

SERMON NOTES

SERIES: Romans: God's Power for Salvation
TITLE: Missing God
SCRIPTURE: Romans 10:1-21
DATE: May 6, 2018
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The book of Romans is a masterfully written exposition of the gospel of God. Without a doubt, it is the foundation of authentic Christianity and the most articulate, systematic understanding of our faith found in the Bible. Countless lives have been changed by the truth found in this ancient letter, and it continues to change lives today. Interestingly enough, Romans was written to Christians. So, while the good news found in Romans can certainly bring people to faith in Jesus, the actual focus is on how the gospel helps Christians think rightly about God, life, faith, and Christian community. If you want to grow to know God more personal and intimate way, this letter is for you!

The question Paul is asking and answering in Romans 9-11 is this: Why are there more Gentiles than Jews being saved? Has God failed to keep his promises to Israel, his own chosen, elect people? Has God rejected Israel?

1. Ch. 9: No, God never promised that all of the children of Abraham would be children of God, only those in the line of promise can become God's children. According to God's purpose in election for Israel, God predetermined to harden the hearts of his own people in order to open a door of salvation to the rest of the world (Gentiles), while only a remnant in Israel would be saved. This was clearly prophesied in the Jewish Scriptures.
2. Ch. 10: No, God has not rejected Israel, Israel has rejected God. Israel has failed to come to God by faith in Christ even though their own Scriptures told them righteousness/salvation comes by faith, not works, and is available to all, not just them. They looked at their own Scriptures and did not see that they all pointed to Jesus. In ch. 10, Paul makes it clear that the reason so few Jews are being saved is not because of election, but because of their rejection of Jesus as their Messiah. It's not that God has rejected them, but they have rejected him.

Why did the Jews miss God-miss what God was doing by providing his salvation to everyone through faith in Jesus? Three reasons are given in ch.10.

- I. The Jews missed God because they did not come to God on his terms (10:-14, see also 9:30-33). They were seeking right standing with God based on works, rather than faith in Christ.
- II. The Jews missed God because they ignored the teaching of their own Scriptures that God's way of salvation was by faith, not works (10:5-20). The Law was not given as a job description for how to become righteous. The Law was not given as a way of earning salvation. It was given that Israel would trust in God's mercy and let their obedience flow out of their faith-out of the gratitude for all that God had done for them. That is at the heart of what the Law aimed to teach. The Jews could not say that they hadn't heard or didn't understand. God had made his plan and purposes known to them in the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets. And that is precisely what Jesus taught as well. Turn from relying on your good works to save you and trust completely in the mercy of God to save you. Then let your obedience flow out of your faith in gratitude for what God has done for you. *Verses 5-20 show us one Old Testament quotation after another to prove the point that God's way of salvation by faith has been plainly stated so the Jews have no excuse for missing the God.*

- A. (5-8) God's message of salvation by faith had been clearly proclaimed (5). The Gospel is within reach of all (6-8). It's simple and attainable, not difficult or hard to find (6-8).
- B. (9-13) The Gospel is also offered to all-to everyone who believes by calling on the name of the Lord. All these truths were plainly foretold in Israel's own Scriptures.
- C. (14-20) However, the Gospel is not accepted by all. God sent many prophets to the Jews proclaiming God's way of salvation. They had heard and understood—they missed God not because he didn't tell them, but because they refused to hear. In v.18, Paul shows from both Moses (Dt 32:21) and Isaiah (65:1) that God had planned all along to include Gentiles in his ultimate plan of salvation and to make them his people.

III. The Jews missed God because they turned their backs to God's relentless, gracious invitation to come to him by faith in Messiah Jesus (10:21).

In ch. 10, Paul is explaining why Israel missed God—why they missed the point of the Law and their own history—missed the salvation God has provided in Jesus. He's telling us these things so we don't make the same mistake and end up missing him as well.

For Discussion —

When you listen to Bible teaching, you should be listening with an ear to learn, but also with an ear to share with others what you are learning. Keep that in mind as you discuss today's message. How do you need to internalize this message so you can share this Good News with someone God might bring across your path this week who needs to hear it?

Have someone read Romans 10:1-2

1. What does God's problem with Israel have to do with us today? What does God's story with ancient Israel in the OT show us about our stories today?
2. How were the Jews seeking to establish their own righteousness? What does that look like today? In what ways, do you find yourself trying to please God through self-effort?
3. What does it mean that "Christ is the end of the law of righteousness to everyone who believes?" (v.4) Has God's Law completely been done away with?
4. What does Moses say (v.5) about someone who tries to be in right standing with God by keeping the law?
5. Why is confessing and believing not a two-step formula for salvation? (vv.9-13)
6. How do verses 14-20 make the point that Israel missed the point?
7. Talk about this picture of God reaching out his hands "all day long" to his stubborn, disobedient people—a people who, as Isaiah says, who walk in a way that is not good, following after their own thoughts. How might this gracious picture of God's kindness lead to repentance?

OR try this approach. After reading Romans 10 ask "From what you heard in Charlie's message or what we just read right here—*What are some of the "AHAs" you took away from what you learned?* When someone volunteers an "AHA," ask follow up questions to dig deeper and to keep the discussion going. Ask the group, "Anyone else have this same "AHA" what do you think about *this insight?*" After you've exhausted topic Throw the original question back out to the group, "Who else had an "AHA?" Repeat the pattern above. Follow up questions then get input from the group. If someone says, "I didn't really have an "AHA," it's more that I don't understand." Then go that direction. Ask follow up questions to help them clearly articulate the issue then ask the group for input. "Anybody else think about that/struggle with that?" So, *how would you answer that question?*" Whoever answers—ask follow up questions, ask for input from the group on that answer (*What do you think about that?*), etc. It's been my (Charlie) experience that you can have a great discussion around this approach to community group conversations.