

April 26, 2020

Speaker: Eric Naus **Series:** This I Believe – The Book of Romans

Passage: Romans 9:30-10:4

Community Group Questions: “Getting Righteousness Right”

Background: In this passage, Paul continues to wrestle with the question: “Why are so many Israelites rejecting the gospel? Have God’s promises to Israel failed?” In Romans 9:1-29, Paul answered these questions from the perspective of God’s sovereignty: God is faithfully fulfilling his saving promises to those he has sovereignly elected to save. In our current passage, Paul looks at the issue from the perspective of human responsibility: so many in Israel will not be saved because they have rejected the gospel. With this background in mind, read Romans 9:30-10:4 aloud as a group, and then work through the following questions:

1. According to 9:30-33, one reason so many Israelites would not be saved is because of misplaced trust. Rather than trusting in the righteousness God offers in Christ, they were putting their trust in their own ability to earn their righteousness by keeping the law. They were trying to climb their own “stairway to heaven.” In what ways do people in our modern day try to earn God’s favor by climbing their own stairway of performance? In your own life, what so-called stairways are you tempted to climb, rather than trusting fully in the identity secured for you by Christ? Why are attempts at self-salvation and self-justification so futile in the end?
2. In verse 33, Paul combines quotations from Isaiah 53:1 and 8:14 to show that Jesus, the rock, should have been a foundation stone for Israel, but instead, he became a stumbling stone. Why does Jesus become our “competition” rather than our savior, when we try to earn our own way into God’s favor? In our daily lives, how can we ensure that Jesus remains our foundation rather than our competition?
3. In 10:1-4, Paul explains another reason that so many Israelites would not be saved: it was because of misplaced zeal. They were zealous for the things of God, but their zeal was misplaced because it was not based upon the truth of the gospel. Why is it so important for zeal to be connected to truth? Can you think of examples where religious zeal is misguided because it is untethered from truth?
4. In our culture today, we are often told, “It doesn’t matter *what* you believe, as long as you believe it fervently, and as long as your beliefs don’t affect anyone else.” Does this logic work in the “real world” of everyday life? How does this logic square with Paul’s teaching in Romans 10:1-4? Does God care *what* we believe just as much as how fervently we believe it? How so?
5. With what kind of zeal is God most pleased? How can we ensure that our zeal for Christ remains strong?

Prayer suggestion: Confess those ways in which we have tried to “earn God’s favor” through good works and performance. Thank God for the righteousness he gives us in Christ! Pray that our zeal would be properly

guided by the truth of God's Word. Take time to pray for "religious people" in your life who have not yet turned in faith to Christ.