

(1) Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God --- but not according to knowledge! For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God --- and seeking to establish their own --- they did not submit to God's righteousness. For Christ is the end of the 'Law for righteousness' to everyone who believes.

(5) For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the Law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them (Leviticus 18:5). But the righteousness based on faith says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down) "or 'Who will descend into the abyss?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).

(8) But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in Him will not be put to shame."

(12) For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing His riches on all who call on Him. For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved (Joel 2:32)."

Think on These Things

- 1) V.1 clearly builds on the closing verses of chapter 9:31-33. What problem challenges the Jews in regard to their being saved? What is Paul's prayer for his countrymen?

Chapter 9 closes noting that the Jews failed to find the righteousness needed for salvation because they sought it by works, not faith. Instead of believing in and trusting Jesus Christ, they rejected Him, 'stumbling' over the Rock, the Chief Cornerstone, that the Father brought to Zion (Israel). Paul desired his people would become saved.

- 2) Give a definition for "zeal." Paul says that his countrymen surely have zeal for the Lord. But they also have another problem! What is their problem? (See Acts 18:24-26 for an example of this.) Can you recall the name of the song sung by Frank Sinatra, and then redone by Elvis Presley? This title represents the perspective of many (most) Jews (...and Gentiles!).

Broadly speaking, zeal speaks to enthusiasm and passion about something. Dictionary.com describes it as eager desire, fervor, diligence, and ardor for a cause. It represents an intensity, as contrasted with apathy, towards anything.

V.2 says the Jews had zeal, but they 'lacked knowledge.' Thus, their passion and intensity were wrongly directed. They were certainly passionate about God, but they were also wrong about understanding and obeying Him.

The Acts reference is about a follower named Apollos who was zealous about God and was preaching water baptism for repentance in response to Jesus Christ because he had no knowledge of Pentecost and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Priscilla and Aquila "explained to him the way of God more accurately."

The song referred to is, "I Did it MY Way," a testimonial about living life according to one's wants and wishes. However, life leading to salvation and eternal life is never done "my way," but by putting one's faith and hope in Jesus alone.

- 3) From v.3, what is the description of their knowledge, and what is the description of their disobedience? Do you think these two concepts are appropriate for our American culture?

Interesting...for all their knowledge of God Paul says the Jews were “ignorant” (uninformed, unknowing) about the righteousness of God. They committed to proving themselves as worthy and righteous in God’s sight. Their error includes a deliberate unwillingness to submit to God’s way and to do things ‘their way.’

Are American’s doing the same thing...? An opinion question for discussion.

- 4) What is the description of Jesus in regards to the righteousness God requires? Who is this solution for?

Jesus is the END of the “Law for Righteousness” --- proving one’s self worthy of salvation through obedience to God’s rules --- to everyone who believes (in Him)!

- 5) According to v.8, how far away is the saving word of God? What do you think this means?

The words gaining ‘saving faith’ are always right near us: I believe in Jesus for my salvation. We can become saved in an instant by believing and expressing this trust!

- 6) Do you notice a slight distinction here in how God responds to the faith and confession of a believer? Look carefully at v.10. What does “faith in one’s heart” provide? What does “confession with one’s mouth” bring? Remember, though, that v.9 keeps the two concepts together!

Heart faith? Brings “justification,” a legal decision of blamelessness in God’s judgment. We must understand that Jesus’ death and resurrection brings us deliverance from personal sins.

Mouth confession? Brings personal salvation for eternal life. We must declare aloud to others that Jesus is Lord! It is HIS righteousness that saves us.

- 7) How can you know for sure you will be saved? Would others recognize these traits in you? What is Jesus’ promise to you in v.11? Look at Luke 9:26, Romans 1:16, 2 Timothy 1:8 and 2:15. **It is the promise of God! If we BELIEVE in our hearts and CONFESS with our mouths, we shall be saved. “Everyone who believes in Him will NOT be put to shame” (v.11). “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord WILL be saved” (v.13).**

Luke says if we are ashamed of Jesus, Jesus will be ashamed of us when He returns. Paul declares in Romans that he is NOT ashamed of the Gospel. Paul directs Timothy not to be ashamed about his Christian testimony, but rather to present himself as a godly worker who correctly (responsibly) handles God’s Word of Truth.

- 8) Who does God desire to be generous to? With “calling on the Name of the Lord,” take a look at Genesis 4:26b. How do you understand this phrase as an action?

God richly bestows His riches upon ALL who call on Him (v.12). The Genesis reference indicates that people began to call upon the Name of the Lord --- that is, to pray --- during the time of Enosh.

People and situations I want to pray for this week: