

God's Plan of Righteousness ***Romans 10:5-15***

¹Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. ²For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. ³Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. ⁴Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

In today's Bible lesson, Paul celebrated the simplicity of the gospel message. Though not simplistic in a pejorative way, the gospel is simple enough to be understood by children, teens and adults without respect to education, income or background.

Paul acknowledged in verse 5 that if a man could perfectly and completely keep the whole law of God for a lifetime, then he would be declared righteous. But the reality is, no one ever has or even will keep the law perfectly (with the exception of Christ). The law is a unit. To break one provision of the law is to leave one guilty of breaking the whole law of God. David Jeremiah put it this way, "*the law of God stands or falls as a unit. It is like a chain that bridges a gap. If one link in the chain breaks, the entire chain is worthless. Breaking one link has the same effect as breaking them all.*"

God's plan for righteousness involves Christ and our receipt of Him into our lives by faith. God works with us on the basis of faith. We receive the righteousness of Christ by faith. Paul explained the gospel message in verses 9-13. We confess "Jesus is Lord" with our mouths (indicating a considered, volitional act of the will . . . one has thoughtfully chosen to declare Christ as Lord). We believe God has raised Him from the dead. We call upon His name for salvation. The result is justification and salvation (see verse 10).

And God's prescription works for everyone (see verse 13). God elects and saves all who come to Him through the righteousness of Jesus and faith and trust in His work at the cross. "*There is a simple word, the word of faith, which can be found in the mouth of any who want to find the righteousness of God.*" Faith in Jesus requires faith in His finished work at the cross, faith in His Lordship, faith in His resurrection and faith in His capacity to save us. David Jeremiah noted that through the resurrection of Jesus, the benefits of the cross are applied to our lives.

There is an egalitarian dimension to the gospel revealed in verses 12-13. God is not a respecter of persons. In Paul's day, the big distinctions would have been between Jews and Gentiles. In our day, people are more frequently divided by race, wealth (or lack thereof), education or social standing. But in Christ, those differences vanish. We are saved by and servants of the same Lord. David Jeremiah wrote that *"all people need to know that they can find righteousness before God by believing in their heart that Jesus Christ is the resurrected Lord."*

God calls those who have heard and responded to this gospel message to be the ones who carry it onward and forward to those who have either not heard or not responded. In verses 14-15, Paul acknowledged the practical difficulties of responding to a gospel that one has not yet heard. So God's people are sent to proclaim, to teach, to declare what God has done for the world in Christ. An unbelieving person or world cannot come to faith in Christ if that gospel has not been presented and an invitation extended.

So God sends not just some, but all Christians. Every believer in Jesus is commissioned and sent to speak about Christ and their salvation to those who have not heard or not believed. Indeed, the Bible says that the feet of those who carry and proclaim the gospel are beautiful. The Lord sends us out. We speak the truth of the gospel. People hear and respond. Those responding call on the Lord. Those who call are saved. Those who are saved are sent. This process continues to unfold in 2010.

Applications . . .

- 1. Practice being able to share a simple gospel message in less than two minutes.**
- 2. Practice your presentation on someone who may not be a Christian.**
- 3. Be willing and available to speak about Christ and His gift of salvation.**
- 4. Pray for the salvation of children in our soccer ministry.**