

Leader's Guide

LESSON 17

Dr. Jerry Nelson

In response to the sermon on January 13th.

Romans 9:30-10:21 Righteousness by Faith

Key Points

While the doctrine of election relies solely on God as the author and finisher of his divine will, it often begs the question, “What about us?” What is our responsibility? Do we have any responsibility if, in fact, God exercises his divine will over our lives? In this passage we will wrestle with the following questions:

- Where did the Jews go wrong and why is that important to us?
- What conditions must be met in order to come to saving faith?
- What is man's response and responsibility to faith and obedience?

Throughout their history, the Jews have been known as a zealous people. “It was commendable in that God was its object, but it was flawed because it was not based on right knowledge about God's ways of salvation.”¹ Their devotion to God became a devotion to the law. Their devotion to the law became their way to salvation. Unfortunately, it is not God's way to salvation. Even though they had ample opportunity to understand God's ways and God's will, they rejected them. Did they have a choice? Was their choice their responsibility, or was it God's?

Personal Reflection

Just as sure as the doctrine of election brings us to God's sovereign choice, so this passage leads us to the issue of our responsibility. Relationships require initiation and response. Without both, there is no relationship.

As you think about your relationship with God, reflect on your own story of saving faith. How did God initiate the relationship with you? What circumstances created a hunger to know God? In what ways did you resist what you knew to be true? What was your tipping point—what caused you to finally respond? Spiritually speaking, what are you most passionate (zealous) about? Reviewing these events may better prepare you to engage in deeper discussion with your group.

Discussion Questions

1. Describe the difference between the way the Jews sought righteousness and the way the Gentile believers obtained it. What implications does that have for people today?
2. How accessible to us has God made salvation (10:5-13)?
3. Describe the relationship of head knowledge and heart knowledge. In Biblical terms the heart is not merely the seat of the emotions and affections, but also of the intellect and will (Psalm 4:7. In biblical language the center of the human spirit, from which spring emotions, thoughts, motivations, courage and action—"the well spring of life").¹
4. Describe how you came to saving faith in Jesus.
5. What should be our attitudes and actions toward Jewish people?

6. The Jews had zeal, but it was misdirected. In what ways do religious people today demonstrate misplaced zeal?
7. In verses 14-17 we find a relational dynamic that it is imperative to salvation. God uses people as his means of reaching people with the gospel message. There is no Plan B. In what ways does this challenge you? What is your response?
8. Do unbelievers have a choice in obedience or disobedience to God?
9. Does the Christian have a choice in obedience or disobedience? (What does freedom in Christ provide?)
10. God continued to pursue Israel and love them even though they continually disobeyed Him. What does this reveal about God?

¹ Barker, Kenneth L. NIV Study Bible (Fully Revised): Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 1985, 1995, 2002.