

ISSUE

20.26

BULLETIN OF
THE OLSEN
PARK CHURCH
OF CHRIST

Faithful Sayings

July 1,
2018

Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM

10:00 AM

11:00 AM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Pat Ledbetter
Brady McAlister
Jeff Nunn

Deacons:

Steve Dixon
Ryan Ferguson
Arend Gressley
Ben Hight
Blake McAlister
Walker McAnear
Ryan Matney
Sam Nunn
Lance Purcell
Rusty Scott
Justin Smiley
Kevin Wise
Trevor Yontz

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope



It's Not God's Fault

By Jason Garcia

“For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; for ‘Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved’” (Rom. 10:12).

We have a tendency to think it's always someone else's fault—Adam pointed to Eve, Eve pointed to the devil, but at the end of the day we're all responsible for our own choices. No amount of self-pity or complaining that we were “duped” will remove our accountability to God. Some, rather than point at others or the devil as the alleged *reason* for their misbehavior, will instead begin to blame God. This is especially tempting because there is a kind of catharsis in doing so—as if believing that God is behind all my frustrations and pains somehow justifies my bad behavior. Sad. Sadder still, some would go so far as to say that their bad behavior is justified *because* it glorifies God! Paul repeatedly

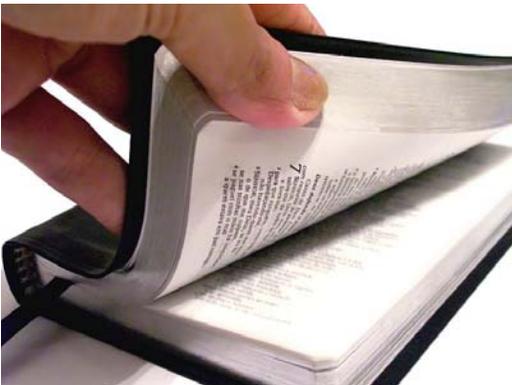


addressed this issue. He knew some would say, “...if **my falsehood accentuates God’s truthfulness, to the increase of His glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner?**” (Rom. 3:7) and “**One of you will say to me: ‘Then why does God still blame us? For who is able to resist his will?’**” (Rom. 9:19). The Holy Spirit knows all too well the mental gymnastics we use to excuse our sin.

Paul is dealing with the same subject here. If anyone rejects Jesus Christ as Lord, thus condemning themselves, it is that individual’s fault and no one else’s. Paul says, “**For not knowing**

about God’s righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God” (Rom. 10:3). God’s righteousness is here again not *His* personal righteousness (blamelessness), but the blameless, justified, righteous condition one can find in submitting to Christ Jesus: “**For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes**” (Rom. 10:4). Paul means that the “end” or “goal” of the Law of Moses is found only in fellowship with Jesus, and what was the goal of the Law? He answers earlier in chapter 9: “**...the people of Israel, who pursued the law as the way of righteousness, have not attained their goal**” (Rom. 9:31). The goal was and is righteousness, but Christ is the only one who can provide that through forgiveness of sins.

Sadly, now just as then, many choose to reject Jesus and the forgiveness He offers. Many of these folks are not hostile toward God, they may be very religious, but ultimately have no hope since they have not obeyed Jesus. There are many sincere, moral people with clear consciences who are lost. What should our response be? “**Brethren, my heart’s desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation. For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge**” (Rom. 10:1-2). This is Paul’s answer, while he had “**great sorrow and unceasing grief in his heart**” (9:2) for his fellow Jews, he did not cease to pray for their salvation, and he did not cease to try and teach them. He also had no delusions about their spiritual state before God—despite their **zeal for God** they had **rejected His righteousness** and in so doing **established their own**. We can and should follow suit. We can honestly and objectively appraise our own condition and that of others based upon the righteous standard of God’s Word, while simultaneously praying for their salvation and the continued faithfulness of believers.



God is not responsible if people choose to remain lost, He has made His conditions perfectly clear as Paul shows: **“Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’**” (v. 6) or **“Who will descend into the abyss?”** (v. 7). Availing ourselves of God’s salvation doesn’t require ascending to Heaven or going into the abyss. God’s already accomplished what’s necessary through His Son (v. 4), we must obey in faith to obtain **“the righteousness based on faith”** (v. 6). God has not called people to some herculean task, but to simple trust and submission to His Son—obedience to His Word—**“If you continue in My word, you are truly My disciples”** (John 8:31). Just as Paul says here, **“The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart’—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching”** (Rom. 10:8). He has put His Word at our finger-tips. There are stores with walls of Bibles in various languages and translations, it’s now been digitized and made accessible on computers and smartphones and tablets! He has provided all we need to know to have eternal life and be pleasing before Him (cf. 2 Pet. 1:3; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). How could we possibly blame Him for not going far enough to reveal Himself? God gave us minds to think with, hearts to feel with, and a will to decide with; He calls us to make right decisions (cf. Deut. 30:19). Who would choose eternal death over eternal life and blessing? (John 3:36) Choose life by loving God, doing what He says, and clinging to Him at all costs (1 Pet. 3:8-12). This is precisely what we see Paul urging here, **“if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved”** (Rom. 10:9), but this is no mechanical act, it can’t be, so Paul repeats, **“with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation”** (v. 10). These conditions are not exclusionary of the others that Paul mentions

earlier in the letter (e.g. baptism, repentance Rom. 6:1-6; Rom. 2:4), but they are named here to reinforce His main point: **“there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him; for ‘Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved’”** (Rom. 10:12-13).

What does it mean to call on the Name of the Lord? It is *not* merely calling out to Christ for Paul had done this on the road to Damascus: **“Who are you Lord?”** and **“Lord, what do You want me to do?”** (Acts 9:4-5), yet his sins were not washed away (cf. Acts 22:16). Calling on the Name of the Lord is *not* merely calling Him “Lord.” Jesus asked, **“But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do the things which I say?”** (Luke 6:46), neither is it simply saying a prayer or fasting—this is exactly what Paul did after he was blinded for three days. For all of his fasting and praying he still hadn’t called on the Name of



the Lord because Ananias had to instruct him to do so: **“And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord”** (Acts 22:16). We see, then, there is an obedient act that is required for the person to really call upon the name of the Lord, not mere lip service or even sincere prayer and fasting and other acts of devotion.

If we are to receive the righteousness of God based

on faith in Jesus Christ, then we must receive and accept it on His terms. Never once has He called us to do something we are incapable of doing, and never once has He called us to blindly trust Him. He has put forth His Word, recorded His deeds, revealed His mind and will. He has never and will never force anyone to obey Him, rather, **“Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life”** (Rev. 22:17). Like Naaman of Old Testament fame, we may think some of His will to be arbitrary or unnecessary, but that is a fatal mistake (one that Naaman fortunately corrected, cf. 2 Kgs. 5). If I am lost in the end, I will have no one to blame but myself. The same will be true for you. So the question remains: Have you obeyed the Gospel of Christ? Are you standing in the righteousness which He affords, or have you sought to establish your own righteousness?



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Please come again.**

● **Let us know if you have any questions.**