

Romans 9:30–33

30What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; 31 but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. 32Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. 33 As it is written:

“Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense,
And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.”

What We Should Say to Election

Main idea: We should respond to the reality of God’s mercy by believing upon Him.

Introduction: What we shouldn’t say (v19) vs what we should say (v20). What is “natural”/wrong, vs what is super-natural (Spiritual!)/right.

1. Prioritizing Mercy

- a. Gentiles first
- b. Noting what they did NOT do. It didn’t come by their pursuing (v16).
- c. Noting HOW they attained. By faith. By what God did. Christ’s atonement, Christ’s calling (cf. v11, 16).

2. Receiving the Warning

- a. Wrong way
 - i. “Israel but not elect Israel” still had all of the advantages in v4.
 - ii. They were very zealous (“pursue” is the same word as “persecute”) for the right kind of righteousness (“the law of righteousness”)
 - iii. They pursued it in the wrong way.
- b. Wrong response
 - i. They treated texts like Leviticus 18:5 (cf. 10:5) as if we are the ones who make the difference, rather than the Lord being the One Who makes the difference.
 - ii. Their response to Jesus has been like Ahaz’s response to YHWH (cf. Isa 28:16, 8:13–15, 7:1–12; 2Ki 16:7)
 - iii. If we are zealous for our doing, instead of absolute in our depending, we will trip over Christ instead of resting upon Him. True Christianity results in giving our all, but a Christianity that has “trying so hard” as its essence results in stumbling over the stumbling stone rather than resting upon the rock.

3. Resting upon the Rock

- a. YHWH Himself is the Rock
- b. Christ, YHWH Himself, is the Rock!
- c. Resting upon Him will never turn out to have been a rash act. He will not, cannot, fail to hold you up.

Conclusion: Behold the mercy of God in Christ! Your trust can never be more well placed than to hope entirely upon Him. If you believe upon Him, your hope will not be put to shame!

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Romans 9, verse 30-33. These are God's words. What shall we say then? That gentiles who did not pursue righteousness.

Have attained to righteousness. Even the righteousness of faith. But Israel. Pursuing the law of righteousness. Has not. Attained to the law of righteousness. Why? Because they did not seek it by faith. But as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. As it is written.

Behold. I lay in Zion a stumbling stone. And rock of offense. And whoever believes on him. Will not be put to shame.

Amend the sends his reading of God's inspired and aren't worth.

We don't naturally say what we ought to say or maybe better since we have a new nature. We don't instinctively, or Reflexively or As a matter of reflex or as, An. Intentional automatic response say. What we ought to say. And so verse 30 asks, the question, what shall we say then?

And it goes with what the apostle has heard. Many times as he's preached, the gospel. He's preached to gospel, that was of salvation. By grace, through faith, from start to finish. Indeed by a grace by a mercy that doesn't have a start and never finishes. Her mercy, that goes back into the electing love of god.

Itself, back into his. Eternal decree. And there are those who have responded. Uh, to this and particularly Thinking about israelites who are not responding by faith in the lord, jesus christ, but our hardening In their unbelief and in their resistance of him. There are those who have whenever he has preached this gospel responded the way.

That he says. In verse 19, you will say to me, then Why does he still find fault? For who has resisted his will? And when we considered verse 19 through verse 24, we considered how wicked that response really is, how hard against god, judging the lord god, who is showing mercy precisely for the fact of his showing mercy.

And so this you will say to me, then Describing how the flesh responds to the gospel. As countered. Now by verse 30, what shall we say? Then. How art we in the spirit? To

respond to the gospel, the natural response that we have. To the truth of salvation by god's mercy alone.

To the truth of election to the truth and predestination The natural response and not here talking about our new nature. But the ordinary response, the instinctive response. Is wrong. There's quite obvious when we get into the passage that focusing on the greatness. The wideness of god's mercy in salvation, not focus that he himself has.

That it is of god who shows mercy. That god, though he is willing to make his power and his wrath known. Is please to show the riches of his glory in. Mercy. He wishes to display the riches of his glory and vessels of mercy. And so, we too, ultra focus on mercy.

And so, we'll see that First of all, Prioritizing mercy in verse 30. And then after we have prioritized, mercy, we will receive the warning, receive the warning. In verses 31 through 33. But then at the end of verse 33, we'll also We'll also rest upon the rock. So first prioritizing mercy, second receiving the warning third resting.

Upon the rock. The supernatural or spiritual with a capital s, holy spirit response. To the truth of god's saving by grace alone. Entirely by his mercy. And that this is the answer. For why there are those within ethnic israel who are not elect israel. The spiritual response is to prioritize.

Mercy, what shall we say then? That gentiles who did not pursue righteousness. Have attained to righteousness. Even the righteousness. A faith. So there are israelites who are being saved and we are going to continue to see that he's already been. Uh, telling us that but he's going to use himself as exhibit a when we get to the beginning of verse of chapter 11.

But how wide and great is the mercy of god that saves us opposite. What we deserve opposite, our inability That is shown, especially in the gentiles. And so he teaches us to prioritize mercy, when he says, what shall we say? Then that gentiles who did not pursue righteousness of attained righteousness.

So, we have a situation where There are those who Uh, not the analogy isn't exactly one to one but it is analogous. Those who have grown up in the church. And they've heard the gospel. And perhaps not even just week by week, but even in their homes, they've they've heard the gospel but they have responded as if it were by works.

As if being saved and being made righteousness, something that we do by meaning, well, in our response, or by doing well in our theology or, or in our obedience or service. And so they have They have not rested entirely only upon the lord jesus christ and they have not responded.

With hearts that yield to him in all things. But then, there are other people. Who didn't grow up in church? They didn't hear the gospel. They didn't have the worship. They

didn't study their bibles. They didn't have all those advantages that we heard about back in verse 4, that the That the israelites had.

But Jesus Christ came near them by someone through whom he proclaimed his gospel to them and he made their hearts alive to respond to the gospel. And they saw themselves entirely hopeless, but they saw in Christ divine and unfailing hope, and they rested upon him. And you have both of those things happening.

That's, that's analogous to what chapter 9 is describing. What should we say then? How should our hearts respond to that? We should be amazed at the wideness of God's mercy. The greatness of God's mercy. What shall we say Gentiles? Who did not pursue righteousness have attained to righteousness? Look how God has saved.

Those who didn't even know what they should be going after. Those who weren't going after righteousness and they didn't know that they should be and God has saved them anyway. Read that with the excitement of In Ephesians 2. Where it says that Christ has come and proclaimed. Peace. In Ephesus.

So when did Jesus visit Ephesus? Well, when by his ordained servant It was Jesus who proclaimed himself. In the gospel. And not only because it was his ordained servant, but, but because he came by his spirit with the preaching, and didn't just call by the words and the ear, but called by awakening the heart.

And we should. Be amazed. Then the greatness of God's mercy. Whenever there is a situation that is perplexing us, We may know. But we may be sure. I'm not saying we might be sure. Saying we ought to be sure. We we ought to be sure that all that is ill all that is evil.

Comes from sinful spirits and sinful men. Unconverted men and from demons. And yet in every situation, We may see the greatness of God's power. The greatness of God's mercy. The reliability of God's faithfulness The inexplicable compassion that he has on sinful men because the only explanation is that God loves to show mercy.

And whenever you or I puzzle over or think about situation like that. We ought to give our first attention, we ought to prioritize our focus. Upon the mercy of God. It is true. That he is just and holy, it is not wrong. That he would display his power. And his justice.

And vessels prepared for wrath. But just as God prioritizes, Mercy in the display of his glory. So also, we are much helped if we here take the apostolic advice, what shall we say then? That's a Gentiles. Noting, what they did not do. They were not pursuing righteousness. And noting how that they attained.

By faith. Even. The righteousness of faith by what God did in Christ. And by what God did. And then by his spirit, So that the work of salvation. Was entirely. A work of God. Father, son. And Holy Spirit. And so the first thing we should say is to prioritize mercy.

The second thing we should say is to warn ourselves. To warn ourselves to take, what has come this partial hardening. That has come upon Israel. And to take it as a warning for ourselves, just like first Corinthians 10, Tells us when there was a great hardening in Israel.

You remember, Israel in the wilderness and And how many of them fell and almost all of them perished in their sins and only Joshua and Caleb of the generation of adults who left Egypt. Even entered into the promised land. And what does first Corinthians 10? Say about all these things that came upon them, they were written down for our instruction.

So that he who thinks he stands should take heed. Lest he fall? And so we should do the same, shouldn't we? Whether it's a partial hardening, that has come upon Israel, which was the visible church up until the day of Pentecost, and you're considering that and Romans chapter 9, and the apostle is counseling us.

He's giving us, the spirit is counseling us by the apostle Christ is counseling us by the apostle. How do we respond to a situation like that? Well, first, we look at the greatness of God's mercy. We prioritize God's mercy. But then we also received the warning We don't say.

There, but by the grace of God, go, I In a way that says, you know, in the manner of the Pharisee with the publican at synagogue together and the saying I thank you, God, that I am not like them. I thank you, God, that by your grace, I am so much better than they are.

No, we say there. Apart from the grace of God, I am. That's me. There's one difference between me and him and that's the grace of God. That's operating in me. And anything good that I find in me is their only from God. And not from me, but praise God.

I'm not in me, I'm in Christ. And I heed the warning. I say look, there are these people. To whom pertain the adoption. They have the covenant with God in which God referred to them corporately as His firstborn, His son, when he was telling fire, to let them go to them.

Pertain the glory, they've seen the glory of God and display in the assemblies of His church to them pertaining, the covenants, to them pertain to giving of the law to then pretending the worship of God to them pertaining the promises they say, well, that sounds a whole lot. Like a kid who grew up.

I hope well.

And yet.

Even having pursued, The law of righteousness, verse 31. Many of them have perished. Many of those israelites are perishing. And the apostle is not unfeeling about it, you remember? He began the chapters saying the talking about the greatness of his sorrow. And have continual this, follow us. But now, when he's giving us council about how to respond says, receive the warning Look at how.

They came. To perish. It's because they pursued righteousness. In the wrong way.

Which resulted in their? Responding to Jesus with the wrong response. The wrong way. Of Israel. Or of these unelect israelites. Has resulted in a wrong response. Those who are Israel but not elect Israel, still had Or had had all of the advantages in verse 4 and they were actually very zealous.

Yeah, we

I'm not sure we get the The sense of the intensity of the word pursue in verse 30 and pursue in verse 31. It's actually the same word as persecute. Scripture does this in both Hebrew and Greek and different different points. One of my favorite Uh, Hebrew uses of the word that is used for persecute actually occurs in Psalm 23.

When the goodness and hesit of God, and Um, Yeah, we've learned to sing because That's always translated in many bibles and salters. Um shortly. Goodness and mercy. So follow me. Well, it's persecute. And it's doubled. It's Persecuting itself, they sell, persecute me. God's goodness and mercy. Goodness, and his steadfast love.

Will be nipping my heels. My entire life. They will not. Let me go. They will continue running after me. Well. This is another zeal word, but They're sadness in this one, not sweetness. These Israelites. Running with all that they had. After a law of righteousness, But they ran. The wrong.

Not by faith. But as if it were by works,

It's not even the wrong righteousness. It's the right kind of righteousness. The. What they were pursuing actually specifically in verse 30, 31 is the law of righteousness, God's righteous law. And so the way that we look to God to save us the way that we look to God. To make us righteous.

There's a vital importance. That we not do it as if it is by works. That we not have a Christianity, whose essence is trying so hard. Yes, genuine salvation will make us those who are zealous. But it is the zeal of love and it is the zeal of joy.

The pursuing there will be more like the way that goodness and mercy pursuit. The pursuing there will be like God pursuing his people or in the Image of that. Hosea pursuing Gomer. Or a husband who has determined. That they're never be a day. Never be a moment. That his wife not know that he loved her.

And we, What to pursue righteousness that way and we will the more god conforms us to christ. The more we will love him. The more that love will be with more of our heart and more of our soul and more of our strength. And yes, you know and i know it should be all.

And one day it will be when we have been conformed to the image of christ. And from where we are, we Can't even imagine. We don't have an inkling of what that will feel like or look like. It is not yet appeared, but we know that when he appears will be like him.

And so we purify ourselves even as he is pure. But there is a zeal. There is. A way of approaching it. Where the christianity? The and there you have to put it in the quote, don't you? Consists of trying so hard. It's not a. Response out of union with christ.

Sort of response to mercy dependence, upon mercy, hatred of sin because That's not me. That's not my savior. It's against my god. It's against me and what i am in him. There is a false. Christianity, a gospel hypocrisy to use the old language. That consists in its essence. Of trying so hard.

And the problem with pursuing the wrong way, Is that if we're pursuing the wrong way, then when it comes to jesus, we'll have the wrong response. Even if the sort of doing Even if the sort of trying, That. That we are. That is what we are coming act in this wrong way of works.

Is a doing a trying Of having right ideas about jesus. Or write obedience to jesus. The law of righteousness. That the israelites were pursuing in verse 31. There's not any worse. Then the theology. Of salvation, by grace alone, through faith alone, in christ alone, to the glory of god alone.

And yet, it is possible to respond to that theology. In such a way that says, if, i believe that well enough, i shall be saved.

And what have we just done? We have. Pursued it as if it were by works. Rather than hearing, That there's a savior. Who in himself has all the righteousness and by himself has done all the saving And resting upon him. Resting upon his person resting upon his work. Knowing that none who have him can be lost.

And not clinging to how sincere we are in coming to him or how accurate. Our, our ideas of him, Of course, we want to be sincere. We're not saying i'm okay with being insincere. And absolutely we want to think accurately about him. We're not saying it's okay with me if i think inaccurately about him.

But we're what we're saying is that as we look to him for righteousness, as we look to him for salvation, it's a resting only entirely upon him.

Because if we don't, we'll be like, israel, israel Uh, their response, this pursuit, that was as if it were by works is described further and coming in the following passages. In verse 5 of the next chapter for mosas writes about the righteousness, which is of the law. The man who does those things shall live by them?

Apparently, this was one of the ways that the Judaisers, or those who are pharisaic those who, whose Uh, christianity, it consisted in doing or who's righteousness can consisted in in their doing. They would appeal to Leviticus 18 verse 5 and say moses wrote this. But bless God and his providence to us, we've just come Through Leviticus 18.

And the point in Leviticus 18 was not that if we obey well enough in regard to the sanctity of marriage that God will reward us with righteousness, Their proof texting a verse that doesn't prove. What they think. The whole point in Leviticus 18 was that it is yahweh who makes the difference.

Your way who has saved them, your way, who has gathered them to himself. He always who provides for them? Continual repeated atonement your way who himself is holy. And that by what he has provided for his people. They are now to walk in a holiness that will cause them to thrive with life.

Which, if a man follow them, he will live. And the goodness of the difference that the lord has producing in israel over against the self-destruction. That was rampant. Among the cananites and among the egyptians. That hear their good god, who's gathered them to himself and given them the way by which he dwells in the midst of them, and given them, his good law is giving them by enabling them to follow that law.

A way of enjoying life as the fruit of what they do not death as the fruit of what they do. But there is not at all the sense that they are meriting life by doing. Or that the ability to do, it comes from then. In leviticus 18, verse 5.

Now the the apostle This warning us. That, if we pursue. The lord. As if it were by works, we are going to stumble. Over the lord, jesus christ. Why did they not attain to the law of righteousness? Because they did not seek it by faith. But as it were by the works of the law for they stumbled at that stumbling stone as it is written.

And he quotes from Isaiah 28, and plus god. And has providence, we've been going through isaiah And we remember that the stumbling stone and the rock of offends in isaiah 28 is as he's combining now the wrong responses to To guard himself as the salvation of judah. And the, the promised king as the salvation of juda that the short term there in Isaiah is, is a picture and a type and a lesson in what is happening on a long-term basis.

In fact, that wasn't the first time in Isaiah that we saw the rock of the stone of stumbling and the rock of the fence that actually came in chapter 8. When a has in judo

were responding one way and after prophesying against a has in Judah, the lord turns to the prophet himself.

And says, Don't be like the rest of israel. You see what the apostle here is doing. He's, he's using a passage in which there was a remnant within Israel and electra israel within Israel. Just as we saw last week, from the way he used, Isaiah 10, and Isaiah 1, and Hosea, chapter 2, and chapter 1.

And so, you remember, back in the beginning of Isaiah chapter 7. A has heard about the conspiracy or the alliance between Syria and Ephraim. They were going to come down to this, southern kingdom and attack them. And they has actually didn't send for isaiah. Remember and isaiah chapter 7, it was the lord who sent isaiah to ahas.

We find out from second kings. 16, where a has sent He sent to a zero Assyria. He sent to tigris's Believer. And not only did he send and say, you know what, there's this alliance of the nations to the north of me, will you, please come help me take with police her and as Syria you guys are the The new rising world power.

He actually plundered the wealth of the temple. And sent that, which was from the temple of the lord. To the king of Assyria rather than going to the lord whose temple it was You read that in second kings 16? But in isaiah 7, then the lord sends Is isaiah to tell?

Ahaz, don't worry. Don't worry, the lord is going to save you. The lord is going to destroy your enemies. And you can ask for whatever sign you want until give you the sign. Because he knows your faith is small. And so just ask for the sign and whatever it is, the lord will do it and you'll know that he's saving you from Syria and aframe.

And ahas has a very religious response. To hold. No, i would never ask for a sign from god. Remember that now is that coming back? And yet the lord is going to ultimately deliver his people anyway. And that's the point at which in chapter 8, he's Actually, telling isaiah, not to fall into What a has has.

So it says, do not say a conspiracy concerning all that this people call conspiracy note. Don't be afraid of their threats. Don't be troubled. You always have hosts him. You shall you all weigh. Let him be your fear. Let him be your dread. He will be as a sanctuary.

But, A stone of stumbling. And the rock of offense. To both the houses of israel, a trap and a snare. To the inhabitants of jerusalem. And many. Among them shall stumble. And then it's later and isaiah 28 which is actually where the apostle was quoting from in the passage before us this evening.

He says, therefore thus says the lord yahweh The whole thy lay in, zion a stone for a foundation. I tried stone. A precious. Cornerstone. Plenty of your children. Know

immediately who that is, don't you? Remember in chapter 8, you always said he is the stone. And now in chapter 28, he's saying he's going to lay the stone.

Jesus is yahweh and Jesus is The savior king. Whom the lord has sent. He became a man to do this. I tried to unprecious precious, cornerstone, ashore foundation. Whoever believes. Will not act. Hastily

If we are trying to have our salvation by doing, Then when we hear, Righteousness and salvation offered to us entirely in Jesus Christ. All that will happen is for a moment. Our pursuit of our own salvation will be interrupted. A trip over him. And the picture here at the end of Romans 9 in the beginning of Romans 10 is The trip over the stumbling stone and they get up and they keep on running.

But he's not there. To be put in our path. He's there to be the end of our path. So that when we find Jesus, The cornerstone, the lord himself. The creator who became, man. And lived a righteous life and died and atoning death. We won't continue to keep on being right with God or trying to achieve.

Being great with God, by how sincerely we are. And how accurately we think. When we come to Jesus, instead of tripping over him and Continuing on. We will rest upon him. We will stop there. Rest there, forever. There's salvation and no one else. And in him, there is source salvation.

As. The apostle, authoritatively by the spirit paraphrases, it Whoever believes on him. Will not be put to shame. The Hebrews. A little bit difficult. So we're thankful for that. But whoever believes on him will not act. Hastily in other words, You will never. You will never find that it was a rash act to rest.

Upon the lord Jesus Christ. And then, And so this is that last Point. We entered some time ago. I didn't do a good job of telling you, we're Doing that resting. Upon the rock yahweh himself as the rock. Christ is yahweh himself who is the rock and resting upon him will never turn out to have been a rash act.

He will not fail to hold you up. He cannot fail. To hold you up. Trying. Will be put to shame. Disastrously. So, But resting upon him. Will never be put to shame. Even uses that. Upon word that upon prospect. Preposition. Whoever believes and the The little word that is translated in our language is on, is a directional upon Worked.

So what should we say then? We should behold the mercy of God in Christ. We should marvel at the greatness and the wideness of his mercy. We shall take warning. That we not think that the difference is to be found in us at all. But rest entirely upon him.

Because the difference is all in Christ. Your your trust will never be more well-placed. Than to hope entirely upon him. And if you believe upon him, Your hope will not. You put the shame. I mean, So, come to God. To call upon the name of him. It has saved us into his addressed us this evening.