

6-1-1942

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Recommended Citation

Laetsch, Th. (1942) "Sermon Study on Rom. 10:1-15," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 13, Article 36. Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol13/iss1/36>

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Sermon Study on Rom. 10:1-15

Eisenach Epistle Selection for the Second Sunday after Trinity

Paul had proved the universal depravity and just condemnation of Jews and Gentiles, 1:18 to 3:20. He had demonstrated on the basis of Scripture that man is declared righteous not because of his own works but by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith, 3:21 to 5:21. He had shown that a necessary fruit of this justification by faith is sanctification of life, in which the Christian makes use of the powers engendered in him by God, 6:1 to 8:39. Beginning with chapter 9, he entered upon a lengthy discussion of the problem of the rejection of the Jewish nation as God's chosen people and the adoption of Gentiles into covenant relations, chaps. 9—11. Throughout this section Paul continually stresses three truths: 1) that salvation is a free gift of God's sovereign grace in Christ Jesus, according to which He is gracious to whom He is gracious. 2) Loss of the salvation prepared by Christ for all mankind is due solely to man's unbelief, which refuses to accept eternal life offered to all as a free gift by the Gospel. 3) It is presumptuous, foolish, and wicked to sit in judgment upon God, because we cannot understand His ways and judgments.

In the passage selected as the Eisenach Epistle lesson for the Second Sunday after Trinity, Paul voices his deep sorrow for his brethren according to the flesh, who did not attain the righteousness of God although they strove for it. He shows that their failure to attain salvation was due to their stubborn refusal to recognize the abysmal difference between the righteousness of the Law and the righteousness of faith. He clearly defines this difference in order to warn his readers against making the same fatal mistake that the Jews made and thus, like them, failing to gain eternal life.

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

"Brethren." The Christians at Rome, both former Jews and former Gentiles, are his brethren, to whom he is attached, though he has not seen them, whom he loves, to whom he can pour out his inmost heart, his joys and sorrows, his prayers and perplexities, knowing that they will understand him, since like emotions fill their soul, like questions have arisen in their minds.

"My heart's desire." The apostle uses the same word that in Luke 2:14 denotes God's good will, is translated "good pleasure" Eph. 1:5, "it seemed good" Matt. 11:26. What seemed good to him was not a passing whim, a fleeting thought, quickly forgotten. It was the good will of his heart. His whole heart and soul, the very seat of his life, his emotions, his intellect, his will, is bent upon

the realization of his good pleasure. Hence it is a matter of course that he speaks to his brethren of this problem agitating his soul in order to incite them to like interest and action. He assures them that this matter was the subject of his "prayer to God." Δέησις, a petition, a plea, a request, flowing from the recognition of one's need or want. So fervent is his good will, so eagerly does he hope that God will hear his prayer, that he regards its present non-fulfillment as a personal want and, like a beggar conscious of his need, pleads with God for relief and help. What, then, is the object of his good will and prayer? He prays "for Israel": Israel, the nation chosen of God to be His peculiar treasure, a kingdom of priests, Ex. 19:5, 6; Israel, Paul's own people, his brethren according to the flesh, whom he loves with ardent affection, for whom he would gladly lose his own life, 9:3. But why is prayer needed for this highly favored people? Cp. 3:1, 2; 9:4, 5. It is needed in order "that they might be saved," for salvation, εἰς σωτηρίαν. His brethren were in danger of losing eternal salvation, that gift than which there is no greater, no more precious to be found on earth or in heaven. In fact, the nation had already been cast off; already "the wrath was come upon them to the uttermost," 1 Thess. 2:16. The dreadful threat of Jesus Matt. 23:38 was being fulfilled. On the other hand, Paul knew that blindness only "in part" had happened to Israel, Rom. 11:25. He himself was a Jew and had been a persecutor and had been saved by the grace of God, 1 Tim. 1:12-16; Rom. 11:1. The elect children of God had not been cast away, Rom. 11:2-5. Therefore, as Moses on Sinai, Ex. 32:7 to 34:10, and later in the wilderness of Paran, Num. 14:11-25, pleaded for his people, so Paul's prayer constantly arising to the Throne of Grace was like a shielding cloud over (ὑπέρο) Israel for the purpose that God regard not their disobedience and unbelief but grant them grace and repentance unto life, that same grace and repentance which had been granted to him, the chief of sinners.

Yet Paul does not permit his fervent love toward his people to blind his eyes to the actual facts. He sees too clearly the true reason for Israel's rejection, too clearly their awful guilt of unbelief.

For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge, v. 2.

Paul bears record, testifies. As if to forestall any charge of bias and prejudice which might be raised against him and to silence any objection before it could be voiced, he concedes not only but solemnly deposes that they indeed have "a zeal of God." He knows that among the Jews there were many who, "instantly serving God day and night, hoped to come" unto "the promise made of God," Acts 26:6, 7; many who like himself could confidently boast that they were, as touching the Law, Pharisees, living "after the most straitest sect of our religion," Acts 26:5. Cp. Phil.

3:4-6. Yet though they thought to do God service, their zeal was to God an abomination as great as that of Israel of old, Is. 1:11-15. Why? Their zeal, says Paul, was "not according to knowledge." Cremer defines *ἐπίγνωσις* as invariably denoting in the New Testament "a knowledge which influences the development of religious life in the most powerful manner. It is a knowledge calling for personal interest and exercising its influence upon the person possessing it." And Von Hofmann says: '*Ἐπίγνωσις* denotes a knowledge which presupposes that the will of the person having this knowledge is directed upon the object of his knowledge. The New Testament usage of the word implies that the lack of *ἐπίγνωσις* is not only an intellectual but a moral fault.' (Roemerbrief.)

While Israel had the revelation of God in His Word and knew many things about the true God of which the Gentiles were ignorant, yet their knowledge was not a true *ἐπίγνωσις*; they lacked the fundamental, life-giving, life-changing knowledge that comes only with a knowledge of Jesus Christ, whom God had promised and sent, John 17:3. And therefore their zeal, though ever so fervent, though ever so sincere, was not acceptable to God.

For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God, v. 3.

The apostle explains, γὰρ, why their zeal was not according to knowledge. They are "ignorant of God's righteousness." The present participle describes their state, that of lasting ignorance. This ignorance concerned a point of vital importance: "the righteousness of God." This term is used in the same sense as in Paul's grand discourse on this righteousness chap. 3:21 to 5:21. It designates not the essential righteousness of God nor the righteousness demanded by God in His holy Law. It denotes that righteousness prepared for sinful mankind, which had no righteousness of its own, Rom. 1:18 to 3:20; prepared by God Himself through His Son, Jesus Christ, Rom. 3:21-30. Of this righteousness the Jews were ignorant, says Paul. Paul knew well enough that there was no excuse for their ignorance. There was no other nation on the face of the earth "who hath God so nigh unto them," Deut. 4:7; to whom God had revealed Himself so clearly; to whom He had given such great and wonderful promises in the manifold Messianic prophecies given to Israel. Yet they remained willfully ignorant of this righteousness. What Moses had foreseen, Deut. 31:27, 29; 32:18, 28, 29, had come to pass, Hos. 4:6; Is. 65:2, 3; Jer. 14:13-16. Christ lays the blame of Israel's ignorance squarely upon their own shoulders, Matt. 23:34-39; Luke 19:41-44.

Remaining willfully ignorant of the righteousness of God, not willing to acknowledge Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah and only Savior, taking offense at such sayings of Christ and His

apostles as John 6:38-58; 8:31, 32, 51; 10:27-30; Acts 2:36; 4:10-12, they all the while were "going about" striving (note the durative present participle) to do the impossible, "to establish their own righteousness," a righteousness self-acquired, which they could bring before God, which they wanted God to acknowledge and accept as being sufficient to merit salvation. Hopeless undertaking! Yet stubbornly insisting on their intention, they "have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." ὑπετάγησαν, the second aorist used in the middle sense, and inchoative, they did not begin to subject themselves, to place themselves in order, into rank and file, under the righteousness of God. Rejecting God's righteousness, God's Savior, God's way of justification, they became disobedient to God's will; their "zeal of God" was no longer true zeal to do God's will. True zeal in serving God remains within the limits of God's Word and will and will not permit itself to be led astray by one's own favorite views and opinions. Rejecting God's righteousness, God's Son, they rejected the one true God. The God whom they served was no longer the true God. Though they cried every day, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord, our God, is one Lord," Deut. 6:4, their Jehovah was a god of their own fancy, an idol. Their zealous worship of this god was idolatry, sin, wickedness, leading them straight to eternal damnation.

For Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believeth, v. 4.

The apostle proves, γὰρ, the folly of such willful ignorance, the wickedness of refusing to submit to God's righteousness. For an end of law (is) Christ unto righteousness for everyone that is believing. What a wonderful message! An end, a complete end, an end that actually and really writes *Finis*; an end of law, not only of certain specified laws, not only of the ceremonial laws, not only of the law of Moses; an end of whatsoever is in any manner or form a law, be it a law of man or of God, of Church or State, of self or superior, Christ is its end. As far as the goal toward which the good will and prayer of Paul was directed, v. 1, as far as salvation for Jew and Gentile, is concerned, Christ is end, *Finis*, of all that may be called law. That is the clear meaning of the two nouns without the article, "end," "law." *In puncto* salvation law has ceased to be a factor, has ended its existence, since Christ came to live and die for man. God's way to salvation is lawless, by way of lawlessness, not a lawlessness in the sense of wickedness and transgression, as though the greater a lawlessness were perpetrated, the greater a salvation were merited. Christ is the end of law unto righteousness. Christ procured the very thing that Israel sought to attain by its "zeal of God," however, could not but fail to obtain in spite of all its attempts: a righteousness which

no man can successfully challenge, which reason seeks in vain to disprove, which even Satan with all his cunning malice cannot argue away; for it is a righteousness which God Himself approves and acknowledges, else He would not have raised from death Him who through His suffering and death meant to procure this righteousness for mankind and had exclaimed, "It is finished!" — a righteousness far transcending human conception, that righteousness of which Paul had written Rom. 8:31-39.

And all this without money and without price! By paying the entire costs, the enormous price of salvation, for all mankind Himself, Christ has made an end of law, of establishing costs, of demanding a price. By His redemption He has bought us with a price, 1 Cor. 6:20; Gal. 3:13; 1 Pet. 1:18. Now this righteousness is ready for everyone that believeth, that puts his trust in Christ, trustingly accepts, takes, appropriates unto himself, what is offered to him without a law, without a demand, without a condition, free, Is. 55:1-3.

A marvelous message indeed. If only Israel would open its eyes and see, and open its ears and hear! But as in reading the Old Testament a veil is upon their mind and heart, 2 Cor. 3:14, 15, so the self-imposed veil of unbelief, of reliance on their own works, of refusing to accept salvation as a free gift for Christ's sake, makes it impossible for them to see that salvation is not by works but by faith in Christ, who is an end of law unto righteousness.

For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the Law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them, vv. 5-7.

"In v. 5 ff. Paul describes more fully the two ways of attaining δικαιοσύνη, that of law and that of faith. His aim is to show that they are mutually exclusive, but that the latter is open and accessible to all." (*Expositor's Greek New Testament.*) In order to describe "the righteousness which is of the Law," ἐκ τοῦ νόμου, takes its origin, springs forth from, or out of, the Law, the apostle introduces a trustworthy witness, Moses, the mediator of the Old Covenant, through whom God gave His Law to Israel and who therefore is well qualified to describe the nature of the righteousness originating in the Law. Moses wrote on this righteousness. Anyone may verify Paul's quotation. It is found Lev. 18:5. Moses does not give his own opinion, but spoke here only what the Lord had commanded to speak to the children of Israel, Lev. 18:1, 2. We have here God's own definition of the righteousness of the Law and the way to salvation which the Law points out. The only way the Law knows is the way of keeping the statutes and judgments of the Law, to walk in them, in all of them. Cp. Deut. 4-6; also Christ's word Luke 10:25-28. The righteousness demanded by the Law and flowing from the Law as the only way to life is a right-

eousness of works, of doing the things commanded by the Law, of fulfilling to perfection all its statutes and judgments and ordinances. Unless this condition is met with, the Law knows of no way to salvation, but leaves the sinner hopeless.

In direct contrast with the righteousness of the Law is posited the righteousness of faith. Since Paul had called on the lawgiver, Moses, to give an authentic definition of the righteousness of the Law, he now introduces the righteousness of faith in order to give her an opportunity to define the way of life as proclaimed by her. The righteousness of faith clothes her definition in words which at once remind the reader of another passage found in Moses, Deut. 30:12-14; but she changes the original words both as to form and application to suit her purpose. Moses had used the words originally spoken by him as an argument for keeping the Law, just as he had used a similar argument, Deut. 4:7, 8, 29-40. There he had stated that God had come very close to Israel. Here he speaks to a generation many members of which had not seen the revelation of God at Sinai. Yet they need not go to heaven or to some distant land to learn the Law of God. God and His Law are near, very near, to them, in their mouth and hearts. These words Paul uses as far as they serve his purpose and puts them into the mouth of the righteousness of faith in order to show that it was at no disadvantage over against the righteousness of the Law. The latter had said, This commandment is not in heaven that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven and bring it unto us that we may hear it and do it? Paul omits all statements not suited to his purpose and simply makes the righteousness of faith "speak on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven?" and adds the parenthetical, explanatory remark, "that is, in order to bring Christ down." No one should argue, Yes, Christ is in heaven, but we are on earth. How can He help us? Who shall ascend into heaven in order to bring Christ down, so that we may enjoy Him and His gifts, righteousness and salvation? Neither should anyone say, "Who shall descend into the deep, that is, in order to bring up Christ again from the dead?" Note that here the words of Deut. 30:13 are changed completely. The righteousness of faith means to say, Both questions are foolish, because either effort would be attempting the impossible. Neither is it necessary to ascend to heaven nor to go down into the earth in order to find and possess Christ and His perfect righteousness. Why? The apostle answers:

But what saith it? The Word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith, which we preach, v. 8.

The apostle once more gives the floor to the righteousness of faith, which in the exact words of Deut. 30:14 explains where to find

Christ, omitting only the last clause, "and do it," as altogether unsuitable to her purpose. Paul adds, "That is" of course not the word of the Law, to which these words were originally applied by Moses, but "the word of faith, which we preach." The Law has no advantage over, no priority rights as compared with, the Gospel. Just as the Law is close, near, in your heart and mouth, so is the Gospel close to you, near to you, in your very mouth, in your very heart. It is the word of faith, a word which does not demand any work or merit or virtue on our part, a word which offers to us a perfect righteousness, an eternal salvation, and bids us take it and make it our own by believing its message. The expression "word of faith" includes more than the offer. This Word, which calls for faith, also calls forth that very faith; for it is, as Paul already has called it, "the power of God unto salvation," Rom. 1:16. Cp. Rom. 10:17. What the Law cannot do the Gospel accomplishes. What the Law demands the Gospel grants as a free gift of grace, a righteousness which makes us heirs of salvation.

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation, vv. 9, 10.

The apostle explains the manner in which the word of faith is near man and at the same time describes the content of this word, which gives to it its saving power. Since in Deut. 30 the mouth is named before the heart, Paul follows this order in v. 9. The word of faith is found in the mouth in the form of confession, a confession expressed in words, a confession of the Lord Jesus, a confession of the faith that dwells within the heart and which believes, relies for righteousness and salvation on the fact proclaimed by the word "that God hath raised Him," the Lord Jesus, the Savior of mankind, Matt. 1:21, "from the dead." This faith cannot remain hidden and quiet. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," Matt. 12:34. Faith residing in the heart of man and filling it with holy joy urges the mouth to publish the glad news, to confess the good tidings, so that others, by the word of faith as living in, and issuing from, his heart and mouth, may be brought to like faith, like righteousness of faith, like salvation in Jesus.

The apostle had named confession first and faith in the second place. In order to show that this was merely a matter of form, in order to guard against any possible misconception, as though, after all, man must do something before faith makes him righteous, or as if it were the confession that gives to faith its justifying and saving power, the apostle reverses the order and names faith first and uses the passive form for both verbs: With the heart it is

being believed unto righteousness, and with the mouth it is being confessed unto salvation, v. 10. The passive indicates that it is not the human act of believing and confessing that justifies and saves us, but the object of faith and confession, the Word, the Gospel, Christ Jesus, who was delivered for our sins and was raised again for our justification, Rom. 4:25.

The apostle had attributed to faith a marvelous power. He proves his statement from Scripture. *For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved, vv. 11-13.*

Paul quotes for the second time (cp. Rom. 9:33) a word spoken by the Lord through the prophet Isaiah, chap. 28:6. But he adds a small word, $\pi\alpha\varsigma$, everyone, which Isaiah did not use, and which the best manuscripts omit in 9:33. He has a right to do that; for the article in the Hebrew original and translated in the Septuagint denotes the whole class, every individual, that is, the believing one. While the righteousness of the Law limited salvation to those who perfectly fulfilled it and therefore put to shame, disappointed, all who trusted in it for salvation, since perfection is impossible to man, the word of faith extends righteousness and salvation to all mankind, asks all to accept this gift, and has not yet put one believer to shame. This $\pi\alpha\varsigma$, everyone, is to be taken in the full sense of the term, all mankind, every human being, be he Jew or Gentile; "for the same Lord over all," or, as it may also be translated, "for it is the same Lord over all that," "is rich unto all that call upon Him." The power of the Lord, which is the power of His Word, is not limited to one nation. No; He is rich, immensely rich, and constantly rich, His riches never waning or diminishing (participle present, durative), rich in grace and rich in power, cp. Eph. 1:19, 20; 3:19-21, so that neither Jew nor Gentile is excluded from His salvation, prepared for all and obtained by all who call upon Him. Again Paul proves his statement by Scripture, quoting Joel 2:32, part of a Messianic prophecy. The Lord Jehovah named there is none other than the Lord Jesus; cp. John 12:41; Is. 6:1-9. And in this quotation we find the $\pi\alpha\varsigma$, whosoever, $\kappa\alpha\iota$, giving another proof that Paul was right in adding it to his quotation of Is. 28:16. There can be no doubt that, while salvation by the righteousness of the Law is unattainable both to Greek and to Jew, the salvation by the righteousness of faith lies ready for all, both Jew and Greek.

The wording of Joel's prophecy offers to Paul another welcome opportunity to prove that the righteousness which is of faith actually and fully and freely accomplishes what is impossible to

the righteousness which is of the Law. "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Ah, Paul, someone might say, you have defeated yourself. This Scripture contradicts your thesis. After all, man must do something. After all, faith is not sufficient to lead us to the final goal. After all, man must call on the Lord before he can be declared righteous and obtain eternal salvation. As if to show the fallacy of this argument and to refute this misinterpretation of Joel's words, Paul answers v. 14a: *How, then, shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?* The better readings throughout vv. 14, 15 offer the aorist subjunctive instead of the future indicative: How are they to call, etc.? The sense remains the same with either reading. Both exclude the possibility of calling on Jesus Christ without having come to faith in Him. Calling on Jesus, praying to Him, worshiping Him, presupposes faith, is an evidence, not a prerequisite, of faith, Acts 9:11. V. 14b: *And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?* How are they to come to faith? The aorist is inchoative. Οὐδὲν ἤκουσαν, cannot mean, "of whom," nor "where" they have not heard. It must be translated, *whom* they have not heard. Faith in Christ is not possible if one has not heard Christ. In other areas one may acquire knowledge by one's own efforts, by research work, by observation, etc. It is a matter of impossibility to acquire the knowledge of the way to life through faith unless Christ reveals it to us, John 1:17, 18. V. 14c: *But how shall they hear without a preacher?* If there can be no faith without hearing Christ, how shall, how can, they be saved? Where and how shall they find Christ to hear Him? One cannot ascend to heaven. Does Christ, then, come to earth? Where? Paul sets all doubt at rest by stating, How shall they hear without a preacher, *ἠεριστὴς κηρύσσοντος*, a herald, one who proclaims the message of a higher authority. It is not necessary to look for Christ Himself. He speaks to man through His heralds. *But how shall they [these messengers] preach except they be sent?* V. 15a. How shall they function as heralds, as ambassadors, unless they have been authorized to do so by someone in authority? A herald coming on his own initiative, in his own authority, would be a *contradictio in adjecto*. If God had not sent messengers to proclaim such news as John 3:16, then even this tiding of great joy would not open heaven to any one sinner, just as the pardon written by any person but one having authority to pardon this particular prisoner would be a joyful piece of news, to be true, but since it was not an authoritative pardon, since it was a falsehood, a lie, it could not free the imprisoned man. Thank God, Scripture assures us that there are authoritative heralds proclaiming to mankind God's salvation.

As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things! V. 15b.

These words are a quotation from Is. 52:7 in an abbreviated form. The prophet envisions the preachers of peace and salvation coming to Zion with the glad news, "Thy God reigneth," v. 7; "the Lord hath comforted His people, He hath redeemed Jerusalem," v. 9; "all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God," v. 10, prepared by His suffering Servant, 52:13 to 53:12. "With the redemption of His people out of the power of the Gentiles the Lord has resumed His rule of grace over Israel and the government of the world and thereby has guaranteed to the people of God the full salvation lying in the future." (Aug. Pieper, *Jesaias II*, p. 387.)

Paul has proved his point. While the way of the righteousness which is of the Law leads through hopeless efforts to everlasting despair, the way of righteousness which is of faith leads straight and sure to the goal of life. And it can do that because it is God's own plan, carried out in every detail by God Himself. It is God in Christ who has established peace and procured salvation, Rom. 3:24, 25; 2 Cor. 15:18, 19, 21. It is God in Christ who sends His heralds to proclaim this good news, 2 Cor. 5:19b, 20. It is God in Christ whom we hear when we hear His messengers, Luke 10:16. It is this message of God's heralds that brings man to faith, moves man to accept the free gift of God, perfect righteousness in Jesus, and eternal salvation, Rom. 10:17; 1 Pet. 1:23. It is this faith which makes possible worship of God in Christ, the calling on His holy name, Eph. 2:10. It is God's work throughout and therefore a way which accomplishes what all other ways will and must fail to do.

In keeping with the scope of the text one may choose the theme, *Why Must We Seek Salvation through Faith, without Works?* Because the righteousness of works cannot save us; because the righteousness of faith leads us safely to eternal life.—*Thanks Be unto God for His Unspeakable Gift!* In Christ we have the end of the Law. In Christ we have righteousness and salvation.—*Christ the End of the Law.* Without Him there is no salvation. In Him we have righteousness and life.—*Why are Not All Men Saved?* The fault lies not with God, vv. 4-15; but with man alone, vv. 2, 3.—Taking into consideration the standard Gospel lesson for this Sunday, one may issue the invitation, *Come Ye to the Waters!* Why spend money for that which is not bread? Hear, and your souls shall live.—While Paul's purpose was not to rouse his readers to missionary zeal, yet the text is replete with thoughts for sermons on missions. *The True Mission Spirit.* Fervent, prayerful love for our fellow men, v. 1; recognition of their need, vv. 2, 3; willingness to bring them the Gospel, vv. 4-15.—*Preach the Gospel to All Nations.* They need it, vv. 1-3. The Gospel alone will save them, vv. 4-15.

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