

The Heart of Israel's History

by Warren Wiersbe

The sermon emphasizes the importance of understanding God's righteousness and the sequence to salvation, which involves a messenger being sent, proclaiming Jesus Christ, the sinner hearing the Word, and having heard, believing and calling upon the Lord.

Duration: 36:17

Topics: "Gods Righteousness", "Rejecting Salvation"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the four rejections of God's righteousness by the nation of Israel and anyone who refuses to submit to it. The first rejection is of God's righteousness, followed by the rejection of God's word. The third rejection is of God's messengers, as seen in the story of the vineyard where the servants were mistreated and the son was killed. The fourth rejection is the rejection of hearing the word of God, despite it being proclaimed throughout the earth. The speaker emphasizes the importance of sharing the gospel and having 'beautiful feet' by spreading the word of God. The sermon also highlights the theme of righteousness throughout the book of Romans, with chapters 1-3 focusing on the need for righteousness, chapters 4-5 on the provision of righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ, and chapters 6-8 on the practice of righteousness in everyday life. The speaker concludes by emphasizing the significance of submitting to God's righteousness and the consequences of rejecting it.

Transcript

Romans chapter 10, last Sunday evening we began in Romans chapter 9 and the Lord willing the next two Sunday evenings will complete chapter 11. These two chapters, these three chapters give to us the prophetic history of Israel. In chapter 9 we have Israel's past election.

Now in chapter 10 we have Israel's present rejection. And chapter 11 will give to us Israel's future salvation. Now these are key books.

In these days when the nation of Israel is in the forefront and in these days when individual Jewish people are so open to the Word of God, it behooves those of us who are saved, born-again Christians to know what the Bible says about Israel. Chapter 10, the Apostle Paul is dealing with Israel's present rejection. And in this chapter Paul explains to us a four-fold rejection on the part of Israel.

God offered four very wonderful gifts to the people of Israel and they rejected these gifts. And the interesting thing is this, we have people in the city of Chicago who are Gentiles who have rejected these

same gifts. Verses 1 through 4, they rejected God's righteousness.

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved. Now Paul is going to use this word saved a number of times in this chapter, so get used to it. I hear people saying, well we don't use the old terminology, we have to use new terminology.

I recall I was talking to a pastor some years ago, he said, well I never use the phrase, the word saved. I said, what do you use? Well he said, I talk about a divine encounter. I said, I have an easier time understanding the word saved than I do the word divine encounter.

Paul used it, now it has to be explained. But you see back in Paul's day, everybody knew what the word saved meant. To be saved meant to be rescued from danger.

To be saved meant to be delivered from bondage. To be saved meant to have your future secure. And so just tell people what the word saved means.

It means to be rescued from danger. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 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.

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believe it. Verses 1 through 4, they rejected God's righteousness. Now the word righteousness is the key word in the book of Romans.

If you were to sit down with the book of Romans in the language that Paul wrote, the Greek language, and just watch for that word righteousness, or righteous, or justified, or justification, same basic word, you'd find it some 65 times in these chapters. Paul's theme in Romans is righteousness. Chapters 1, 2, and 3, righteousness needed.

The whole world guilty before God. Chapters 4 and 5, righteousness provided through faith in Jesus Christ. Chapters 6, 7, and 8, righteousness practiced in everyday life.

We don't live in sin because we've been saved by God's grace. So you have righteousness needed, the whole world is guilty. Righteousness provided through faith in Jesus Christ.

Righteousness practiced in daily living. Then you get to 9, 10, and 11, you have righteousness rejected by the nation of Israel. And not only by the nation of Israel, but by anybody who has refused to submit to God's righteousness.

Now what he says here in verses 1 through 4 is so very practical. He's saying here that these people, with their total inner being, refused God's righteousness. There was something wrong with their minds.

They were ignorant of God's righteousness. Now this raises an interesting question. Why was the Jewish nation ignorant of God's righteousness? They'd been given the Ten Commandments.

They had the book of Leviticus, which is the great holiness book of the Old Testament. They had the Old Testament Scriptures. Why were they ignorant of God's righteousness? Because their leaders took their own religious system and placed it on top of God's revelation.

And it got to the point where the Jewish people couldn't see what God had to say, all they could see is what men had to say. And that's one reason why Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount. Isn't it true

today in the city of Chicago, people don't know what sin is? And people don't know what righteousness is? And when Jesus Christ came to preach, and He preached the Sermon on the Mount, His theme was, except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees, you'll in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Of course, this shocked everybody because if anybody was going to heaven, the Pharisees were. And yet theirs was a righteousness of ritual, a righteousness of works, a righteousness that was a self-righteousness. And Paul says here they rejected God's righteousness.

Their minds were ignorant, their emotions were misdirected, they were zealous for their own self-righteousness and not God's righteousness. If you get interested in that subject, just read Philippians chapter 3, where the Apostle Paul, who was the leading Jewish rabbi of his day, tells us how he went about to establish his own righteousness. If anybody had any reason to brag, he could.

A Hebrew of the Hebrews, born of the tribe of Benjamin, zealous, persecuted the church concerning the righteousness which is in the law blameless. So their minds were ignorant, their emotions were zealously misdirected, but their biggest problem is found down in verse 3. Their wills were stubborn. You know why most people go to hell who have heard the word of truth? I'm not talking about people who haven't heard, I'm talking about people who have heard.

You know why people are lost and going to hell tonight who have heard the word of the gospel? It's because they won't submit. You see, we don't like this word submit. We live in a world where you don't submit.

We live in a world where if you're a man or a woman, you stand firm and say, I'm not going to give in to anybody. And that's what they did. When Jesus Christ came, instead of accepting God's righteousness in Christ, they found him guilty and crucified him.

Before you criticize them, remember you and I would have done the same thing. And so they rejected God's righteousness. Because, you see, God's righteousness, according to verse 4, is Jesus Christ.

Not the Ten Commandments, not the temple, not the sacrifices, not the priesthood, Jesus Christ. This word end here means finish. Now some of these folks who want to get me back into law, they say, now you must worship on the Sabbath day, or you must not do this, or you must do that, don't eat this, and don't do that.

These people who want to get me back under Mosaic law had better read verse 4. Jesus Christ is the end of the law. He finished the law. He has fulfilled the law in himself, and now when you have Jesus Christ, you have the righteousness of the law.

That's the beautiful thing about being saved. Instead of saying, I've got to obey all these commandments, or I'll go to hell, you simply come and say, I will give my life, I will submit to Jesus Christ. And when you receive Him as your Savior, God gives you His righteousness.

That's what Paul's talking about over in 2nd Corinthians chapter 5, when he says, God hath made Christ to be sin for us, He who knew no sin, that we might be made, what? The righteousness of God. Oh, you say, it's too good to be true. That's exactly right.

That's where grace comes in. It is too good to be true, but it's true that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. And somebody here tonight who says, I'm a sinner, I'm dirty, I'm unclean, I'm wicked, you can come to Jesus Christ and submit.

Submit. And when you submit to Jesus Christ, He gives you His righteousness. But they rejected God's righteousness, verses 1 through 4. Now their second rejection is in verses 5 through 13.

They rejected God's Word. Now these things go together. The righteousness of God comes to us in Jesus Christ.

This is revealed to us in God's Word. Notice what he says, for Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doeth those things shall live by them. That's the first kind of righteousness, law righteousness.

And law righteousness says do. Law righteousness says try. But law righteousness never saved anybody.

So he moves on to tell us in verse 6, but the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise. And here he quotes from Deuteronomy chapter 30. He goes back to the Old Testament Scriptures.

Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven? That is, to bring Christ down from above. Or, who shall descend into the deep? That is, to bring Christ again from the dead. But what saith it? And here he quotes from Deuteronomy again.

The Word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart. That is the word of faith which we preach. Notice what he's saying here.

He is telling us here there are only two kinds of righteousness. There is law righteousness that says do, try. There is faith righteousness which says done, trust.

Now which of these do you have tonight? I meet people all over this city who say to me, well preacher I'm trying as hard as I can. I'm really trying. Paul says you try that kind of approach to righteousness, you'll never get it.

The righteousness that says try fails. The righteousness that says do fails. But the righteousness of faith that says trust because it's already done is the righteousness that succeeds.

And they rejected God's Word and consequently rejected God's righteousness. You see it's rather interesting. Paul says here this word of salvation isn't far from you.

The Jewish nation couldn't complain and say well the Word was too far. We had to go up to get it or we had to go down to get it. Paul said no excuses like that please.

The Word of God is near you. You have the Word in your mouth. The Word of God was given to you.

Nobody who's here tonight can ever say to God, God the Word of God was too far from me. I just couldn't get a hold of it. It's here right now.

The Word of God has been sung to you tonight. The Word of God has been read to you. It's being preached to you tonight.

The Word of God isn't far away. It's near us. You say well can I trust the Word of God? Look at verses 9 through 11.

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus or Jesus as Lord. You remember back in Paul's day everybody said Caesar is Lord. Once a year every Roman citizen walked up to the altar and took a pinch of incense and put the incense on the altar and said Jesus, it said Caesar is Lord.

When you put your faith in Jesus Christ something happens to your heart and what happens in your heart comes out of your mouth. The two always go together. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh and the mouth says Jesus is Lord.

Get this now. That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord 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 about salvation.

What he's simply saying here is this. The Word of God is near you and the Word of God can be trusted. Here is God's promise.

If you will believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and having believed confess him as Savior and Lord you're saved. That's not difficult. Now it's difficult if you won't submit.

You see the person who stands straight and tall and stiffens his neck and narrows his eyes and looks at you and says I'm not going to call anybody Lord. You can't be saved. We're saved by submitting and one of the evidences of our submission is Jesus is Lord.

I believe that Jesus died for my sins and arose again and that today he is Lord and I receive him. I submit to him. But they rejected God's Word in spite of the fact that it was near them.

In spite of the fact that it was dependable and sure and in spite of the fact that it was for everybody. Somebody here tonight may say well that promise is not for me. Look at verses 11 and 12.

For the scripture saith whosoever, Paul likes that word, whosoever believeth on him shall not be disappointed. You say I've been so disappointed in my life. I trusted this religion and it failed me and I trusted this cult and it failed me and I tried this thing and it failed me.

Paul makes it very clear in verse 11. You believe on Jesus Christ you won't be disappointed. Is there anybody here tonight who's ever been disappointed by Jesus Christ? Now many times we have disappointed him but he that believeth on him shall never be disappointed 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. And here comes that word again. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

So nobody can say well it's too far from me. Here it is. Nobody can say well I can't depend upon it.

It's sure. Nobody can say well it's not for me. It's for all.

It's rather interesting back in chapter 9 Paul has emphasized election, the sovereignty of God. Here in chapter 10 he emphasizes my responsibility to call upon the Lord and the two go together. They rejected God's righteousness.

They wanted their own righteousness. They rejected God's Word because God's Word contradicted their religion. I've met people like that.

Maybe you're here tonight. You say pastor, do you mean to tell me that I can be saved tonight just by trusting Jesus Christ? That's what it says. You mean that all that this religion has been teaching me about this ritual and that ritual and this commandment and that commandment really isn't true? That's right.

We aren't saved by our good works. We're saved by the finished work of Jesus. It's not do righteousness.

It's done righteousness. He said it is finished and folks it is finished. They rejected God's righteousness 1 through 4. They rejected God's Word 5 through 13.

In verses 14 through 17 they rejected God's messengers. There's a connection here. We need righteousness.

The message of God's righteousness is revealed in God's Word and God's Word is carried by God's messengers. Look at 10, 14 through 17. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher, without a proclaimer? That doesn't just mean an ordained minister standing in a pulpit.

He's talking here about any of God's servants who will share the message of Christ. And how shall they preach except they be sent? As it is written, and here he quotes from the book of Isaiah back in chapter 52. As it is written, how beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace and bring glad tidings of good things.

But they have not all obeyed the gospel for Isaiah saith, Lord who hath believed our report. So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Now folks there is a sequence to salvation and the sequence is given right here.

Let's just reverse what he's given here in verses 14 and 15. A messenger is sent out. That's the first step.

A messenger. How shall they preach except they be sent? And so someone is sent out. Now God does the sending.

He's not talking here simply about sending a missionary to Mexico or a missionary to Japan. He's talking about anyone. Tomorrow morning the Holy Spirit of God is going to send one of our people out someplace.

I thank God that all week long people who are a part of Moody Church are witnessing for Jesus Christ. I chatted with a lady on the phone the other day. She said, praise the Lord, last week I led eight people to Christ.

That's wonderful. So step number one, somebody is sent. Step number two, he proclaims Jesus Christ.

Not a church, not some theology, he proclaims Jesus Christ. He just lets people know that Jesus Christ is the answer to their needs. That Jesus Christ can give them righteousness.

Step number one, somebody goes. Step number two, that somebody shares Christ. Step number three, the sinner hears the Word.

That's important. He has said to us here in verse eight, it's the Word of faith. Down in verse 17, he says, this faith comes by hearing the Word of God.

Don't you ever divorce the Word of God from the witness. People aren't saved by hearing tear-jerking stories. People are saved by hearing the Word of God.

Step one, somebody goes. Step two, they proclaim Christ. Step three, the sinner hears.

And having heard, step four, he believes. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. And believing the message, he calls.

Now if he calls without believing, he calls in vain. But having believed the message of the gospel, he says, this is what I need. I need the righteousness of God.

I am such an unrighteous, undone sinner. I believe that Jesus died for me. And he calls upon the Lord.

And my Bible says, whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. The dying thief rejoiced to see that fountain in his day. And so may I, though vile as he, wash all my sins away.

I'm glad that it says whosoever. I remember hearing Wilbur Nelson tell one day, this had been years ago, about going into a restaurant. And the restaurant was crowded.

And he sat down at a table with a gentleman. And he thought he would get acquainted. He said, my name is Nelson.

The fellow said, that's unusual. My name is Nelson, too. He said, well, my name is Wilbur Nelson.

The man said, so is mine. It was remarkable. Now you won't find another Warren Weersbe running around anyplace, I don't think.

I know five Mel Johnsons. And if I looked hard, I could probably find five more. God doesn't put a name in here.

It might be somebody else's name. God just says whosoever. Now don't get used to that.

Don't think that that little word whosoever is to be shared in a good news club on a flannel graph board. That word whosoever got you into heaven, they rejected God's messengers. What did God do? God sent them messenger after messenger.

The messenger was sent. The messenger preached Christ. They heard, but they wouldn't believe.

They rejected God's messengers. Remember that story that Jesus told about the vineyard? A man had a vineyard and he let it out to some people. And then he sent a servant down to get his money, to get his produce.

And they stoned him. He sent another servant down. They threw him out.

He sent another servant down. They beat him up. Finally, he said, I'll send my son.

They'll honor my son. They killed his son. Stephen in Acts chapter seven at the end of that great speech, that great message in which he analyzes Israel's history.

If I think I'm correct in saying that's the longest sermon in the in the New Testament. Here's a whole chapter, Acts chapter seven devoted to Stephen analyzing Israel's history. You know what Stephen says in that in that particular sermon? It's very simple.

Go home and read it tonight. He says, all during Israel's history, when God has sent them a Redeemer, they rejected him the first time, but they accepted him the second time. That's all he's saying in that chapter.

God sent Joseph, they rejected him the first time, accepted him the second time. God sent Moses, rejected him the first time, accepted him the second time. God sent the prophets, they rejected them the first time.

After they killed him, they accepted him. God sent Jesus, they rejected him the first time. Thank God they're going to accept him the second time.

They rejected God's messengers. By the way, what have you done with God's messengers? I want to remind you that people in Chicago have a greater responsibility before God than people do in any place else. They've heard the Word of God.

This city has had some of the greatest preaching of the Word of God. You can turn the radio on, you can go to the newsstand and find a Bible, you can turn the TV on. People in Chicago are going to be without excuse.

Don't you criticize the nation of Israel? They rejected God's righteousness, they rejected God's Word, they rejected God's messengers. I want to spend just a minute before we move into their fourth rejection, on verse 15. He's quoting here from the book of Isaiah, how beautiful are the feet.

We never think of beautiful feet. Now you may know somebody who really has beautiful feet. Feet to me have never looked beautiful.

We think of people with beautiful hands. I'm not a connoisseur of such things. There may be people with beautiful legs.

There may be people with beautiful forms. I don't doubt this. The human form can be very beautiful, but not feet.

Feet are ugly. I have not seen anything beautiful about feet, but God does. You see, this little quotation from Isaiah goes back to when the nation of Israel was under bondage, Babylonian captivity.

Then God set them free. God delivered them. And he says, how beautiful are the feet of those who came to say, hey, you're free.

Now it also looks prophetically. Isaiah is looking down through the centuries. He's looking at a time when the nation of Israel once again will be going through bondage, during the tribulation period.

Oh, it's going to be so rough on the nation of Israel during that tribulation period. But then one day Jesus is going to return, and one day the messengers are going to go out and say, the kingdom has been established. The Messiah has come.

How beautiful are those feet. But right now, how beautiful are your feet? We spend so much time trying to make our hair beautiful. Some of us doesn't take much time.

Trying to make our faces beautiful, that may take a little more time. Do we spend much time making our feet beautiful? You want to have beautiful feet? Far more important than a beautiful face or a beautiful hairdo or a beautiful form, beautiful feet. How do you get beautiful feet? Just take the gospel out.

That's all. Just walk up and down the stairs of buildings and walk up and down. Just take the gospel.

I thank God for people in Moody Church, many of them, who wherever they are, they have beautiful feet, just sharing the word of God. They rejected God's righteousness. They rejected God's word.

They rejected God's messengers. Their fourth rejection is in verses 18-21. But I say, have they not heard? Yes, verily.

And here he quotes from Psalm 19. Their sound went into all the earth and their words unto the end of the world. You see, the people can't say, oh, we didn't hear the word of God.

Paul and the apostles and the early Christians took the message of the gospel throughout the known world. You can't use that as an excuse, saying we haven't heard. They've got a second excuse.

But I say, did not Israel know? Did they understand? I can just see some Israelites saying, well, Paul, we didn't understand this gospel. We didn't know what you were talking about. Notice what he says.

First Moses said, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people. That's the Gentiles. And by a foolish nation, I will anger you.

But Isaiah is very bold and says, I was found of them that sought me not. That's the Gentiles. I was made manifest under them that asked not after me.

That's the Gentiles. Some Jew stands up and says, Paul, we didn't hear the word of God. Paul says, wait a minute.

The word went out to the whole world. Paul, we didn't understand the word of God. Paul says, if the heathen Gentile could understand it, who never had a prophet, who never had the law, who never had the priesthood, who never had the sacrifices, who never had the Old Testament Scriptures, if a blind pagan Gentile understood it and received it, why couldn't the Jew? Verse 21 is a very touching verse.

Here are these Gentiles who weren't seeking after righteousness, but when they heard the message, they believed, and God saved them. But here's the nation of Israel in verse 21, but to Israel he saith, and once again he's quoting the Isaiah passage, the Isaiah prophecy, all day long, says God, all day long I have stretched forth my hand to a disobedient and gainsaying people. Beautiful feet and outstretched hands.

You know what he's saying here? He's saying all during this day of grace, Almighty God has stretched out his hands to Israel. Now we often use this passage about the beautiful feet to talk about sending missionaries to the Gentiles, and we can say that, but basically here he's talking about sending messengers out to the Jews. And God is saying all day long, all during this day of grace, my arms have been outstretched.

Sounds like Jesus, doesn't it? Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how oft would I have gathered you together as a hen doth gather her brood, and ye would not. That's rather a beautiful thing. When Jesus was born, Zacharias, back in the Gospel of Luke said, the day spring from on high has visited us.

The day spring, the dawning. When Jesus came into this world, a new day dawned. The light came into the world.

The people that sat in great darkness have seen a light, and the light came in. Jesus came into this world and the light dawned. And that light's been getting brighter and brighter.

This day of grace has been ticking off on God's clock. Today is still the day of grace. It's not the day of judgment.

It ought to be a day of judgment. The way people are treating God's Son and God's Word and despising God's grace, it ought to be a day of judgment, but it's not. A man said to me one day, I can't figure out why God doesn't send judgment upon this world.

I said, I'll tell you why. He has already judged our sins on His Son, on the cross. But one of these days, there will come judgment.

Peter tells us why our Lord has not sent judgment. God is long-suffering to us, Word, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. And so Paul says, they've rejected God's love.

They've rejected His righteousness. They've rejected His Word. They've rejected His messengers.

They've rejected His love. What more could he have done to show them His love? And by the way, what more could he have done to show you His love? I'm sure that somewhere in this congregation tonight is somebody who is living in Romans chapter 10. That's the rejection chapter.

You've rejected God's righteousness. Now you need righteousness. You'll never get into heaven without righteousness.

Not your own, God's. And so Paul is simply saying tonight, men apart from God's righteousness are lost. This righteousness has been provided.

God makes it easy for people to be saved. God doesn't make it hard for people to be saved. God makes it easy for people to be saved.

The Word of God is nigh unto them, in their mouth, in their heart. Call upon the name of the Lord. It's easy to be saved, provided you're willing to submit.

Men apart from God's righteousness are lost. God's righteousness is a gift to those who will receive Christ. And when you receive Him, you're saved.

And then those outstretched arms of God just engulf you. And He says, you're mine. You're mine.

If you've rejected Him tonight, I say to you, all day long God's stretched out His arms toward you. All day long. I don't know how much longer this day of grace is going to continue.

I sometimes feel we are in the last minutes of the last hour. You can't afford to wait. You can't afford to fool around.

Tonight, respond to God's invitation of love. Hear the Word. Believe on the Savior.

And go home righteous, accepted in Christ. Let's pray. Father, we pray that many here tonight who need to be saved will come and give their hearts to Christ.

Oh, Father, may there be no one here going about to establish his own righteousness, a religion righteousness, a self-righteousness, a works-righteousness. May there be those here tonight who will submit themselves to the righteousness of God. Oh, how thankful we are that Jesus Christ is our righteousness.

May many call upon Him tonight. We pray in His name and for His sake. Amen.

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