***The Stumbling Stone of Israel, No. 2  
Romans 9:30-33  
RO131-01***

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Romans 9:30-33. Our subject is The Stumbling Stone of Israel, segment number 2.

At the end of Romans 9, Paul summarizes the problem faced by all Jews in the past relative to spending eternity in heaven. He has pointed out that the Gentiles who had no access to God found the key to absolute righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ. He has pointed out that the Jews who did have access to God but rejected faith in Jesus Christ tried to gain absolute righteousness through the keeping of the Mosaic Law, and they failed completely. Paul raises the question of how such a thing could have happened to the Jews. His answer is that the Jews would not follow God's plan of salvation, which was a gift plan to those who trust in Jesus as Savior.

Jesus Christ, to the Jews, was a stone, Paul said, over which they stumbled and smashed themselves to the ground. And so, the Jews in Paul's day who rejected Jesus Christ as God's channel of eternal life went into the lake of fire for all eternity. And that is true of every Jew today who rejects Christ. A person simply cannot secure salvation and eternal life in heaven by any system of good works, including a combination of good works and faith in Christ. If you try to combine the two, you neutralize the grace-basis of salvation, and you've lost it all.

To the unsaved Jew, then, Jesus Christ is a stumbling block. To the unsaved Gentile, Jesus Christ is foolishness. 1 Corinthians 1:23 says that in these words, "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness." So, the Jews stumbled over the idea of Jesus Christ as their channel into eternal life. The Gentile thinks it's crazy that somebody else bears your sins and can pay for your guilt and carry your punishment. No one can ever secure absolute righteousness, however, except by trusting in Jesus Christ as his own personal Savior, just as Abraham did. 1 Corinthians 1:24, therefore says, "But unto them which are called [that is, called to eternal life], both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

**The Jews' Attitude Regarding Jesus Christ**

So, as we come to the end of Romans 9, a chapter which deals with the past condition of the Jewish people, we are now down to verse 33. In this verse, we have now a prophetic preview. We read, "As it is written." "It is written" is the Greek word "grapho." The word "grapho" refers to the written scriptures. The scripture that Paul says, "It is written," he's going to quote two Old Testament scriptures that he weaves together in Romans 9:33. You can find these scriptures in Isaiah 8:14 and in Isaiah 28:16. He takes statements from both those scriptures, and he weaves them together under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in to this statement in verse 33.

"Behold." This is a Greek word we've had often: "idou," and it's an exclamation. It's the Greek way of saying, "I want you to pay attention." It points to the fact that something important is about to be said. We would just say, "Notice." "As it is written, notice, I lay." The word "lay" is "tithemi." In the Greek Bible, "tithemi" means, "to place something in a position." We have a statement about what God Himself has done relative to Jesus Christ.

He is laid in the location of Zion. The word "Zion" refers to Jerusalem, and the occasion is when Jesus Christ came into Jerusalem riding on the donkey in that triumphant procession when people were recognizing Him as the King that Israel was waiting for and as the One who would be the Messiah Savior. And you may read about that in Luke 19:29-40, how Jesus Christ comes into the city. People hail Him as the promised Messiah.

He is the One who comes to the city of Jerusalem, and He is in Zion, a stumbling stone. That is, something that the Jews stumbled upon. And we've already seen that reference to the Jews coming in, stumbling over Jesus Christ. Then he says specifically, "This one who comes to you in Zion is going to be a rock of offence." Rock. The "petra." The word "petra" is the word for a large boulder.

The word "offence" is "skandalon." "Skandalon" is the name for the trigger part of the trap, a trap for animals has a trigger. When the trigger is moved, the animal is trapped. Greeks call that trigger the "skandalon." Later, this was applied to the whole trap itself. So, Jesus Christ, God says, was a trap which snared the Jews into seeking righteousness by works. They were so antagonistic to Jesus Christ, and they hated Him so much that that actually drove them to do the thing they shouldn't do: to try to seek to get by with God on the basis of their own good performance.

In the New Testament, this word "skandalon" is used of anything which arouses prejudice or which proves to be a hindrance, which is exactly what Jesus Christ was to the Jews. He proved to be a point of prejudice for them and a point of hindrance. So, the attitude of the Jews toward Jesus Christ was very, very terrible.

In Acts 3, following the day of Pentecost, verses 12-26, we have an account of Peter reviewing what the attitude of the Jews was toward Jesus Christ, and it is the same attitude which is true of them today. And it is this attitude which is the "skandalon," which is the trap into which they have fallen. Listen to what Peter says:

Acts 3:12, "And when Peter saw it, he answered the people, 'Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? [They had healed the lame man.] The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go.'"

"'But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; of which we are witnesses. And His name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by Him hath given Him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. And now, brethren, I know that ye through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had showed before by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled.'"

"'Repent therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the Lord. And He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heavens must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the age began. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, 'A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.' And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet [that is, Jesus Christ], shall be destroyed from among the people.'"

"'Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. Ye are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, 'And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.' Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.'"

So, in this little summary passage, Peter has indicated the problem that the Jews had coming from Abraham, information from God, everything you could have asked for. And yet Jesus Christ, instead of being the means to take them into heaven trapped them to going to hell. Now, that was sad indeed. Jesus Christ proved to be the trap. Instead of accepting Him as the gift from God. So, here's the picture. Not very pretty. Very sad. The Jews had it all, but instead, they found that Jesus Christ was nothing but a stone over which they stumbled, smashed themselves to the ground, and proved to be a trap for them.

**The Worthlessness of Trust in Anyone Other Than Jesus**

Then, the last part of verse 33, we read the other side of the picture, the divine offer. "And, whosoever believeth." The word "believeth" is one of those important Greek words. It's the Greek word "pisteuo." "Pisteuo" means "to trust." The idea is to depend or to rest upon someone. It's in the present tense, so this is constantly true. This is active voice, so this is something an individual decides to do - you decide to believe, or you don't believe. It's a participle - a spiritual principle.

And, in order to make it clear that just believing in itself is not worth anything, the Bible is very clear to add another word. Here it is, the word "on," which in the Greek Bible is, "pepi," which indicates the object of your trust in order for you to have salvation. Faith or trust in anyone other than Jesus Christ is worthless.

I think you understand that. I would not want to run a hazard that somebody who is here this morning or who is listening to these tapes later may have missed this, so may I point out a couple of verses.

Faith or trust in anyone other than Jesus Christ is worthless with God. We know that, because John 14:6 says, "Jesus saith unto him, 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.'" So, when some Jewish person says, "I'm going to heaven, but I do not believe in Jesus Christ," he's wrong. The Bible says, "Jesus Christ is the only way to the Father."

John 3:16 puts it explicitly in these words, "For God so loved the world [of unbelievers] that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth ["pisteuo," trusted] in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. It is trust in Jesus Christ that makes the difference.

And then, one more in the book of Acts 4, that very explicit and clear statement. Acts 4:11-12, "This [referring to Jesus Christ] is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." We must be saved. So, there is no alternative.

Yes, Paul says, quoting the Old Testament, "Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone, a rock of offence." On the other hand, whosoever trusteth on Him [and that is Jesus Christ] shall not." And the word "not" is that strongest Greek negative, absolutely no way will you be ashamed.

The word "ashamed" looks like this: "kataischuno." "Kataischuno" comes from two words. The first part here is "kata," a preposition which really means, "down," and the last part here, "ischuno," is a verb, and that means, "to shame." Now, when you add in the Greek language this word "kata" to a word, it intensifies it. It make it place a stress upon it. It is saying you absolutely, in no way be ashamed of trusting in Jesus Christ as Savior. And, the word here connotes something more than being ashamed; that is, being disappointed, failure to realize your expectations.

This word is used in this way in Romans 5:5, where we read, "And hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit." Hope, that is trust in Jesus Christ (and hope in the Bible means a sure thing), will not cause you to be ashamed. And here, it means, in Romans 5:5, you will not be disappointed. So here, Paul is saying, quoting the Old Testament prophet, that God says that whoever trusts in the Savior that God will send, Jesus Christ, will not be disappointed in having trusted in Him for eternal life.

This is in future tense - at any time in the future. It is passive; this will not be done to anybody who trusts in Christ. It's indicative mood, a statement of fact. So, anyone who trusts in Jesus Christ for personal salvation will never be disappointed after he dies. That's the point.

And, there is no greater disappointment, I can assure you, that a human being can experience than to be going out of this life fully confident, fully assured that all is well with your soul, and then, when that soul slips out of the body and those eyes open in eternity. And the person wakes up, and he looks around himself, and he discovers he's in the holding pen of hades preparatory to being transferred into the lake of fire. And he wonders how this happened, and then he sits and thinks, "I had such great hopes of going to heaven. What a disappointment."

Well, the reason he's disappointed is because he had placed his trust in the wrong thing. He had followed the wrong plan of getting plan. He followed the wrong map. So, it is no small thing for Paul to confidently quote the prophets saying, "If you trust in Christ as Savior, you may be sure that when you die, you will not be disappointed in securing eternal life in heaven." But, the other side of the coin is true: anyone who trusts in anything else than Jesus Christ for salvation is going to experience a horrible disappointment after he dies.

**Saving Faith**

So, let's take a look at this Gospel of salvation, this thing that the Jews missed in such an unbelievable way. What in the world is saving faith? How can so many people be going to hell today who think they're going to heaven? How can so many vast church congregations going to hell all together? Because they're all based upon the certain concept by which they secure eternal life which the Word of God does not justify.

Saving faith. Many people who claim to have saving faith in Christ for salvation are actually trusting in a church organization, in some religious ritual. They're trusting in some system of doctrine, or they're just hoping for the best. That is not saving faith. But for most religious church people, they believe that saving faith is loyalty to some religious organization, participation in some ritual system, allegiance to a system of beliefs.

You see, one may believe what is revealed in the Bible about Jesus Christ, and yet not be saved. You must understand that. The Bible tells us that the demons all believe that. They all believe in God, and they all believe what the Bible says, but they're not saved. Saving faith which results in personal regeneration and eternal life includes, as we have learned in our recent evangelism seminar, three things. So, let's review them.

**Knowledge**

Saving faith includes, first of all, knowledge. The lost sinner must be told the Gospel about Jesus Christ. One cannot believe in Jesus Christ until he knows something about Him. The Bible places hearing the information about Jesus Christ before believing in Him.

You will find this to be true, for example, in Acts 15:7, "And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, 'Men and brethren, we know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the Gospel, and believe.'" Peter described his experience with the house of Cornelius, and he points out to them that this was the result of his telling them the Gospel first and then they believed. That order is important.

Notice Acts 18:8, "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized." One more. Ephesians 1:13 indicates that order. You have to have knowledge before you can believe it. 1:13, "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom also after ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." Here again, you heard it, and then you believed.

So, you see what a travesty it is to sit in so many churches where an invitation is given for people to accept Christ as Savior when nobody has explained the Gospel. Nobody has made any reference to what the Gospel is or how a person can be saved. They've given them no knowledge. But you see, many preachers make that mistake. They slip up because their minds are not on getting you into heaven. Their minds are getting you to their church membership. The Bible places hearing the information about Jesus Christ before believing. The knowledge that one needs to be saved, of course, is the Gospel.

Summarized for us in 1 Corinthians 15:3-5, "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures [that's the first part of the Gospel: Christ died for our sins]; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures [that's the second part of the Gospel: He arose from the dead]: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve [and so on]."

This is not a Jesus Christ that is a human creation that we are to trust in. He is a Jesus Christ who is the Christ revealed in the Bible. Therefore, when we say you must trust, you must believe in Jesus Christ as Savior, we are telling you specifically that you must believe certain things about this person. You must believe certain things that are true of Him.

John 20:31 tells us that He is God. "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name." So, the Jesus Christ we're talking about is deity.

Furthermore, the Jesus Christ whom we are discussing is also humanity. 1 John 4:2 points that out. "By this know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God."

Also, the Jesus Christ of whom we speak is the One who died to pay the penalty for the sin of mankind. That is the specific thing that we are depending upon that He did in our behalf. Romans 5:8 says that, "But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

And furthermore, that He is the Jesus Christ who bore the sin of the world, who arose from the dead, and thereby demonstrated the acceptance of His sacrifice by God the Father for the payment of our sins. Romans 4:25 tells us that, "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again on account of our justification being achieved."

So, when we tell you that you must have knowledge, that knowledge includes who Jesus Christ is. He is the Godman. He died. He arose from the dead, and God the Father is satisfied with the penalty that He paid. So, the lost person must know the Gospel in order to be saved.

A Christian messenger, of course, is needed to transmit the knowledge of the Gospel to the lost. Romans 10:14-15 points that out, and that's where you and I come into the picture. "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? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!'"

**Mental Ascent**

So, the first thing that a person has to have to be saved is knowledge. The second thing he has to have is mental ascent. The Gospel about Jesus Christ must be accepted as being the truth. Those who do not believe that the Bible is an errant book from God will not feel compelled to accept the Gospel as true. They will create their own way into heaven.

And some of you have raised this question, "Supposing a person says, 'Well, I just don't believe the Bible.'" Well, when they do that, they have rejected the only authoritative source of information from God, and there's not much more you can say. You do have to have the mental ascent that the information in the Bible is indeed true, but mental ascent is more than just understanding the Gospel. Mental ascent is really paying attention and, again, coming to the point where you accept the statement as being true.

I was thinking many years ago when my daughter Heidi was very little. We were on a family vacation. We were driving through a town trying to find some place to eat, and several places were closed. And in the background of all the conversation with the boys and everybody else in the car about finding a place to eat, there was this chirping little voice that suddenly came in and says, "There's a Howard Johnson!" And everybody kept expressing, "Where could we go to eat," and this little voice chirps up and says, "There's a little Howard Johnson!" And everybody keeps talking and says, "Heidi, sit down." And everybody's carrying on, and finally, there's a lull in the conversation, and this voice chirps up and says, "There's a Howard Johnson!" And everybody looks at her and looks where she's pointing. [Ah!] There is a Howard Johnson right there! And there is an orange roof and a cupula and the other things!

Well, that little kid had the information, but in the back of our minds, we heard her saying that, but nobody believed her. And consequently, we would have starved [laughter] had we not eventually cast our trust into this message. You see, that is mental ascent. Now, we understood what she was saying, but we did not believe her. You know, we kept, looked around, and finally, we spotted what she was seeing. And we realized that what she gave us was the truth all along. So, the issue is that you must have mental ascent.

**Trust**

And then, the third thing for salvation is you must have trust. There are two Greek words that tell us what to do with the Gospel about Jesus Christ. The two words are "believe" and "faith." Both words mean, "to trust, to rely upon." Trusting means that you cast yourself upon the object of your trust. So, again, you see, you can have a knowledge of the Gospel of the Good News about Jesus Christ. You can conclude, yes, it's the truth, but you can still not commit yourself to it. That's the difference.

On one occasion, when I was in China with the Marine Corps, I was in charge of a 105-millimeter field artillery battery. We were moving down the road, and we came to a bridge. And I stopped the car and got out, inspected the bridge, and concluded that it was safe to cross. The major came charging up with his Jeep and wanted to know if I thought that was safe to go across. And I told him I thought it was.

He was uneasy, and so he said, "We'll go one truck and one howitzer at a time, and all the men out of the trucks." I had more faith in the bridge than he did. I was willing to trust the whole column to it. He did not believe that that structure would hold these heavy vehicles. And we did not even believe that it could take one truck and one howitzer across until he actually drove out on it, and we decided to hazard one man and one piece of equipment.

Now, that is an example of ultimately putting your trust in a bridge by getting on it. No matter how much you talk about it, no matter how much knowledge we had by inspecting this structure, no matter how much we believed that it would hold, we did not have trust. We had knowledge. We had mental ascent, but trust only came when we finally ordered those vehicles across with those guns.

So, saving faith includes this critical element of trust. The Bible furthermore clarifies that Jesus Christ is the object of trust for salvation. It does that as we've indicated by adding these prepositions after the word "believe" and "faith," like John 3:16 does and John 3:36. Let me show you. John 3:16 says that "whosoever believeth [preposition] on Him." That is, trusting upon Jesus Christ. John 3:36 says, "He that believeth on the Son."

So, saving faith involves trusting in Jesus Christ and His payment for our sins on the cross. We depend on Jesus Christ alone. We don't bring any human works. We don't bring any confessions to a priest. We don't bring any good works. Faith in itself does not save, but faith in Christ does. It is the object of trust that's the important thing.

So, saving faith, then, is knowing the biblical doctrine of the Gospel about Jesus Christ, accepting the Gospel as being the truth, and then casting oneself upon it for the forgiveness of one's sin and the imputation of God's absolute righteousness to your credit.

The illustration that we have heard concerning saving faith in comparison to a sinking ship and one lifeboat is true. You have a ship with four people on board, a sinking ship in the middle of the ocean. One man lacks any knowledge about the available lifeboat. He does not understand that it's even there. He doesn't even know it's there, so he's lost at sea. He has no knowledge. Another man knows that the lifeboat is available, but he does not believe that it can save him. He has no mental ascent, so he is lost at sea. The third man knows that there's a lifeboat on board. He believes that the lifeboat will float and will save him, but he refuses to get into it. So, he is lost at sea. He has no trust.

But there is the fourth man who knows that there is a lifeboat on board. He believes that a lifeboat will sustain him on the waters. He gets into the lifeboat, is lowered into the sea, and he is saved. You see, he had knowledge, he had mental ascent, and he had trust. All that is what is involved in being saved. Anything less than that dooms one to eternal death.

This is what the Jews' problem was. They had the knowledge of Jesus Christ. They didn't believe it was true, so consequently, they did not trust in Him. And that's the problem of every Jew today.

**The Presentation of the Gospel**

Now, let's tie this up with the presentation of the Gospel. Reviewing what we learned in the Even Tell seminar, which was such an excellent presentation of personal evangelism. The Christian today has been given the responsibility of explaining the Gospel to the lost so that they may receive from God the gift of eternal life in heaven. Yes, it is your duty. It is your responsibility. It is your privilege.

Mark 16:15, "And He said unto them, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.'" Luke 24:46-48, "And said unto them, 'Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.' And ye are witnesses of these things."

And finally, upon the moment of Christ's ascension into heaven, the statement in Acts 1:8 to each of you who have received it this morning, "'But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.'" So, we have the calling to present the Gospel. And we learned in our seminar to follow the bad news, good news approach.

**Bad News**

Point number 1 in speaking to a lost person. Here you are, a person that you have found an entrée to speak to them about the Gospel. They're ready to listen to you. You have their attention. What do you say?

Well, first you tell them that there is bad news in the Bible about every person. One, the Bible tell us that we are all sinners. Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." The glory of God is His standard of absolute righteousness. Everyone has violated God's standard of right conduct, so all are sinners. Now, that's bad news, because that means you can't go to heaven. Some people are, of course, better than others, but no one matches up to God's perfect, moral standard. Everyone is guilty of both mental and overt sins.

This is comparable to trying to swim to California to Hawaii, or to throw a stone from Texas to Minnesota. Everyone comes short of the goal. Some people will swim farther out into the Pacific Ocean toward Hawaii than others before they drown, but nobody's going to make it. Some people will throw a rock further toward Minnesota than others, but nobody will hit the target. And that is the problem. Sin is missing the mark of God's absolute righteousness, and that's what the Bible means when it says, "You are a sinner."

So, all miss God's glorious standard of absolute righteousness. No one is as perfect as God is, because all have sinned. And if you're not as perfect as God is, you can't go to heaven. No matter how good you are or how hard you try, you see, you can never become as good as God, and so you're excluded from heaven.

Now, there's another problem that's bad news. The Bible says that the divine penalty for our being sinners is death, eternal death, eternal separation from God in the lake of fire. Romans 6:23 tells us that. And of course, when we are talking to people about the Gospel, we want to open our Bibles and let them read these verses. "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

If we hire ourselves out to do a job for someone, we get paid for our services. That is something that we have earned; we have it coming to us. The Bible says that everyone who has sinned has earned some wages from God, and that wage is eternal death. The wages of sin means eternal separation from God in a conscious state in the lake of fire. There is no way a human being can come to God on his own to escape receiving the wages of death that he has earned. Once a person dies physically, his eternal destiny is irreversible.

**Good News**

But, there's also good news in the Bible - good news for every sinner. First of all is the news that Christ died for you. Romans 5:8 says this, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Since we, as sinners, cannot come to God with anything that will secure salvation, God decided to come to us with salvation as a free gift. Christ died to pay the penalty of death for your sins.

This is illustrated by the analogy of a person in good health and a person who has cancer. Here is this individual dying of cancer. Here is this individual who has good health. What happens in the Bible is that cancer, which is a symbol of sin, is exchanged for the good health of the healthy person, which is comparable to the righteousness of God. The healthy person takes your cancer as God has taken your sin, and the healthy person gives the good health, which is comparable to receiving the righteousness of God. So, He takes our sins - our cancer. He gives us His good health - His absolute righteousness.

And that's exactly what 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, "For He hath made Him [God the Father made Jesus Christ] who knew no sin to be sin for us [He took the cancer of our sins]; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." So that, He could give us His good health of absolute righteousness. After paying for our sins with His own death on the cross, Jesus Christ rose from the dead as proof that the justice of God the Father was satisfied in His payment for our sins.

So, there is good news in the Bible, first of all, and that is that Christ died for us. The second part of that good news is that you can be saved through faith in Jesus Christ. Ephesians 2:8-9 therefore say, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Since Jesus Christ paid for our sins, God the Father can give us eternal life in heaven as a free gift. We receive this gift by faith in Jesus Christ as our personal Savior. Faith means to place one's trust in Christ so as to depend on Him alone for salvation. Trust means to cast yourself upon Him, total confidence, just as one does as you sit down on a chair.

So, therefore, if we add anything to trusting in Christ - such as water baptism, church membership, a moral lifestyle, good works - we have neutralized the gift basis of salvation, so that God then is not free to give us eternal life at all. We know this from Romans 4:4-5, which says, "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

We've already learned from Ephesians 2:8-9 that God saves only by grace. Romans 4:4-5 tells us that if you work for it, it can't be given to you by grace. Romans 11:6 further adds to that when it says, "And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace." So, you see, you can't mix them and still get into heaven. God only gives salvation from hell as a gift to a lost sinner who does nothing more than trust in Jesus Christ who paid for our sins and then arose from the dead.

Knowing that one is saved, born again spiritually, and going to heaven is based on the facts revealed in God's inerrant book, the Bible. It is not on how you feel at any particular moment. So, we close with John 5:24 that gives us the basis of our assurance. "'Verily, verily, I say unto you, 'He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment; but is passed from death unto life.''"

"'Verily, verily, I say unto you, ''He that heareth My word [the person that heareth the Gospel], and believeth on Him [believes what God the Father said about trusting in Jesus Christ as Savior] hath everlasting life [You've got it now.], and shall not come into judgment [never can come into hell, never can lose that salvation]; but is passed from death unto life [true now and forever. No worry about being disappointed after you die and discover that you're not going to heaven.].''"

**Phrases to Avoid**

We would add one final word of caution as we learn in our seminar. Do not confuse lost people by giving them non-biblical phrases and telling them what to do with the Gospel. We have to give them the Gospel, and then we must tell them what to do with the Gospel to be saved. And what the Bible tells them to do with the Gospel is summarized in Acts 16:31, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

So, do not tell them, "Give your heart to Jesus." Very bad. Colossians 2:10 says this, "And ye are complete in Him who is the head of all principality and power." You don't give something to Jesus Christ to be saved. It is He who gives something to you. You are complete in Him.

"Give your life to God" is another expression you should not use. 1 John 5:11 says this, "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." It is not you giving your life to God. It is God giving His life to you.

Do not tell people to invite Christ into their heart. Revelation 3:20 says, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." That is not salvation invitation. That is inviting you to open your heart by confessing your sins so that Christ can come in and sup with you, have temporal fellowship with you.

Another phrase is, "Would you like to pray and receive Christ?" That is a false invitation. That is not what the Bible asks. John 3:36, please notice, says, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." It is not a matter of praying.

And finally, notice that the Bible does not call upon us to tell people to accept or receive Christ. John 1:12 is often quoted, thinking that that's what it says, "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the children of God [but then it explains how to receive], even to them that believe on His name." So that, it is false and confusing to tell people to receive Christ or to accept Him. They don't really know how to do that, but they know how to believe the Gospel and trust in Jesus Christ.

This, you see, is the problem that the Jews had. We have gone in detail over what is faith salvation. You have enough now, if you think this through, to be a capable witness for Jesus Christ. If you are not a Christian, you have everything you need to be able to be saved and genuinely saved, and securely saved. So, this is the issue that the Jews missed, and this is the issue that faces every human being. We are the witnesses. Let's go out and tell it.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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