the sea to go retrieve it. Now, the apostle makes the same point in an even greater way in v7. You can't contribute to your own righteousness any more than you could contribute to bringing Christ up from the grave in the resurrection!

The logic of Deu 30 holds in Rom 10. If the Lord has gone to the lengths that He has already, to put His word in their mouths and in their hearts, then surely He will complete their salvation (v9). This is not a works-principle for the confessing and believing of Christ in the gospel any more than Deu 30 was a works-principle for obedience to the law. Rather, it is a demonstration by Who saved us (Jesus!) and how (Incarnation! Resurrection!) that the only way of being made right with God is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. It is not at all by works, but by Christ, as God graciously makes us to confess Him with our mouths that He is YHWH in the flesh, and to believe in Him with our heart that He is the resurrected Redeemer.

Now, this does not mean that the confessing and believing aren't important. They are very important. Indeed, they are required. But "necessary" does not mean "meritorious." The confessing is a gift of grace; the believing is a gift of grace; the Christ to Whom this believing unites us is a gift of grace. And we can be absolutely sure that to every single one to whom God gives all of this by His grace, He will surely give the whole of His blessed salvation by that grace, in His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

If you don't believe in the incarnation of the LORD, or if you don't believe in the bodily resurrection of Christ, you can be just as sure that you are lost that the Christian can be sure that he is saved. For, it is God Who saves, and He does so in this incarnate and resurrected Christ, Whom the saved confess as incarnate and believe in as resurrected.

But if you do believe, then that believing is not a work that you have done, but a work that God has done. The same Savior God Who gave Jesus from heaven and brought Jesus from the grave is the Savior God Who has given you to confess Him and to believe in Him. Hallelujah!

In what ways are you tempted to treat your confessing as needing to be good enough to earn salvation? In what ways are you tempted to treat your believing as needing to be good enough to earn salvation? Where do confessing and believing come from in the first place? What (Who!) is good enough to earn your salvation? From where can you get more of confessing Him and believing in Him, as you find that your own confessing and believing are too small?

Sample prayer: We thank You, our God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—that You have saved us entirely by Your grace, through faith in Jesus Christ, without our contribution at all, You gave Him from heaven to become a Man for us, without our contribution at all, You brought Him up in the resurrection on account of our salvation. And without our help at all, it is You Who have given us the faith by which we confess Him as LORD and believe His bodily resurrection. So, keep helping us by Your Spirit, we pray, until You Who started the work have brought it unto completion. Give us to work out our own salvation by Your working in us both to will and to work according to Your own good pleasure, we ask through Christ, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP32AB "What Blessedness" or TPH517 "I Know Whom I Have Believed"

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Romans chapter 10 5 through 9, these are God's words. For Moses right to that the righteousness, which is of the law. The man who does those things shall live by them? With 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, or who will descend into the abyss. That is to bring Christ up from the dead. 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. 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. So far the reading of God's inspired and And therein toward, And 931, the apostle had mentioned. Those Israelites who Uh, pursued a law of righteousness. But did not attain to that law of righteousness.

And why didn't they attain it? Because this verse 32 says, They did not seek it by faith. Was it, but as it were By the works of the law. So, if by the Spirit's grace, They would have pursued the law. Of righteousness, by faith in God. Who offered himself to be their righteousness, to make them righteous.

He indeed would have by grace through that faith that he had given them. He would have made them righteous in himself. A faith. Of course, it would be by faith in Jesus. Because Christ is the One in him, God has made himself. Our righteousness, and that's where The apostle has just come from as we begin in verse 5.

When he says for Christ, is the end of the law for righteousness. To everyone who believes God has always had. A law of righteousness that was to be pursued, not by works. But by faith, But is especially when Christ comes that we see the way in which God makes himself our righteousness by faith.

Now, the apostle answers. Those who Uh, would pursue The law of righteousness or were pursuing even The law of righteousness, as if it were by works. Using their own contention from Leviticus 18, verse 5, Which if you just lift, The middle portion of the verse, You get the man.

Who does those things shall live by them? And so he says, verse 5 for Moses writes about the righteousness, which is of the law. The man who does those things shall live by them? But the righteousness of faith speaks, in this way. You know, who he quotes in the next few verses.

Moses. From Deuteronomy chapter 30. A place in which Moses by the spirit had said I set before you life and death. And if you keep the commandments of God, it will be life. And if you don't, you will die. And so it's the same exact sort of thing that he is.

That he was describing and Leviticus 18 verse 5, which by the way, Since we have just been in Leviticus 18, you probably still remember from just a few weeks ago that the point of the chapter as a whole, is that it's the Lord who makes the difference. It's the Lord who saved them out of Egypt.

And they were not to be like the Egyptians is the Lord who saved them to bring them into the land of the Canaanites. And they were not to be like the Canaanites. Then that the Lord who had saved them. Would also make the difference between them. And all of these other nations.

So that when he said those who do these things to live by them, he wasn't saying If you are good enough to earn life from me by how hard you work, That may have been. Indeed was The way that the unbelieving Israelites the pursuing it as if it were by works of the law is realized red, Leviticus 18:5 but they were reading it incorrectly.

And surely the apostle could have said that from Leviticus 18 5 but there's a parallel passage and Deuteronomy 30. Where it's still Moses writing about whom they claimed. That they were that they were such devout followers of Moses. And in Deuteronomy 30, he gives the same principle Indeed, in Uh, Deuteronomy 30 and verse 15.

He says, I have set before you life. And verse 16, keep has commandments. That you may live. But it's verses 12 through 14. Immediately proceeding that that is quoted here. Verse 12 quoted in verse Romans 10, verse 6 Deuteronomy. 30 verse 13, quoted in. Romans 10. Verse 7, Deuteronomy verse 30, verse 14.

Quoted in Deuteronomy and Romans 10. Verse 8. And what he does is, he shows how strongly God had emphasized. That this was not. God offering righteousness, by how hard you worked, or these feats of of work and spiritual strength and righteousness. But God, who had not only saved them, out of the land of Egypt, but had come near them in his word.

Indeed God who puts his own word in their mouth and puts us own word and their heart. So that if they do obey, Uh, it is. Of course, entirely by the grace of God. It is not something that is merited. By our works, but that has given by the mercy.

Of God. Who works in us. And so, he says, but the righteousness of faith speaks this way, do not say in your heart, who will ascend into heaven in the original context. He's saying, you know, you don't have, you didn't have to go to heaven, To get my word.

I came to you. With my word, and And I brought it to you. And he says, you didn't have to go across the sea. And brave, the depths of the sea to get my word. I brought it near you. Close to you. And now he takes that, which was already true enough and the original context and he makes application To the incarnation and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

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. In other words, You're righteousness cannot be by the works of the law. Because you cannot contribute to your righteousness, any more than you could contribute to Christ's incarnation.

So, do not say in your heart who will ascend into heaven, That is to bring Christ down from above. Or verse 7. Who will descend into the abyss? That is to bring Christ up from the death. From the dead. So not only could you not contribute to your righteousness anymore than you could to Jesus's incarnation.

To bring him down from heaven. You can't contribute to your righteousness any more than you could contribute to Jesus's resurrection. To bring him up from the grave. And so you can see how he takes the original context, which with God prophesying by Moses, how he had come near them by grace and it was not at all by their works.

But by the mercy of God, by the grace of God by their dependence, upon their faith in the living, God even then in Deuteronomy 30, How much more we know that now? When it isn't just God bringing his people out of Egypt and addressing them as Sinai. But God himself has come down from heaven as a man added humanity to himself in the incarnation of the Lord.

Jesus. And God himself has secured. There's their Uh, their redemption are redemption on account of which Christ rose from the dead. And we can't contribute to our being righteous anymore. Then we could contribute to either his incarnation. Or his resurrection. And so God, who did that in Christ is also the one who As he says, here in verse A Brings his word and puts it in our mouth.

Brings his word and puts it in our heart. He is the one. By his preaching, by the preaching of the gospel. Produces faith. So that we confess the truth about Jesus's incarnation. And we believe the truth. About Jesus's resurrection that if you confess with your mouth, the Lord Jesus.

So what if Christians confess with their mouths? That Yahweh has become a man named Jesus. That if you confess with your mouth, the Lord Jesus and Believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead. What is one thing that every Christian must believe in their hearts?

That Jesus Christ has been bodily raised from the dead. That our redeemer has not only paid for our sins, but on account of our salvation, an account of our justification, Jesus Christ was raised from raised from the dead death. Could not hold him. And the same God, who gives us?

The faith to believe the incarnation of Christ and the resurrection of Christ. He has given us Christ himself through that faith. And together with Christ. He gives us everything. In our salvation. And so, of course, if you confess your with your mouth, the Lord Jesus, who gave you to do that.

God, And believe in your heart that God has raised you from the dead who gave you to believe that God. You will be saved. Because God, who gave Christ and God who began applying Christ to you and has joined you to Christ isn't going to allow somehow. Your salvation to be interrupted or stopped or kept from happening.

You shall be. Saved. Not about a principle of works. Put it on a principle of faith. Which was the principal notification 185. Which was the principal in Deuteronomy, 30 11 through 16. Which is the principal in romans 10, 5 through 9. Which is the principal, and the whole bible.

Salvation by grace alone. Through faith alone. In christ alone. To the glory of god alone. And then, let's pray. Thank you, father for This portion of your word, we look forward to Sitting under the preaching of it. The midweek meeting. This week. We pray, lord that you would Help us by your spirit to resist.

That works principle that our flesh would read into your word. And instead read. Your whole word. That's teaching us salvation by faith. We thank you that you who gave christ? From heaven. And who raised him from the dead? And who have given us faith. To confess and to believe with our hearts, That you will surely complete our salvation.

So help us by your spirit. We ask in jesus name Amen.