

“That Stumblingstone”
Romans 9:30-33

Introduction:

1. This Morning - We Come To The End:
 - Of Romans 9:
 - So - Please Turn There With Me In Your Bibles:
 - Romans 9!
 - Where - All Throughout This Chapter:
 - The Apostle Paul Has Been Showing Us That:
 - Justification By Faith:
 - For Both Jews And Gentiles:
 - Has Been The Plan Of God:
 - Since The Beginning!
2. And - Even Though:
 - During His Time - And Even In Our Own:
 - Many, If Not Most, Of The Jewish People:
 - Have Rejected Their Messiah:
 - And Have Not Believed In Jesus Christ:
 - This Does Not Mean That:
 - God Has Failed:
 - In His Purposes & In His Plan!
- And So - All Throughout This Chapter:
 - Paul Has Used The Old Testament Scriptures:
 - To Prove That:
 - God Is & Has Always Been:
 - Faithful To His Promises!
 - And That:
 - He Is & Has Always Been:
 - More Than Fair To His People!
 - Because He Is Both Just And Merciful!
 - And That:
 - The Lord Is Not & Has Never Been:
 - The One At Fault & To Blame:
 - For The Sin & Rebellion Of His People!
 - And Even:
 - The Lord Has Not & Will Not:
 - Ever Forget His Plan!
3. And So - ***Far*** From ***Forgetting*** His Plan:
 - In Truth - God Is ***Fulfilling*** His Plan!
 - And So - At The End Of This Chapter:
 - We Discover Together:
 - Just What God’s Plan Is! And:
 - Just Who God’s People Are!
- And So - Beginning At 9:30 - Paul Writes:
 - 9:30-33 - “What shall we say then?”
 - Or - What Can We Take Away From All Of This?
 - All Of This Discussion About The Character & Conduct Of God?
 - “That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. / But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. / Wherefore? Because [they sought it] not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; / As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed!”
4. The Plan Of God:
 - To Save Sinners:
 - Is & Has Always Been:
 - By Grace Alone:
 - Through Faith Alone:

- In Jesus Christ Alone:
 - Who Is “A Stumblingstone And Rock Of Offense!”

- This Is The Great Theme:

- Not Only Of Romans - But:
 - Of God’s Eternal Plan!
 - Back In 3:28 - Paul Wrote:
 - “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law!”
 - Then - In 5:1 - Paul Wrote:
 - “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ!”

5. So - Once Again - We Are Reminded That:
- Faith Is:

1. *The Real Path For Sinners!*

- The Real Path & The Only Path:
 - To A Right Relationship & Standing With God!
 - And - This Is What We Find In:
 - 9:30-32 - In The Contrast Between:
 - The Gentile Nations & The People Of Israel!
 - So - Paul First Wants Us To:
 - Consider The Gentiles!
 - 9:30 - “What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith!”
 - Now - In This Verse - The Apostle Paul Is Speaking In General Terms!
 - He Does Not Mean That Every Gentile In Ever Nation:
 - Has “Attained To Righteousness!”
 - But - At That Time & Even In Our Time:
 - More & More Of Us Who Were “Not Considered His People” Are Now Being:
 - 9:26 - “Called The Children Of The Living God!”
 - But - How Did This Happen?
 - Especially When You:
 - Think About Our Past!
 - 9:30 - “Which Followed Not After Righteousness!”
 - The Bible Is Clear About:
 - The Kind Of Sinners We Are!
 - Utterly Helpless & Hopeless!
 - Paul Puts It This Way In Ephesians 2:11-12:
 - “Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; / That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world!”
 - And Then - In Ephesians 4:19:
 - We Are Even Told That - “Being past feeling [we had] given [our]selves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness!”
 - This Means That We All Sought To Live Our Lives:
 - Without Any Concern:
 - About God & His Righteousness & His Truth!
 - And So - We All Sought To Live:
 - Without Conviction!
 - Without Care!
 - And - Without Christ!
 - This Is All Of Our Pasts!
 - And Did We / Do We Deserve:
 - The Mercy & Grace Of God?
 - No! But What Does Paul Tell Us Next In 9:30?
 - Think About Our Present!
 - 9:30 - “The Gentiles, Which Followed Not After Righteousness, Have Attained To

- Righteousness!”
 - Again - Not All Gentiles:
 - But Many Gentiles!
 - Including Many Of You Today!
 - The “Righteousness” That Has Been “Attained”:
 - Is The Righteousness:
 - That Is Required To Stand Before God – According To His Terms!
 - Its Not **Our** Righteousness:
 - But **His** Righteousness:
 - Even The Righteousness Of Jesus Christ!
 - God Has Invited Us:
 - To Have A Relationship With Him:
 - And Many Of Us:
 - Have Accepted His Invitation & RSVP’d! How?
- Think About Our Provision!
 - 9:30 - “Even The Righteousness Which Is Of Faith!”
 - This Is The Real Path:
 - For Sinners Like Us!
 - Faith!
 - Faith In:
 - The Gospel Of God’s Mercy:
 - Not - Our Merit!
 - Faith In:
 - The Gospel Of God’s Grace:
 - Not - Our Good Works!
 - Faith In:
 - The Lord Jesus Christ:
 - And His Righteousness:
 - Which Is A Gift To All Who Believe!
 - Even As We Are Told In:
 - Ephesians 2:8-9 - “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: / Not of works, lest any man should boast!”
- This Path Has Always Been:
 - The Plan Of God For Sinners!
 - The Path Of Faith!
 - But Then - Paul Wants Us To:
- Consider The Jews!
 - 9:31-32a - “But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. / Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law!”
 - Again - The Apostle Paul Is Speaking In General Terms!
 - He Does Not Mean That Every Jew:
 - “Hath Not Attained To The Law Of Righteousness!”
 - Because - Even He Had!
 - But - At That Time & Even In Our Time:
 - So Many Who Were Considered To Be The People Of God:
 - According To Hosea 1:9 - He Said To Them - “Ye Are Not My People, And I Will Not Be Your God!”
 - But - How Did This Happen?
 - Well - Paul Wants Us To - Once Again:
- Think About Their Past!
 - 9:31a - “But Israel, Which Followed After The Law Of Righteousness!”
 - The People Of Israel Were The Ones:
 - Who God Chose To Give:
 - His Law - Which Paul Describes In 7:12 - As “Holy And Just And Good!”
 - And They Became:
 - Very Earnest & Diligent:
 - In Trying To Keep That Righteous Law!

- But - There Was A Problem!
 - Because - There Is A Difference Between:
 - Pursuing & Following After:
 - The Righteousness Of God, Which Is Revealed By The Law! And:
 - Pursuing & Following After:
 - The Law Which Cannot Make Anyone Righteous!
 - But - They Tried!
 - And That Was The Problem!
 - Because - No Matter How Much A Person Tries To Keep God's Moral Law:
 - As James Tells Us In James 2:10 - "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all!"
 - So Now:
- Think About Their Present!
 - 9:31 - "But Israel, Which Followed After The Law Of Righteousness, Hath Not Attained To The Law Of Righteousness!"
 - Not Only Did They Fail To Reach:
 - The Standard Of God's Perfect Righteousness & Holiness!
 - They Even Failed To Reach:
 - The Standard Of God's Law!
 - **IE:** The Train That They Were On Never Reached Its Destination!
 - So - Even The Law:
 - They Tried To Keep:
 - They Didn't & They Couldn't!
 - Even Though - "They Tugged And Toiled, And Labored With All Their Might!" (Gill)
 - They Tried To Follow:
 - But They Failed!
 - And So - Paul Wants Us To:
- Think About Their Presumption!
 - 9:32 - "Wherefore? Because They Sought It Not By Faith, But As It Were By The Works Of The Law!"
 - Once Again - It Is Faith:
 - That Is The Real Path:
 - For Sinners!
 - But - They Presumed That:
 - Their Sin Was Not All That Sinful!
 - They Thought That:
 - They Could - By Their Own Efforts - Measure Up To The Righteousness Of God!
 - But - They Failed To See That:
 - God's Law Goes Deeper Than:
 - Just The Words & Works:
 - That Were Given To Them!
 - If You Remember From Our Study:
 - Through The Ten Commandments Last Year - We Learned That:
 - Each Commandment Flows From The Nature & Character Of God!
 - **IE:** Even As Today - Laws Reflect The Legislators! Good Or Bad!
 - For Example:
 - The First Commandment:
 - Reflects The Truth:
 - That God Is A Unique God:
 - That Is - He Is The Only God!
 - So - In Exodus 20:3 - We Are Told - "Thou shalt have no other gods before me!"
 - The Tenth Commandment:
 - Reflects The Truth:
 - That God Is A Satisfying God!
 - Because - When You Have Him - Or Rather - When He Has You - You Truly Have All

You Need!

- And This Truth Underlies The Commandment In Exodus 20:17 - "Thou Shalt Not Covet!"

- And So - When It Comes To The "Works Of The Law" - Its More About:

- Who You Are On The Inside - Than:

- What You Do On The Outside!

- In Psalm 51:6 We Are Told:

- That The Lord "Desirest Truth In The Inward Parts!"

- The Contrast Between:

- The Pursuit Of The Gentiles & The Jews:

- Couldn't Be Greater!

- But - It Reveals That:

- The True Path - The Real Path:

- For Sinners:

- Is Faith!

- As Paul Tells Us Later:

- In Galatians 2:16 - "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified!"

- But - What Happened:

- To The People Of Israel:

- To Cause This Contrast?

- Well - In 9:32 - The Apostle Paul Gives Us:

2. ***The Real Problem For Sinners!***

- 9:32b - "For they stumbled at that stumblingstone!"

- **IE:** Have You Ever Walked Or Ran Along A Path - And Tripped Over A Rock Or Stone? This Is What Paul Is Describing For Us! This Is What Happened To The People Of Israel!

- Along Their Path - Of Trying To Please God By Their Insufficient Works - Their Feet Struck A Stone! They Tripped & They Fell!

- "They Stumbled At That Stumblingstone!"

- But - What Was That Stone & How Did It Get In Their Path?

- Well - In 9:33 - Paul, Once Again, Blends Together:

- Some Quotes From The Old Testament:

- From Isaiah 8:14 & Isaiah 28:16:

- That Describe This "Stumblingstone!"

- And - The First Thing We Learn About That Stone:

- Is That It Was / Is:

- A Stone Of God's Initiation!

- As Paul Writes In:

- 9:33a - "As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone!"

- This Is God Speaking!

- And He Says - "Behold, I Lay In Sion!"

- This Stone Was No Common Stone:

- That Gets Uncovered On A Well-Worn Footpath!

- No - This Stone Was:

- Purposely & Perfectly Placed There - On That Path:

- By God!

- In Fact - He Is Still Placing This Stone:

- In The Path:

- Of Each Person In This World!

- And - It Is:

- A Stone Of God's Interference!

- Mount Zion Refers To:

- The Mountain-Top Where:

- God Met With His People:

- In The Great Temple Of Jerusalem!

- So - In The Place:

- Where Israel Would Go:

- To Meet With God:
 - For Worship & Fellowship & Forgiveness Through Sacrifice & Instruction!
- In The Place:
 - Were All Faithful Jews Would Flow:
 - And Set Their Affections & Even Their Prayers Toward!
- There - God Places:
 - 9:33 - "A Stumblingstone!"
 - This Stone:
 - Is The Interference Of God:
 - With The Plans & The Affairs Of Man!
 - While We Are:
 - Going Our Own Ways - And:
 - Doing Our Own Things:
 - Sometimes - Even Good Things!
 - God Puts This Stone Of Stumbling:
 - Into The Path Of Your Life:
 - To Get Your Attention!
 - But - For Sinners Like Us:
 - That Stone Becomes:
- A Stone Of God's Insult!
 - It Becomes - 9:33 - A "Rock Of Offense!"
 - This Stone Insults:
 - The Plans & Desires & Even:
 - The Belief Systems:
 - Of Those Who Think They Both *Know & Have*:
 - What It Takes To Stand Before God!
- This Stone Of:
 - God's Initiation!
 - God's Interference!
 - And - God's Insult:
 - To Whatever "Sensibilities" We Have As Sinners!
 - Is Jesus Christ:
 - And His Righteousness!
 - In His Life & In His Death!
 - It Is Jesus Christ:
 - Who Is The "Stumblingstone & Rock Of Offense":
 - To The People Of Israel!
 - According To John 1:10:
 - "He came unto his own, and his own received him not!" - Why?
 - Because - They Stumbled At & Were Offended By:
 - His Pedigree!
 - His Poverty!
 - His People - "A Friend Of Publicans And Sinners!"
 - His Profession!
 - His Principles & Teachings!
 - His Purpose - Mark 10:45 - "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many!"
 - And All Of This Was Also Prophesied:
 - By Isaiah - In Isaiah 53:3-4:
 - "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. / We did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted!"
 - But - Jesus Isn't Just:
 - A "Stumblingstone & Rock Of Offense" To:
 - The Jews Only! But To Gentiles!
 - To The World!
 - 1 Corinthians 1:23 - "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness!"
 - And - This Is The Real Problem:

- For Sinners!
 - We Don't Think We Need:
 - A Savior Like Jesus!
 - In Fact - Most Do Not **Want**:
 - A Savior Like Jesus!
- Our Feet Hit This Rock:
 - And We Stumble & Fall:
 - Because We Do Not Want:
 - To Leave Our Own Pathway Of Sin & Self-Righteousness!
- But - As Paul Ends This Ninth Chapter:
 - He Doesn't Leave Us:
 - Fallen On That Path!
 - Because - Then - He Reminds Us Of:

3. ***The Real Promise For Sinners!***

- 9:33 - "And Whosoever Believeth On Him Shall Not Be Ashamed!"
 - This Is How We Know That:
 - The Stone Of Stumbling & The Rock Of Offense:
 - Is Not An Object:
 - But A Person!
 - A "Him!"
 - The Reason Why God The Father:
 - Sent His Only Begotten Son Into This World:
 - To Interfere & Even To Insult:
 - Our Sinful Sensibilities:
 - Was So That We Could, By Faith In & On That Rock:
 - Be Saved!
 - You See - Once You Trip Over A Rock:
 - You Have A Choice To Make!
 - First - You Can Choose:
 - To Ignore It:
 - And Keep On The Same Path:
 - You Are On!
 - It Probably Hurt & Stung A Little:
 - And - You Might Curse At It For A Time:
 - But Eventually - You Will Get Over It:
 - And Follow The Path:
 - That Is "Broad" And "Leadeth To Destruction!"
 - Second - You Can Choose:
 - To Remove It!
 - By Picking It Up:
 - And Throwing It As Far From Your Path As Possible:
 - As Just A Nuisance & A Common Stone!
 - It Was Just Something:
 - That Got In Your Way:
 - And You Will Never Give It A Second Thought!
 - Or - Third - You Can Choose:
 - To Pick It Up:
 - And See It For The Rock That It Is!
 - There's A Part Of Isaiah 28:16 That The Apostle Paul Did Not Quote:
 - But - Tells Us The Kind Of Stone Christ Is!
 - He Is - "A tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste!"
 - That Stone Of Stumbling & Rock Of Offense:
 - Is - In Reality - A Jewel!
 - A Precious, Though Tried, Corner Stone!
 - And - "Whosoever Believeth On Him Shall Not Be Ashamed!" (9:33)
 - This Means That - When You Trust In Jesus Christ:
 - As The Rock Of Your Salvation - You Will Have No Reason To Be

Ashamed!

- Because - In Jesus:
 - 2 Corinthians 1:20 - "All the promises of God – are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us!"
 - All That God Promises:
 - In And Through Jesus:
 - Are Real!

Conclusion:

1. So - The Plan Of God:
 - All Along - No Matter:
 - Who You Are Or Where You Came From:
 - Has Always Been:
 - What Will You Do With Jesus?
 - What Think Ye Of Christ?
 - That "Stone Of Stumbling & Rock Of Offense?"
2. Will You:
 - Believe In That Tested Stone:
 - That "Tried Stone" - That Was:
 - Wounded For Your Transgressions & Bruised For Your Iniquities?
 - Or - Will You:
 - Stumble & Fall:
 - Because You Want To Keep Enjoying The Pleasures Of Your Sin For A Season?
3. Will You:
 - Believe In That Treasure Stone:
 - That "Precious Cornerstone" - That:
 - Luke 20:17-18 - "Is Become The Head Of The Corner!"
 - Or - Will You:
 - Ignore & Reject Him:
 - Because You Think You Can Live Your Life & Make It To Heaven Without Him?
 - Remember What Jesus Said - About Himself:
 - "Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder!"
4. Or - Will You:
 - Believe In The Truth Of That Stone!
 - Believe In All:
 - That He Is - And:
 - All That He's Done - And:
 - All That He Promises!
 - Because:
 - What You Can't Do:
 - He Has! And:
 - What You Are Not:
 - He Is!
5. This Has Always Been The Plan Of God!
 - John 3:16 - "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life!"

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