

Romans 10

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[0 : 00] Now, would you please stand with me in the chapter we read in Romans chapter 10. I do not have one verse or one specific text, but I would like to look at one aspect, one teaching, one lesson that we can learn from this chapter.

I would like to take verse 1 as a kind of starting point for us this morning. And in verse 1, the Apostle Paul says, Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved. Now, this verse is in striking contrast with the previous chapter. In the previous chapter, the Apostle Paul speaks of God's sovereignty.

In chapter 9, the Apostle Paul clearly, unmistakably says that it is not of our doing, it is not of our will, it is not of our choice.

If we are saved, it is because of God. Paul says, God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy. God is the one who loved Jacob and hated Esau.

[1 : 26] Before they were born, there was an eternal decree, an eternal choice. Jacob was saved, not because he was better, not because God saw any good in him in the future.

God saved him because it pleased the Lord to do this. Salvation is according to God's plan, God's will, God's grace, God's word.

We are but the recipients, the receivers of this salvation. And Paul says, some people are prepared to be for honor and others for dishonor.

Some people are chosen to be the manifestation of God's wonderful grace. And other people are passed by and used to manifest the perfection of God's righteousness.

Now, as you read this chapter, you are humbled. We all are. And we wonder, if it is all of grace, as Paul so clearly says, if it is all of God, what's the point for us?

[2 : 39] If it is God's choice, if it is true that God will save those he has chosen to save, if it is true that God will do whatever God is going to do, then we have nothing left for us.

We can just sit and wait. And sadly, this is the case for many, especially in this part of the world. You have been taught rightly that God is a sovereign God, in creation, in providence, and in salvation.

That God has a number of people that he is going to save. God has made a choice in eternity. And you might be tempted. Okay.

None of my business. If God wants to save me, he will save me. If you are a Christian, you might be tempted to save. Or if God wants to save someone in scalping, he is going to do it.

He doesn't need me. And there's no point trying, because he is the one who is going to do it. And so the Apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, after telling us that salvation is of the Lord from the beginning to the end, he writes chapter 10 to qualify what that means.

[4 : 05] To explain, to balance what he says in chapter 9. And there are five things that I want to share with you this morning, on this afternoon.

how the Apostle Paul qualifies election, how he balanced the teaching on election with human responsibility. And so in verse 1, you find that God's election, God's sovereign will, it's not an excuse for a cold heart.

The Apostle Paul was a Calvinist, if I can use that expression. He believed in the sovereignty of God and salvation. And yet you find in verse 1, chapter 10, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved.

My heart's desire. He knew that a remnant would be saved among the desert. He knew that only some were chosen.

That not all of them were called. He knew that only some. And yet, despite this understanding, despite this knowledge, his heart's desire was for them to be saved.

[5 : 22] In chapter 9, at the beginning of the chapter, he says, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continuous sorrow in my heart, for I could wish that myself were a curse from Christ for my brethren.

He knows that God is going to save those that he has appointed to save. And yet, he's heartbroken. He has a heavy heart. Because there are people that he knows, people that he loves, who are saved.

And his heart's desire for them is that they will be saved. He knows election.

He believes in election. And yet, that understanding does not stop him from desiring the salvation of sinners. And if you're a father or a mother, or a grandfather or a grandmother, and you have children and grandchildren, you believe that God is going to save his own.

[6 : 37] You know God has a people from all eternity. But that does not stop you from desiring their salvation. It doesn't stop you from being heartbroken when you see them going away from the Lord.

When you see them rejecting the gospel. It breaks your heart. It breaks my heart. And what we feel for our children, for our spouses, we should feel for our kinsmen, for our neighbors, for our friends, for our relatives, for our communities.

Yes, God has chosen a people in this community. But we should be like the Apostle Paul, broken. For them. Should be the desires of our heart for them to be saved. The Apostle Paul goes so far to say that I could wish that myself were accursed.

He's saying, if it were possible, I would be willing to get lost in hell for my people to be saved.

[7 : 54] He knows it's never going to happen. But his desire for them is that they will be saved.

So the question for me and for you this morning is, do we have such a desire? Do we have such a brokenness of heart for the lost all around us?

Are we upset? Are we saddened? Are we concerned about so many in our neighborhood, in our communities, going to spend eternity in heaven?

Does it bother us? Sometimes we take God's election and we say, oh, there's nothing I can do.

And we might grow cold, friends. I'm not saying that this is the case with you, but we might be tempted to grow cold. And we shouldn't. The Apostle Paul was in court.

[9 : 01] His heart's desire for his people was for them to be saved. And so election, friends, should not justify, does not justify our hearts.

Another aspect about Paul balancing election is that election does not excuse our lack of prayers.

Again, in verse 1, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved.

Paul doesn't simply desire the salvation of sins. Paul does not simply desire and sullen that so many are not saved.

But he prays. My desire and prayer to God. He doesn't pray because it is expected to pray.

He does not pray for them because it is the right thing to do that he prays. He doesn't pray for them because he's commanded to pray. He prays for their salvation out of a desire because it is his heart's desire for them to be saved.

[10 : 24] And because of such a desire he prays to God that they might be saved. He's acknowledging that salvation is of God.

He's acknowledging that his effort won't save the people. He's praying to God. He's depending on God for their salvation. But he's praying. He's pleading with God for the salvation of his people.

And yes, friends, it's true that our prayer won't save sinners. It is true that our prayer won't save anyone. But we have to pray.

And if we truly desire the salvation of our children we will pray for them. If we truly desire salvation of our neighbors, of our communities, of the people in this island, we will pray.

It doesn't matter who the elect are. It doesn't matter how many God has chosen in this community to save. We pray. Paul knew there was an eminent.

[11 : 36] He didn't know how many, who they were. But his heart's desire and his prayer for them, be they elect, be they recubit, his desire and prayer for them was that they might be saved.

And if we love the lost, be they in our families or be they strangers, we should pray for them. And the proof that we love them is that we pray for them.

And so let me ask you the question, do we pray for them? Do we plead with God? Do you ask God for their salvation?

I was brought up in a Christian home at the privilege of a believing mother. And my mother's desire was for me and for my sister to be saved.

That was a prayer. And she was often upset when she heard parents praying for their children to get a job and for their children to get the right boyfriend or girlfriend or the right house or being well. [12:59] She was upset. Is that all they're going to ask to God for their children? Is that all that matters for them? To have a prosperous life? A happy life?

Her desire was for me and my sister to be saved. And she prayed for that.

The Lord answered a prayer and God said if we desire the salvation of the lost let us pray for them. Let us pray for them.

to the one who is able and willing to save. Election does not make us lazy in prayer.

It excuse our lack of prayer using election in a wrong. The Apostle Paul prayed for his people.

[14:03] He prayed with God for them. Thirdly, election should not change our message.

It should not affect our heart's desire. It should not affect our prayer life. It should not affect our gospel proclamation.

If you have noticed in our reading the Apostle Paul for example used the word Hussaeim

whosoever believeth whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Whosoever believes will have eternal life. He knew that only some will be saved. But the gospel proclamation the gospel message was for whosoever to the people who will go to the gospel.

He does not limit his proclamation of the gospel to those that could be delayed but to everyone. and he did that because God's message is for everyone.

[15:20] I don't know if you are reprobate. I don't know if you are chosen. I don't know if you are going to heaven or not. I don't know. But God's message is for all of you.

The gospel is for each and every one of you. The offer of salvation is for everyone, for whosoever is willing to take it. And so when we preach the gospel, we share the gospel, and we tell others about Jesus, we should not be afraid to tell these people that whosoever, we should not be afraid to say to that people, if you believe in Jesus, you will not be ashamed.

You will have a eternal life and the forgiveness of all your sins. God has no limitations in his offering of the gospel. Neither should we.

In our message, it's not just a whosoever, but also there is this, the righteousness of God which is offered to everyone. The problem with the Jews was that they were trying to save themselves with their own righteousness.

They were trying to get to heaven by their own works, by the good works, by religious works. Paul says they have zeal, but they are wrong because salvation is not through our own righteousness, it is through the righteousness of Christ.

[16:53] And everyone who receives that righteousness, everyone who by faith receives that righteousness as his own, he will be saved.

He will be saved. no eggs and no bites. All I'm trying to say in friends is that God's revealed will for his church is that he shared the gospel.

It's not our business to discover and guess who are the chosen one of God. God knows that. Our business is to tell others about Christ.

It's to tell others that God is willing to clothe them, to cover them in the righteousness of Christ. To forgive them from all their unrighteousness and give them the righteousness of God in Christ.

election should not change when we preach God's requirements.

[18:08] We tell everyone, we tell whosoever believeth in him shall be saved. It's not about works, it's about faith.

and we say to everyone, if you believe in Jesus, if you come to him, if you ask him for salvation, if you depend on him for life and for eternity, you will be saved.

I've been under the ministry of people that because of election are afraid to say the whole truth. I've heard ministers afraid of saying to people, come and believe.

The dog of election was confusing them, was limiting them, was hindering them from preaching the full gospel to everyone. But Paul, the same one who wrote chapter nine, the same one who so clearly defines and describes God's sovereignty, God's absolute sovereignty, salvation.

It says that whosoever believes in Christ will be saved. And so election does not undermine our responsibilities.

[19:44] And what are our responsibilities? the first one is to believe. Whosoever believeth in him shall be saved.

The first responsibility you and I have is to call upon the name of Jesus. It's to ask Jesus to save us. It's to believe in him.

It's our responsibility. That's not God's responsibility. It's our responsibility. And so if you're not a believer, if you're still lost in your sin, you are commanded to believe.

You're encouraged to believe, you're exhorted to believe. Don't blame God if you're not a Christian. Whosoever believeth shall have eternal life.

Don't be wondering in your mind, am I chosen? Am I not? Is God going to save me? Is he going to pass me by? That's not the business. Your responsibility is to believe, to receive Christ, to accept Christ, to bow down before Christ.

[21 : 12] Remember Jesus speaking to the Pharisees in John chapter 5? He argues with them, gives them the reasons why they should follow him, why they should come to him.

He speaks about Moses and John the Baptist and the miracles of the dead. All these things should persuade you, but you will not come to him.

That's the problem. It's not that God doesn't want you to come. You will not. You are unwilling to surrender. And what was true for the Pharisees is true today.

If you're not a Christian, it's not because God has not chosen you. If you're not a believer, it's because you will not come to Christ.

Because you refuse to give your life. And so, election does not excuse your unbelief.

[22 : 29] Election does not excuse our responsibility to preach. It does not undermine our responsibility to preach. Paul says, they have to believe.

They have to call upon the name of the Lord to be saved. But the only way for them to know how to be saved, the only way for them to believe is for us to preach.

It's for us to tell them. They have to hear the gospel because faith cometh by hearing the word of Christ. And so, everyone has a responsibility to believe.

And we who are the Lord's people have the responsibility to tell that they might believe. I'm not saying it's our responsibility to make them Christians or persuade them or to change their heart or to make them willing.

That's God's work. Our responsibility is to tell them, is to share the gospel with them. But also Paul speaks of some people who are sent to preach.

[23 : 46] Not everyone is called to preach. God has appointed, chosen, and equipped certain among us to be preachers of the gospel.

And Paul is saying it is the responsibility of these men to preach, to proclaim the truth, to declare Christ to an unbelieving one.

And as that word is preached, God will do his work. And if we don't preach, don't expect anyone to be saved.

That's how ordinarily people are brought to Christ. During the Reformation, God raised men like Luther and Zwingli and Calvin and others that awakened by the Holy Spirit proclaim the gospel to the people in Europe.

And as the people heard the gospel, they believed in Christ. We have to preach. They say, what about me?

[25 : 00] I'm not called to preach. And then you're called to send. Paul said, how are they going to preach if no one sent them? For your minister to be able to preach, he has to be sent.

He has to be enabled to do so. He has to be encouraged, and he has to be in such a situation that he can give himself to the preaching of the gospel.

So you are not called to preach. But one way for you to reach out the lost, one way for you to enable the lost to hear the gospel is by sending, by supporting, by enabling.

As you know, I'm going to Italy. After 12 years in this county, I'm going back to my homeland. And I'm very thankful to God that he has not just called me to preach, but that he has put in the hearts of my brethren to send me.

The Lord has given to the free church a desire for me to go. He's put in the hearts of my brethren a willingness for me to go. If the church doesn't send me, I won't go.

[26 : 19] And so for the Italian people to hear the gospel, that they might believe in the gospel, it wasn't enough that I was willing to go. It made the church willing for me to go.

It is our responsibility friends to do this yes. Finally and very briefly, our confidence. The election should not affect our hearts, should not make us lazy in prayer, should not hinder our proclamation,

should not undermine our responsibilities, should not diminish our confidence.

You might think that God is sovereign, he has a people, a remnant, says Paul, therefore few will be saved, so it's quite hard, quite difficult.

And I fear sometimes we abuse the dogma of election and we expect very little to happen. But this dogma of election was a great encouragement for the apostle Paul.

Remember when he was in Corinth? There were troubles and trials as always in his ministry? And God spoke to him a night. And what did he say to him?

[27 : 47] I have a great people in the city. I have a people chosen from all eternity to be my people. I have a people here chosen from all eternity to be forgiven, to believe in Christ to eternal life.

Go and preach. As you preach, I will gather them. And so God's sovereignty should give us confidence as we share the gospel, as we preach, that there are people even in this community that God is going to save.

God is going to task, that God is going to move, that God is going to make willing. We're not going on our own. It's not in our own power.

But it is God's work, it is God's power, it is God's will. So we preach with confidence. We share the gospel with confidence, believing that God will save his people.

That he is, as Paul says in this chapter, the Lord of all. And he is king, that the hardest person in this community can be brought to his knees and to confess that Jesus is Lord.

[29 : 10] And no case is too hard for the Lord, that nothing is impossible, he is the Lord of all. And he's able to save to the uttermost, all those that believe.

But also another reason why we should be so confident, it is because of God's word. Faith comes by hearing. What do the people in Scalpy need?

What do the people in Harris and Lewis need? To hear the word of God. The more I am in the ministry, the more it seems to me that all that we need is for the gospel to be preached.

We can do many activities, we can do many things, but what is going to transform people is the preaching of the word, the reading of the word, the proclamation of the word, the explanation of that word.

Faith cometh by hearing. And God has given us an incredible weapon, a two-edged sword, and as we proclaim God's word, as we explain God's word, as we preach God's word, that is a sword cutting the hearts of those listening to that word.

[30 : 47] That word can penetrate and prick the consciences of men and bring them to cry for mercy.

God, the sovereign God, has given us a mighty weapon in our hands. So, word, let us use it.

I'm sure that you desire the salvation of sinners. Pray for them. I'm sure you desire for them to be saved. Speak to them about Christ.

Tell them what God has done for you. Remember the demoniac who was delivered by Jesus? His desire was to follow Jesus.

He's ascending to his own family and friends. Go and tell them what the Lord has done for you. Go and share with them God's word, God's truth, God's message.

[31 : 55] Let us pray.