

Eternity Daily Bible Study

Romans 9-16 The Implications of Salvation

Number: 594

Verses: Romans 10:5-8

Topic: All Our Spiritual Huffing And Puffing

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Romans 10:5-8 MKJV *For Moses writes of the righteousness which is of the Law, "The man who does those things shall live by them." (6) But the righteousness of faith says this: "Do not say in your heart, Who shall ascend into Heaven?" that is, to bring Christ down; (7) or "Who shall descend into the deep?"; that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead. (8) But what does it say? "The Word is near you, even in your mouth and in your heart"; that is, the Word of Faith which we proclaim;*

Christianity is not a matter of *doing* this or that, or of being *very high-notioned* and heavenly minded, or even being incredibly *deep* and meaningful - but rather is simply a matter of simply believing God, and especially believing what God has done in Christ.

The Law given by Moses consisted of 613 commandments of various shapes and sizes, all of which had to be kept and if they were all kept then they brought life. It was working at it, day after day, year after year, keeping the holy, righteous and just standard of human behavior (Romans 7:12) that was found in the Law. The problem was that due to sin, and its indwelling in human flesh, no one could keep the law. It was an impossible yoke, that neither the Jews of old, or even of Jesus' day were able to bear (Acts 15:10).

Acts 15:10-11 MKJV *Now therefore why do you tempt God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples, a yoke which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? (11) But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, according to which manner they also believed.*

This idea of righteousness through law-keeping is deeply ingrained in many cultures, and people saturated with the idea of earning their way in life, and familiar with law and merit and "brownie points" tend to become legalistic when they adopt a religion. Grace is a hard concept for many. Islam and Judaism with their law codes and holy books are more comfortable for many people than relying on the work of a crucified Savior.

However the righteousness which is by faith is not performance based in any way at all. You do not have to live up to some high heavenly standard (*Do not say in your heart, Who shall ascend into Heaven?*) or go into the depths of complexity such as philosophy or psychoanalysis (*or "Who shall descend into the deep?"*).

Christianity is simple enough that it can be apprehended by soldiers like the centurion, to fishermen like Peter, to tax-collectors like Matthew and to prostitutes, lepers, outcasts and shepherds and yet is profound enough offer an ocean of truth to the magi or to intellectuals like Paul or to noblemen like Joseph or Arimathaea and Nicodemus.

Being spiritual is **not** about strenuously obeying some list of ever more difficult religious rules, or attaining to some insight, or having some heavenly experience. It appears to me that roughly 90% of people who go on and on about "being spiritual" advocate one

of those three dead-end pathways – law-keeping, personal insight or mystical experience. But Paul, and the whole of the New Testament, says that these lead nowhere and will only result in spiritual frustration. But they are much beloved because they are measurable. We can tick off the rules we have kept, we can say we have “had the experience” or gained the insight or passed the theological test – yet all the while the self is not surrendered and the soul is still lost!

Christian faith does not depend on how many Greek verbs you know, or on how well you keep a church's list of rules, or on whether you have had this or that spiritual experience (most of which also occur in non-Christian religions). Christian faith depends on faith, hope and love.

If we are saved by works, by law, by effort, or by some insight or understanding then there must be a “pass mark”, some sort of a spiritual yardstick. Once we pass this point X then we can say for sure that we are saved.

Now Paul says, imagine that the spiritual standard is “above” in some way. Perhaps a high moral or spiritual or ethical standard or perhaps some high knowledge or mystical experience. Now if we set this “pass mark” high enough for some human being to reach, we will in effect be “bringing Christ down”. We would have to lower the bar (from the high Christ-standard) if we were to pass the test. That is in effect we would be bringing the high Christ-standard down to within our reach so we can be saved.

On the other hand if our spiritual task was “below” in some way. If it was to descend into the depths of God and of self-knowledge, and plumb the depths of sacrifice and service and of deepest humility and profoundest suffering. If we were to make our standard for salvation that we had to attain to the depths of Christ's humility, suffering and death-then we will quickly find that we cannot go there. We simply cannot take what He took. We cannot suffer as He suffered. Our sin-weighted souls would break in the attempt. We can only go a small fraction of the way, we would have to “raise Christ up from the dead again”, to make it easy enough for even a few souls to pass the test.

Wherever we set our spiritual standard it ends up being either in an impossible place (if it is set at the level of Jesus Christ) or it ends up being at a compromised and even blasphemous place (if it is some human-invented standard that is less than Christ-like).

As I keep saying – there is NO SPIRITUAL LADDER that we must ascend. We do not rise up by religious effort. We go directly to God through faith. There is no ladder, there is only faith, hope and love.

What then is the pathway to salvation? (8) *But what does it say? "The Word is near you, even in your mouth and in your heart"; that is, the Word of Faith which we proclaim;*

Salvation comes from receiving the Word of God in faith. You simply have to believe the gospel and you will be saved. It really is as simple as that. No list of rules, no heavenly experiences, and no deep mystical knowledge is required.

The word of God can be in our mouth and in our heart. It is near us, as near as a preacher, the radio or the Bible. It is as near as our memory of a Sunday School lesson, and as near as the testimony of our own conscience. We simply have to believe when

God speaks to us in our inner selves and tells us to trust in Christ for salvation.

The righteousness that comes by faith is a personal impartation of Christ's righteousness. It comes to us personally through the faith connection. It is as we believe that we receive. It is God's love poured into us through the Holy Ghost (Romans 5:1-5).

The whole system of spiritual ranking is demolished. Legalism is finished. Rule-keeping is dead (though we are put onto a path to holiness) and all straining and stressing after this or that is done away with. Just like Peter stepping out of the small boat on Lake Galilee, and onto the stormy sea, we believe, even shakily and are saved.

Christianity is a faith and not a religion. We don't need priests or sacrifices or altars or holy vestments or some great and wondrous ceremony in order to be saved. We simply need to believe. We need to believe that Jesus is Lord, and that He was raised from the dead for our salvation (Romans 10:9-13). God is all around us, and we just need to grasp onto His saving hand. And the act of doing that, of believing that His Hand is there, and can be safely held onto – that is what we call saving faith. All our spiritual huffing and puffing has been replaced by simple trust in the gospel.

Blessings,

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