

CCLEB SERMON NOTES



SUNDAY OCTOBER 25, 2026
ROMANS 9:30-10:4

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THE RIGHT WAY TO GET RIGHT WITH GOD



Have you ever tried to put something together without reading the instructions?



You see the instructions and think; I don't need this. I can figure it out myself. So, you start putting things together, spending time and doing what seems right to you. But eventually, you realize something isn't working. No matter how hard you try, you can't get the result you were hoping for. Why? Because you ignored the way it was designed to work.

The point is simple: working harder won't make the wrong instructions right.

The same principle applies to our relationship with God. You can be sincere, you can be religious, and you can work as hard as you want, but none of it can make you right with Him. There is no such thing as my way or your way when it comes to salvation. We can only be made right with God His way.

And that's exactly what Paul is going to show us in our passage today.

So, I invite you to open your Bibles to **Romans chapter 9**, starting in **verse 30**, as we look at the difference between trying to earn our own righteousness and receiving the righteousness God has already provided through faith in Jesus Christ.

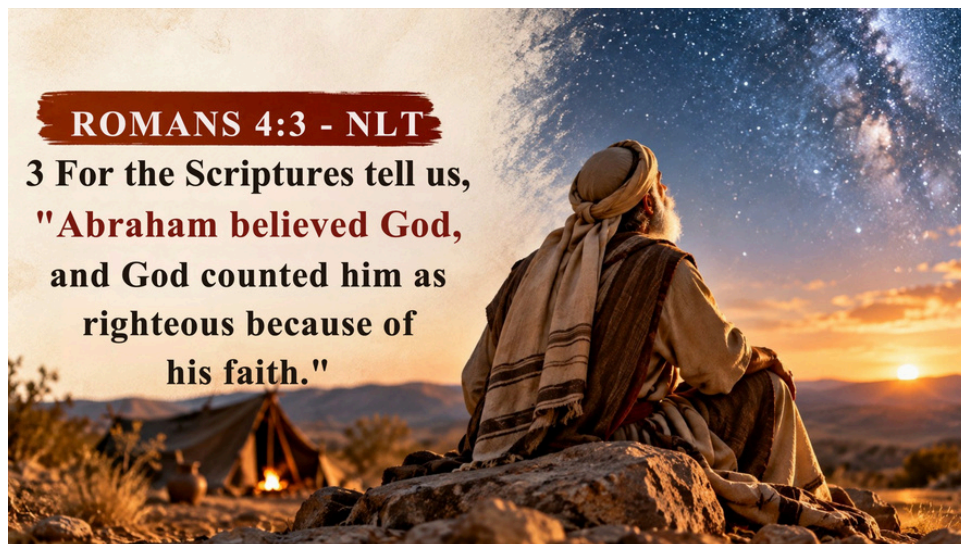
Romans 9:30-31

When Paul asks, "What does all this mean?" he is bringing together everything he has explained throughout this chapter.

Remember, Paul began this chapter by expressing his deep sorrow for his own people, the Israelites. God had given Israel so many blessings and promises. He even chose Israel to bring the Messiah into the world. Yet many of them refused to believe in Jesus.

Paul makes it clear that being born an Israelite did not guarantee salvation. God had chosen Israel for a special purpose, but that didn't mean every Israelite was automatically saved. Salvation has always depended on God's mercy and has always been received through faith, not through our background or efforts.

Remember, Paul already showed us in **Romans chapter 4** that Abraham was made right with God because he believed God. So, whether Jew or Gentile, we all need God's mercy, and we can only be made right with Him through faith.



ROMANS 4:3 - NLT
3 For the Scriptures tell us,
"Abraham believed God,
and God counted him as
righteous because of
his faith."

Now, after explaining God's promises, His mercy, and His plan for both Jews and Gentiles, Paul brings everything and here's the conclusion: The Gentiles, who weren't even trying to become righteous by keeping the Law, were made right with God through faith. But Israel, despite all their efforts to become righteous by keeping the Law, failed to obtain that righteousness.

And here's something important we need to understand: When it comes to being made right with God, His way is nothing like the way we usually do things.

In many areas of life, effort matters. If you want good grades, you study. If you want a paycheck, you work. But salvation is different.

Brothers and sisters, we naturally think that if we want to be right with God, we need to do something to deserve it. We're so used to earning things that it's difficult for us to understand that God offers us something we could never earn.

And that's the problem: we often try to earn what God has already made available to us through faith in Christ. No matter how hard you try, you will never get there. That is not God's way.



Have you ever tried to open your house door or your car with the wrong key? Am I the only one who has done that?

You can keep turning the key and pushing as hard as you want, but the door will not open. Trying harder won't help. You have the wrong key.

And that's the point Paul is making. Israel was trying to become right with God through their own efforts instead of trusting in Him. But righteousness cannot be earned by keeping the Law. It can only be received through faith in Jesus.

Now, let me clarify something. Paul is not saying that God's Law is bad. The Law is good, and it has an important purpose. But God never intended for us to earn our salvation by keeping it.

In fact, Paul already explained this back in **Romans chapter 3 verse 20**.

So, if the Law can't save us, what can? Jesus Christ. And that's exactly what Paul wants us to understand. But that raises an important question: Why did Israel, despite all their efforts, fail to obtain that righteousness? Paul gives us the answer in the next two verses. **Romans 9:32-33**

Paul uses two important words here: Stumble and trust.



So, why did they stumble over Jesus?

Because they were trusting in their own efforts instead of trusting in Him.

They believed that keeping the Law would make them right with God.

But the Law was meant to reveal their sin and show them their need for a Savior. And they missed that. When Jesus came, instead of putting their faith in Him, they continued relying on their own obedience.

They were so focused on what they could do for God that they refused to trust in what Jesus had done for them.

Albert Barnes, a Bible commentator, explains that Jesus didn't come to make people stumble. He came to save them. But for those who rejected Him, He became a stumbling stone.

But then Paul gives us the second word: Trust.

And that's the difference. The same Jesus who became a stumbling stone to those who rejected Him is the One in whom others placed their faith.

And this is exactly what God had already revealed through the prophet Isaiah. Notice how Paul brings together two Old Testament passages in **verse 33**.

The first one is: **Isaiah 8:14**

And the second one is: **Isaiah 28:16**

Notice the contrast between these two passages.

In **Isaiah 8**, we see a stone that causes people to stumble. But in **Isaiah 28**, we see a strong foundation, a cornerstone that people can safely build upon.

And Paul brings these two passages together to show that both are speaking about Jesus Christ.

Long before Jesus came, God had already revealed through Isaiah that some would reject the Messiah while others would trust in Him.

Now, notice the wonderful promise at the end of **verse 33**: "Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced."

In other words, you will never regret putting your trust in Jesus. He will never fail to fulfill His promise of salvation and that promise is available to you and me today.

So, don't rely on your own efforts to become right with God. Put your faith in Jesus Christ and what He has accomplished for you.

And what exactly has Jesus done for us



He lived the perfect life we could never live. He died on the cross for our sins, taking the punishment we deserved. And on the third day, He rose from the dead, showing that He had defeated sin and death.

And that's the good news of the gospel: Jesus took our place on the cross, and through faith in Him, we can be made right with God.

My prayer is that you will trust in Jesus Christ and in what He has done for you. It was Paul's prayer for Israel as well, as we see in the next chapter.

Romans 10:1-2

Paul longs and prays for the people of Israel to be saved.

And I think there's an important lesson here for us. It's good to have a desire to see people come to know Jesus Christ, but that desire should also lead us to pray for them.

Sometimes we say, I really hope my family members, my friends, or the people I work with will come to know the Lord. And that's a good desire.

But are we praying for their salvation?

Let's be honest. It's easy to complain about the people around us. But complaining never changed anyone's heart. It's time to stop complaining and start praying.

Now, think about this. Paul is praying for his own people, the Israelites. Many of them had rejected him, opposed him, and even tried to kill him. Remember, in **Acts 14:19**, some Jews turned the crowd against Paul, and they threw stones at him because he was preaching the gospel.



But even after everything he had suffered, Paul still loved his people and prayed for their salvation.

Think about that. Paul didn't want revenge. He wanted them to be saved. Even though they had rejected him and hurt him, he still loved them and wanted them to know Jesus Christ.

And I believe Paul learned that from Jesus. Think about Jesus hanging on the cross. Even as He was suffering, He prayed for those who were crucifying Him, saying, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing." (**Luke 23:34**)



This is a challenge for us, too. Maybe right now you're thinking of someone who has hurt you or someone you consider an enemy.

Lord, help us see them the way You see them. Help us desire what You desire for them: that they would come to know Jesus Christ and be saved.

Because the greatest thing that could happen in their lives is to know Jesus. He is the One who can change their hearts and transform their lives.

Paul knew it wouldn't be easy. His people had zeal for God, but their zeal was not guided by a true understanding of God's way of salvation.

If anyone could understand what was happening with the people of Israel, it was Paul, because before he came to know Jesus, he had made the same mistake himself.

Remember, Paul used to persecute the church. He had zeal for God, but it was pointed the wrong way. He had been there himself.

Then he met Jesus on the road to Damascus (**Acts 9**), and everything changed. Look at what he says in his letter to the Philippians: **Philippians 3:6-7**

Paul is talking about everything he once trusted in: his Jewish background, his knowledge of the Law, and his efforts to obey it.

He once believed these things made him right with God. But after coming to know Jesus, he realized that none of them could save him.

And listen to what he says next: **Philippians 3:8-9**

Do you see the difference?

Paul was no longer trusting in what he could do for God. He was trusting in what Jesus Christ had done for him.

And that's the contrast we see with Israel. Many of them were still trying to become right with God through their own efforts. But Paul had learned to stop trusting in his own righteousness and put his faith in Jesus Christ.

Now look at what he says in **Romans 10:3**.

Notice the difference. God's way versus their own way.

Instead of accepting the righteousness God provided, they continued trying to establish their own.

But here's what we need to understand: We cannot create our own way to salvation. God has already provided the way through His Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus is the only way. AMEN!

And in the next verse, Paul explains why Jesus is the only way. **Romans 10:4**. Notice what Paul says: "Christ has already accomplished the purpose for which the law was given."

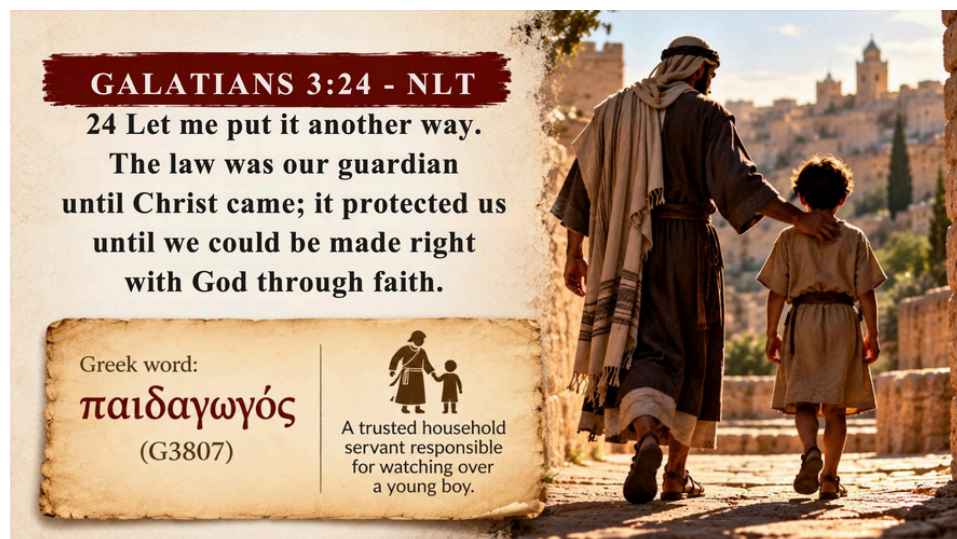
Paul is showing us that Jesus is the goal of the Law. The Law was always pointing to Him, and in Christ, its purpose is fulfilled. And because Jesus fulfilled the Law, we don't have to depend on keeping it to become right with God. Our righteousness comes through faith in Him.



Remember, God gave the Law for a reason. As Paul explained earlier in **Romans 3:20**, the Law shows us how sinful we are. It reveals our sin, but it cannot save us.

And in his letter to the Galatians, Paul explains another important part of the Law's purpose. **Galatians 3:24**.

Notice that Paul describes the Law as a guardian. The Greek word is "paidagōgos" (G3807) This was a trusted household servant responsible for watching over a young boy, guiding his behavior, and accompanying him whenever he went outside until he grew up.



The guardian had an important responsibility, but his role was temporary. The Law had an important purpose too, but it was never meant to save us. It served as our guardian until Christ came. The Law could show us our need for salvation, but only Jesus Christ could provide it.

And that's where many in Israel made the mistake. They were trusting in their ability to keep the Law to make themselves right with God, instead of putting their faith in Jesus, the Savior the Law was pointing to.

They were depending on the guardian instead of trusting in the Savior.

I want to finish with 2 points of application for you today:



Remember the illustration about trying to open a door with the wrong key?

You can keep turning it, pushing harder, and trying again, but that door will never open because you're using the wrong key. And sometimes we do the same thing in our relationship with God.

We think that coming to church, serving, giving, reading our Bible, or simply being a good person will make us right with God.

Listen, those are good things, but none of them can save us. Only Jesus can.

And that's why we need to repent. We need to turn away from our sins and embrace the new life God has for us. We need to stop trusting in our own way and start trusting in God's way. So, here's a question I want you to think about: Am I trusting in what I do for God, or in what Jesus has already done for me?

Now, I'm not saying you should stop coming to church, serving, praying, or reading your Bible. Please, keep doing those things! Just do them for the right reason: to grow in your relationship with Jesus and become more like Him every day.

And remember, your salvation doesn't rest on how good you are or how much you do. It rests on Jesus Christ and what He accomplished on the cross.

So, stop trying to open the door with the wrong key. Put your trust in God's way.



Remember Paul's heart for his people. Even though many had rejected him, opposed him, and hurt him, he continued praying for their salvation.

And I think that's a challenge for all of us. We all know someone who needs Jesus. Maybe it's a family member, a friend, a coworker, or even someone who has hurt you.

It's easy to complain about people, criticize their decisions, or get frustrated with the way they live. But how often do we actually pray for their salvation?

Ask God to open their eyes, soften their hearts, and help them understand the truth of the gospel. And while you pray, be ready to act. Ask God to open a door for you to share Jesus with them, or to bring someone else into their life who will.

Let me share a story with you:

One day, my son and I were at Walmart sharing the gospel. We approached a young man and started talking to him about Jesus and how much God loves him.

As we talked, he began to cry. He told us, I know God loves me. I've been through so much in my life, and I recently survived a terrible accident.

Then he told us that his mother was a faithful Christian who had been praying for his salvation.

Think about that. This mother had been praying for her son's salvation, and God gave us the opportunity to share the gospel with him. Isn't that awesome?

When I asked if he wanted to put his faith in Jesus, he said yes. We prayed together right there, and he received Christ as his Lord and Savior.

Brothers and sisters, Jesus said there is joy in heaven over one sinner who repents (Luke 15:7). I couldn't stop thinking about that mother and the joy she must have felt when she heard the news.

So, keep praying. You may not see what God is doing behind the scenes, but He hears your prayers.