

THE LOST AND US - 1
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ABOUT THE LOST?

1 Cor.11:1; Romans 10:1-4

INTRODUCTION:

- I. Just because Paul had become a Christian & most of his Jewish countrymen had turned against him, doesn't mean that he didn't have tender and concerned feelings toward his fleshly brethren.
 - A. In Romans 10:1-4 Paul talks about his great love for them. **READ TEXTS.**
 - B. And even though we know him better as the “apostle to the Gentiles,” his concerns and efforts still lent themselves to the “saving of Israel!”
- II. **THE THEME OF THE BIBLE IS MAN'S SALVATION. James 1:21**
 - A. Because of Man's need for salvation from the guilt of his own sins is the reason Christ came to the earth! **Matt.1:21; 1 Tim 1:15**
 - B. Because of Man's need for salvation is the reason Christ died on the cross. **Rom.5:8; 1 Cor.15:3**
 - C. Because of Man's need for salvation to be realized is one reason Christ is coming again. **Heb.9:28**
 - D. Because of Man's need for salvation is the reason Paul became an apostle.
- III. In Romans 10, then, we are allowed to see the very **HEART** of a soul winner.
 - A. When we **RECOGNIZE** that, we must then strive to be a reflection of what we see in the apostle Paul!
 - B. We also need to recognize that many of **our fellow-citizens in this area**, [aka - “our brethren”] have **MANY OF THE SAME QUALITIES** that Paul’s brethren in Israel had.

I. AS GOD’S PEOPLE TODAY, WE MUST HAVE A BURNING DESIRE FOR THOSE WHO ARE LOST, JUST LIKE PAUL HAD! Rom.10:1.

- A. Paul's heart's desire was to see his **Jewish brethren** saved. (Has **OUR DESIRE** really reflected that attitude?)
 1. His “*desire*” meant his **longing, yearning, or craving**. (How much desire/yearning/craving to save the lost have others been able to **SEE IN OUR CHRISTIANITY?**)
 2. **They had rejected Jesus**, but the door wasn't completely closed to their possibilities for salvation! (Regrettably, many times today don't **WE shut the door** on those who've said “No” in the past?)
- B. Paul was **praying** for their souls' **eternal welfare!** (Again, does that summarize **OUR efforts?**)
 1. Paul prayed that they might be saved. (How long since we've prayed for a **specific** lost person?)
 2. **I don't exactly know the way he worded his prayer** for their salvation; **IT COULD HAVE BEEN:---**
 - a) That they might **hear the gospel** - *and he was desirous of sharing the gospel with them.*
 - b) That they might **study the word** - **and he was TRYING to study with them.**
 - c) That they might **live the Christian life** - **AND HE WAS READY TO HELP TRAIN THEM IN THE PATHWAYS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS!**
- C. Paul was truly a Christ-like person. **1 Cor.11:1-**“Be ye imitators..”.
 1. Paul was trying to be **just like Christ** in reaching every lost person! **Lk.19:10.**
 2. **Matt.18:12-14-** “What do you think? If any man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go and search for the one that is straying? 13 “And if it turns out that he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine which have not gone astray. 14 “Thus it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones perish.”
- D. Paul was evangelistic-minded himself, and was constantly enlisting others to help spread the good news of the gospel. **Acts 12:25-** “And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their mission, taking along with them John, who was also called Mark.” **13:13-** “and John left them and returned to Jerusalem.”

1. The New Testament church today, **just as in the first century**, must be an evangelistic church.
 - Acts 2:47- *“praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved.”*
 - Acts 4:4- *“But many of those who had heard the message believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.”*
 - Acts 5:14- *“And all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to their number;”*
 - Acts 6:7- *“And the word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.”*
 - Acts 8:4- *“Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.”*
2. These exhibitions of their successes were all a direct result of the EFFORTS they put forth in sharing the gospel with others! **HOW MANY OF OUR FRIENDS HAVEN'T YET HEARD ABOUT THE GOSPEL?**

II. IT'S ALSO URGENT WE UNDERSTAND THAT OUR FELLOW-CITIZENS IN THIS AREA [“OUR BRETHREN”] -- ARE LOST WITHOUT GOD! Rom.10:2.

- A. Is it to anyone's credit that they ONLY have a **GREAT ZEAL** for the Lord, but no acceptable PRACTICE?
 1. Those first century Israelites, like Paul, were very **enthusiastic**. John 16:2- *“They will make you outcasts from the synagogue, but **an hour is coming for everyone who kills you to think that he is offering service to God.**”* Acts 9:1-2- *“Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, 2 and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.”*
 2. If **sincerity alone** were all one needed, then those first century Jews would have been saved!
 3. They **revered the Law of God** anytime they were convinced they heard it, but **THEY HAD PUT A HEDGE around the Torah, and had also elevated the authority of the Mishna** [their books of traditions], to the extent that they *had not accepted the teachings of Jesus!*
- B. So, that's how we can perceive that their “great zeal” was *“not according to knowledge”*- Matt.7:21.
 1. Sadly, many of our **religious neighbors** today are making these same mistakes.
 2. While God demands that we **be sincere**, He also demands that we ALL **obey His teachings**.
 3. NO ONE can plead *sincerity of conscience* while blatantly disregarding and disobeying God's law.
 4. Cf. the Godly Examples of Cornelius, Eunuch, Saul: **ALL of these had to make changes religiously!** Acts 17:30.
 5. And all of this we say about our neighbors, **applies also to us**, if we're not reaching out to them!
- C. The Jews' **knowledge was incomplete**, and so their religious **actions weren't adequate** toward God!
 1. They were ignorant of God's righteousness (text). Rom.1:16-17
 2. But Paul wasn't content just to let them be lost -- no matter how many **previous rejections**, or their **ancestry**, or their **status in the community**, or **even their age!**
 3. Often, the reason such excuses seem familiar is because **WE USE THE SAME ONES FOR NOT TRYING TO REACH THE LOST FOR CHRIST, DON'T WE?** [Have you honestly ever heard anyone say that they were **RIGHT NOW at the right age** for serving the Lord? Or, that **THESE** were exactly **the right circumstances for getting busy** as a Christian?] **OFTEN, rather than seeing work being done, we're hearing more EXCUSES than ever, aren't we?**
- D. **WE NEED THE HEART OF THE APOSTLE PAUL.**

1. **ILLUS:** A Christian was passing out tracts & when he handed one to a well dressed lady who thought she was holier than anyone else, and she said: *"Wait a minute, Sir, you must not know who I am."*
 - a) Friends, may I impress you that there is a day of judgment coming, and **on that day it won't matter who you are!**
 - b) And it is with love and concern that Paul tells us of that day: **2 Cor.5:10.**
2. **ILLUS:** *[Often, because things aren't "exactly right" for us, we neglect serving the Lord. NO MATTER your handicap, you need to always be reaching out!]* A preacher confided in a friend that he was going to resign because some of the members had mistreated him & didn't think he was a very good preacher. His friend asked him: "Have they crowned you with thorns yet? Or did they spit on you? Have they nailed you to a tree?" The preacher saw the point, figured he wasn't so badly treated after all, and didn't leave!
 - a) Jesus told us that, no matter our handicaps, we can't make a sacrifice that's greater than HE can make up for us, in **Mk.10:29-30-** *"Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake, 30 but that he shall receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life."*
 - b) And again, it is with love and concern that Paul tells us of God protecting us: **1 Cor.10:13.**
3. **ILLUS:** A vacationer watched with curiosity as a lumberman occasionally jabbed his sharp hook into a log, separating it from the others that were floating down a mountain stream. When asked why he did this, the worker replied, *"These may all look alike to you, but a few of them are quite different. The ones I let pass are from trees that grew in a valley where they were always protected from the storms. Their grain is coarse. The ones I've hooked and kept apart from the rest came from high up on the mountains. From the time they were small, they were beaten by strong winds. This toughens the trees and gives them a fine and beautiful grain. We save them for choice work. They're too good to make into plain lumber."*
 - a) Friend, the point is that God often allows some of His dearest saints to be bent by trial or buffeted by the winds of adversity so that they may be strengthened for His service and prepared to fulfill His highest purposes.
 - b) And the love of the Lord expressed through His apostle Peter: **1 Pet.4:14-** *"If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you."* **And the love & concern of Paul says: 2 Cor.12:15-** *"And I will most gladly spend and be expended for your souls. If I love you the more, am I to be loved the less?"*

III. GOD WOULD NOT THEN, AND WILL NOT NOW, ACCEPT FOLKS ON THE MERITS OF THEIR OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS! Rom.10:3.

- A. What is of vital importance is God's righteousness. **Rom.3:21-23-** *"NOW, the righteousness of God ... is manifested ... even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,"*
- B. We cannot justify ourselves. **Rom.3:20.**
 1. All have sinned **Rom.3:23.**
 2. The recompense for sin has ETERNAL CONSEQUENCES! **Rom.6:23.**
- C. The Jews had THREE STRIKES against them.
 1. They were **ignorant of God's righteousness,** which they manifested when---
 - a) They failed to understand God's true nature.
 - b) They failed to understand the nature of man.

- c) They failed to understand God love.
- 2. They went about **trying to establish their own righteousness.**
 - a) They sought to make themselves acceptable to God through religious rituals, ceremonies, laws, & works **that were different from God's ordained regimen.**
 - b) They sought to save themselves by being as religious as they could.
- 3. They **refused to submit** themselves **to** the righteousness of **God.**
 - a) Simply, they refused to follow Jesus who is God's righteousness.
 - b) As a result, JESUS SAID they were "judged!" **Jno.12:48.**
- D. We have no religious authority, we just want to help people realize that they cannot save themselves.

IV. CHRIST WAS THE ONLY MEANS BY WHICH PAUL'S COUNTRYMEN OR BY WHICH OUR NEIGHBORS IN THIS AREA CAN BE SAVED! Rom.10:4- *"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes."*

- A. Christ is the **VERY ONE** pointed to by the inspired prophets of the O.T.
 - 1. Christ ended the law; He was the object toward which the law pointed. **Gal.3:24-25-** *"Therefore the Law has become our tutor **TO LEAD US TO CHRIST**, that we may be justified by faith. 25 But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor."* **Col.2:17-** *"things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ."*
 - 2. Christ ended the law; He fulfilled & completed the law perfectly.
 - a) Jesus has become the Ideal Man, the Perfect Man, the Representative Man. **2 Cor.5:21-** *"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."* **Heb.5:8-9.**
 - b) **Acts 2:22, 36-** *"Men of [Carmichael] Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know— 36"Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified."* [Our sins demanded His crucifixion!]
 - 3. Christ ended the law, taking it out of the way (with all its legalism). **Col.2:14.**
- B. Christ is the means of salvation *"to everyone that believeth."*-**Rom.10:4**
 - 1. Paul is talking about an obedient faith.
 - 2. Notice examples of faith in **Hebrews 11: BY FAITH...**Abel **worshipped** God.//Enoch **walked with** God.//Noah **built** for God.//Abraham **offered** to God.//Moses **suffered** for God.//
- C. His way is the only means of salvation. **John 14:6; Acts 4:12**
Rom.5:19- *"For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous."*
John 15:6- *"If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."*
- D. It is a "straight way" **that excludes all others.** **Matt.7:13-14**
- E. Can't you really understand why we must have a keen desire to want to help people find Jesus.

CONCLUSION

- A. Just like Paul, we have family members and close friends who are sincere at what they are practicing religiously, but who are still lost.
- B. Instead of **excusing them**, let us seek to teach them a better way, the way of N.T. Christianity.
- C. Instead of **writing them off**, let's reach out to them.