

The Gospel In The Law

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Preacher: Chris Trousdale

[0:00] Open up to Romans chapter 10.

If you don't have a Bible with you, or if you prefer, you can grab one of the Bibles that are scattered around in the chairs. Our pew Bibles, and if you're using one of those Bibles, you only need to turn to page 946 in those copies of the Scriptures.

If you have your own copy of the Scripture, then open up to Romans chapter 10. And we're going to jump in in verse 5 and only read down this morning through verse 8. And so if you're visiting with us, one of the things that we like to do as we read the Scriptures together, though, is we stand together and read in honor of God's Word, the Word of God.

So if you all would stand, let's read in verse 5. Paul writes, For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them.

But the righteousness based on faith says, Do not say in your heart, Who will ascend into heaven? That is to bring Christ down. Or who will descend into the abyss? That is to bring Christ up from the dead.

[1:16] But what does it say? The Word is near you, in your mouth, and in your heart. That is the Word of faith that we proclaim. Thank you for this Word here, Father.

And thank you for the Word of faith about which we meditate this morning. Help us to rejoice in the good news. We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. You guys take a seat. I saw several people post on social media, Facebook, and other things over the last few days.

People posting about the Fuller House show. I guess they're bringing back the Full House and all the casts and all those sorts of things. Now, I didn't watch it. I'll be honest with you.

I didn't really care for the original show all that much. Not my kind of thing. Some of you really like it, and now you're ready to throw something at me or whatever. But it was just not my kind of show. I just didn't really get into it. And so I didn't watch the new one.

[2:12] But I did read a review on it just because I was tired of reading things about elections and politicians. And I just happened to click on it because I'd seen it on social media several times. So I clicked on it and I read a review.

And it wasn't a nice review. But what I gathered from the review was that there were a lot of homages to the original show. A lot of catchphrases. There's a lot of things, you know, just phrases and things that if you watched that show in the 90s that you would know those phrases.

And so they'd make sense to you and all those sorts of things. Apparently it was loaded with those sorts of things. And I wondered, I thought to myself, what if somebody just happened to turn that on because they heard that it was a new show.

And they tried to watch through this pilot episode in which they have crammed all these references to the old show and all these random one-liners. What if they had no clue what that was about?

What if they had no idea and they were trying to make sense of the show? They would probably eventually figure out that it's based on an older show if they didn't even know that much.

[3:14] They could probably, based upon the canned laughter that they have in there, they could probably figure out when they were making some sort of reference that was supposed to be funny back to the past show. They could probably figure out some of those things.

But I bet a lot of it would be completely confusing. Why did she say that? That makes no sense. What does that have to do with anything? Why would they put that there? Why would they do that? Who's this person coming in? And why is everybody excited to see this guy?

It probably wouldn't make a whole lot of sense. And unfortunately, a lot of times we read our New Testaments in the same way. We read our New Testaments and we don't realize just how much the New Testament is drawing upon the Old Testament.

We don't realize how frequently the New Testament is quoting from the Old Testament or paraphrasing the Old Testament or making some sort of allusion to the Old Testament, signifying some event that took place back there or a person from the Old Testament time period.

And so many times as we read through the New Testament, we kind of scratch our heads at things and we wonder, what's that all about? What's that talking about? Or sometimes we just prefer to move on and move quickly because we think, I don't understand this thing.

[4:26] I don't know what's going on here. I don't know what they're talking about in this book. And we miss so much of the meaning. We miss so much of what the Apostles intend for us to catch.

They intend for us to understand it. We miss it simply because we don't know the back story. We don't know the Old Testament oftentimes well enough to fully understand what's happening in the New Testament.

And we have seen that reality play itself out as we've been walking through the book of Romans. It's over and over and over the Apostle Paul has quoted, cited, made reference to, paraphrased, alluded to the Old Testament many, many, many times.

You can count the quotations up, but you can't count the number of times that Paul just sort of alludes to or makes mention of something or uses language that comes from the Old Testament. I mean, it is all through this book.

And the reason for that is that the New Testament writers did not see themselves as people who were setting up some sort of new religious system.

[5:31] They didn't see themselves starting a movement that sprung out of nowhere and had no connection with the past. They weren't trying to begin something new. They were trying to continue something that was very, very old.

And so we saw last week, Paul says, if you look in Romans chapter 10, if you look back up at verse 4, he says that Christ is the end.

And we said that word end most likely means goal here. Christ is the goal of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. And the word law, of course, refers back to what we call the Old Testament law, the law of Moses, the first five books of the Old Testament, which do include, of course, include stories of creation and people like Abraham or Noah before Abraham and the beginnings of the nation of Israel and the exodus from Egypt.

But also throughout that book, especially in Leviticus and in Deuteronomy, we have many, many, many commandments and laws. And so oftentimes what's called the Torah or the Pentateuch, those first five books are simply called the law.

And Paul is saying that Christ is the goal of the law. He's the one to whom the law was pointing all along. That's how Paul reads the Old Testament.

[6:52] And that's not an idea that Paul made up. That's not something that Paul thought of. It's not as if Paul was sitting around thinking, I wonder how I can try to convince people to believe in this message that I'm preaching.

I know what I'll do. I will say that the book that they've been reading for so long that they simply know as the scriptures, I will say that it's all it was talking about the same thing that I'm talking about.

And that's how I'll get them in. That's not at all what happened. In fact, Paul didn't come up with this concept of the Old Testament being about Christ. He got that from Jesus himself.

In fact, I'd like you real quickly, I'd like you. We're going to do a little bit of jumping around this morning. And so I'm sorry in advance. But most of the verses are going to be on the screen. But if you want to, turn back to the Gospel of Luke.

I want you to see this with your own eyes. In Luke chapter 24, after Jesus' resurrection, as he's visiting with a couple of his disciples, I want you to notice what he says to these disciples.

[7:52] This is Jesus helping his disciples to understand something about him. And in verse 25 of Luke 24, we read this. It says, he says to them, Oh foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.

So he's talking about the Old Testament. You don't believe what the Old Testament says, he tells them. Verse 26, Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his

glory?

And beginning with Moses, that's those first five books that we're calling the law. So starting out with the law and all the prophets. So that's the whole Old Testament now. That's shorthand for saying what we call the Old Testament.

Beginning with Moses and all the prophets. He interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. So Jesus himself, as he interprets the Bible, what we call the Old Testament for his disciples, throughout the entire Old Testament, he's showing them how all of the scriptures are ultimately about him.

They point to him. And that understanding of the Old Testament informed the apostles. It helped the apostles to understand the message that they were proclaiming.

[9:05] And it helped them to better proclaim that message. And that's why, as you begin to turn through the pages of your New Testament, that's why you will continually see quotation marks around words, phrases, and sentences that you might not know why they have quotation marks around them.

Because they're over and over referencing back to the Old Testament. I'll give you one example of this. Turn to the very front of your New Testament. The Gospel of Matthew.

Just turn to the very front. We won't read through all of these, but I just want you to glance at them in your Bible real quickly. If you just look at Matthew chapter 1, page 1 of the New Testament, we can look just in the first two chapters of Matthew.

He starts, of course, with an entire genealogy connecting Jesus with the history of Israel. But even beyond that, you have verse 23, a quotation from the prophet Isaiah. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son.

We're familiar with that. If you jump down a little bit more in chapter 2, verse 6, you have a quotation from the book of Micah. Move down a little bit further. Let your eyes just fall further down.

[10:07] And in chapter 2, verse 15, you have a quotation from the book of Hosea. In verse 18, a quotation from Jeremiah. And that's just in the first two chapters of the first book of the New Testament.

And I'm only mentioning the direct quotations. I'm not talking about all the allusions and all the people that they mention from the Old Testament. So this view of the New Testament message of the gospel being a continuation of the Old Testament message is something that Jesus passed on to his followers who became the apostles and something that they now pass on to us.

And that's extremely significant for us. I don't know how many times I've heard people make reference to the God of the Old Testament in distinction from, I suppose, the God of the New Testament.

In fact, not long ago, I can't remember what I was watching. It was a movie or TV show. I just made a mental note of it. But I don't remember what it was. Not long ago, I was watching a show. And somebody mentioned, somebody said something about the wrath of God.

And then another character said, yeah, we're talking Old Testament God here. And so it was this idea that the God of the Old Testament is this God full of wrath and he's angry. Whereas in the New Testament, God is all about love and mercy and forgiveness.

[11:26] And so we set up this kind of dichotomy like we got two parts of the Bible and really they're totally separate and distinct from one another. So that some people go so far as to divorce them entirely from one another as if they have nothing to do with each other.

In fact, a lot of Christians even do this. A lot of believers will do this not intentionally, but we just do it in the way that we approach the Bible. Sometimes we make that assumption that in the Old Testament, God is all about wrath and judgment.

In the New Testament, He's all about mercy and love. But the reality is that that's just not the case as you begin to read through both of the Testaments. The Old Testament is full of mercy. It's one huge story of God's mercy upon the sinful nation of Israel.

And He keeps pulling them back to Himself. He keeps forgiving their sins over and over again. And then when you turn to the Gospels, Jesus talks much more about hell and the wrath of God than He does about the love of God or heaven.

Over and over Jesus makes reference to God's wrath or to the concept of hell or judgment. So that this sort of dichotomy that we've created in our minds between the Old Testament and the New Testament, if you read the book itself, it's not borne out.

[12:38] It's just not there. But more importantly, we need to understand that all of this is God's Word in its entirety. And it's all woven together into this beautiful tapestry.

And that makes sense. If God inspired these writers, these men throughout the centuries to write His Word, then it makes sense that as all of these writings, these 66 different books of the Bible come together, it makes sense that there would be these threads and connections between all of them because they all have God as their ultimate source.

Yes, Paul has his own distinct style of writing and it's different from John's. And yes, parts of the New Testament read differently than parts of the Old Testament in terms of style and the focus of the content.

But there are these threads running through the whole thing and all of it is connected and it's one whole. And Jesus and the apostles tell us that in its entirety, this book is a testimony to the work of Christ, to the person of Christ, and specifically to the gospel of Christ.

This is a book that's about the gospel from Genesis 1-1 all the way to the last page of your Bible.

This is a book about good news.

[14:01] All of it is about good news. And we have been soaked in that good news. We have been soaking up the gospel as we've been walking through Romans.

And now this morning, just after Paul has said that the goal of the law, what the law was aiming at and pointing toward all along the goal of the law is Christ, now Paul's going to turn in verse 5 and he's going to begin to show us just how the law itself, he's going to limit himself to the books of Moses here for a few verses.

He's not going to jump ahead to the prophets. He's going to limit himself to the books written by Moses, to the law, and he's going to show us this morning how the law itself is ultimately about the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And before we can look at that though, I need to make sure that we're all sort of on the same page in our understanding of what Paul is talking about when he talks about the gospel. Or specifically, what Paul is talking about when he talks about righteousness throughout this chapter.

Because that's the language that he uses to describe the gospel frequently in Romans and especially here at the beginning of chapter 10. He talks about how to gain a right standing before God.

[15:17] How can we survive judgment day? How can sinners come to be viewed in God's sight as those whose sins are forgiven and who are righteous even though we're not righteous?

How can that happen? That's Paul's focus throughout chapter 10 really. How does that happen and how do we spread the good news about how that happens to other people? That's what chapter 10 is about.

And he begins chapter 10 by lamenting the fact that the vast majority of his fellow Jews, the vast majority of his, what he calls his kinsmen, according to the flesh. He begins chapter 10 by lamenting the fact that most of them have not received this gospel.

Though they have the book that testifies to it, they have missed it and they have not received the righteousness that they need to survive on judgment day.

Look up just a few verses. He says in verse 1, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them, that's his Jewish kinsmen, is that they may be saved. So he assumes they're not saved, that is judgment awaits them.

[16:20] And then he tells us why. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For being ignorant of the righteousness of God and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.

There's all that righteousness language. And what he means by this is that they keep trying to earn a righteous standing before God. They keep trying to actually be righteous by following the law and that's not going to work out for them.

They're not going to be able to do enough to be counted as righteous in God's sight. And in all of their efforts to be righteous, they have missed out on the free gift of righteousness that God offers through Jesus Christ.

Because Christ has come. And Christ is the only person who ever lived in perfect obedience to the law of God. He lived a full life of perfect and full submission to God's word and God's will.

And so Jesus and Jesus alone is actually really righteous before his Father. And the good news of the gospel is that when we put our faith in Jesus, the righteousness that Jesus actually earned that

we cannot earn is counted as ours.

[17 : 38] It's as if it's really our righteousness. And all of our sin is counted as Christ's. And on the cross, he endures the punishment that we should have to endure for our sins while we get the reward for his righteous life.

And all of that happens by faith. And so Paul is consumed with this righteousness language in chapter 10 because he wants us to know how can you be righteous before God?

Not by obeying the law because you can't obey it. It's simply by trusting in Christ so that his obedience stands in your place as your obedience.

That's the good news of the gospel. That's what Paul means when he says that the goal of the law was Christ. That's what he's saying that the law, the books of Moses were pointing toward all along. The free gift of righteousness through faith in Jesus all along. And now, because he has said that, he needs to prove that from the writings of Moses.

[18 : 42] So he's going to take us back in time. Look there in verse 5. He says, for, because, so he's proving his case here, for Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, or literally, the righteousness out of the law, the righteousness that comes from the law.

He writes about that kind of righteousness, earned righteousness, the kind of righteousness that Paul says his kinsmen were pursuing. He says, Moses writes about that. He doesn't ignore that. He writes about it.

And this is what Moses says. Moses says that the person who does the commandments shall live by them. Now, there are no quotation marks, at least in my New Testament here, but there ought to be because this is a quotation of Leviticus 18.5.

If you turn back in your Bibles all the way back in your Old Testament to the book of Leviticus near the beginning of your Bible, you can see in Leviticus 18.5, Moses says, in the midst of all these commands, he's got chapter after chapter of commands, and he says this, you shall therefore keep my statutes and my rules.

If a person does them, these commandments, if a person does them, he shall live by them. I am the Lord. If a person does these commandments, he shall live by them.

[20 : 05] Now, one of the most important things that we can learn as we're looking at Paul's use of the Old Testament, here the law, as we look at Paul's use of the Old Testament, we can learn how we're supposed to read the Old Testament.

We can learn how we're supposed to interpret the Old Testament. Because many times, the difficulty that we face, the problem that we have as we read our Old Testament, we're thinking, what does this have to do with my life?

What does all of this have to do with anything that I experience on a daily basis? And one of the reasons for that is that we're not reading our Old Testaments in the same way that Paul and the other apostles and even Jesus himself, they taught us to read our Old Testaments.

And so as you read Leviticus 18.5 in its original context in the book of Leviticus, one of the things that you would take note of if you were reading through Leviticus is that when God says through Moses, the one who does these commandments will live by them, it's clear in the context of Leviticus that what he means is your life will be prolonged upon the earth.

And in fact, he means specifically that your life in the land that I have given to you as an inheritance, so the land of Palestine, the land of promise, he says to the people of Israel, if you obey my commandments, you'll get to live there longer.

[21 : 29] Your life will be longer and your time in the land will last longer. And you come to Romans chapter 10 and as Paul cites Leviticus, it's clear that that's not what Paul has in mind.

Paul is not thinking of living in the land of Palestine longer. I mean, after all, he's writing to people who are living in the city of Rome. Paul doesn't even have an extension of this life in mind.

Paul has in mind eternal life. If you do these commandments, you get eternal life, you get salvation, you get to live forever, you get to survive the judgment. So how does Paul arrive at that conclusion if Leviticus 18.5 is about living longer in the land physically?

How does he do that? Because he reads his Old Testament in the way that Jesus taught them to read it, in the way that he taught Peter and John and the others to read it. He reads his Old Testament through new covenant eyes.

And one of the things that you'll notice that the apostles are frequently doing as they're interpreting the Old Testament for us is they're showing us that many of the things in the Old Testament that we

read about so often are actually pointing toward a similar but greater reality that is ours in Christ. [22 : 43] So when we were way back in Romans chapter 4 as Paul was talking about Abraham, father of the Jewish nation, as he was talking about Abraham, if you're reading Romans 4 and you know the story of Abraham then you know that at the very beginning of Abraham's calling to come to the land of Canaan, the land of Palestine, that God promised Abraham that I'm going to give you this land.

This is going to be all yours and it will belong to your descendants. This is your land. You're an heir of this land. Even though Abraham lived his life without ever having received the inheritance, Abraham could be confident that God gave that land to him and to his descendants and sure enough in the future they came to be in possession of the land for a time, temporarily.

But when you get to Romans chapter 4 and Paul begins to interpret that, Paul says that Abraham through faith in Christ became an heir of the world so that all along the land was just like a little mini picture, like a microcosm of the ultimate inheritance of the world, the whole world.

What world? This world when it's been refashioned and recreated after Christ returns, what the book of Revelation calls the new heavens and the new earth. It belongs to those who trust in Jesus so it belonged to Abraham because he had faith in the future Messiah.

So Abraham promised a little strip of land in the Middle East, believes all of the promises and ultimately becomes an heir of the world. That's how you read your Old Testament.

[24 : 18] You read it with new covenant eyes and so then you begin to read through the Old Testament. You see all this business about the land which initially seemed a little bit boring to you unless you happen to live in that land.

It seems a bit boring to you and detached from your daily life and then you begin to understand that there's a greater reality being hinted at in all of that business about the land. A much greater reality that has a great impact upon you.

What will you do forever? What will you do? Assuming that you trust in Christ, assuming that you are indeed saved and assuming that you inherit eternal life, what are you going to do forever?

Are you going to be like Tom in the Tom and Jerry cartoons? I mean, I don't know how he can have a bulldozer run over him and he's fine but an anvil drops on his head and suddenly he floats up into heaven. I don't know how that works but you'll be like Tom and you're just going to kind of sit up there and strum a harp on a cloud for a little while?

That sounds boring to me. That's not interesting. I don't want to sit around on clouds and strum harps. That's not interesting to me. That's not what the Bible holds out to us. That's not what the Bible says.

[25 : 26] The Bible says that we will be raised from the dead physically. We will dwell with Christ someday physically on a renewed earth, a creation even better than the Garden of Eden, even better than the original creation, renewed and made better than it ever has been before.

Perfect. And we will spend all of eternity in real bodies that don't grow old or get sick and we will live forever in a real world forever enjoying the presence of Christ, ever increasing joy in His presence, in real bodies with no problems, in a real world with no sin, no sickness, no disease, no death, and no problems whatsoever.

whatsoever. And when you begin to read the land promises that way, suddenly the Old Testament starts to come alive. It's not just land though.

Life in the land signifies that eternal life with Christ in the future that all those who trust in Him will have someday. So Paul is not just grabbing a verse out of its context and assigning it some new meaning that he finds to be helpful to make his point.

Paul's reading the Old Testament through these new covenant eyes and he's coming to understand and helping us to come to understand what the law is ultimately about. And the law ultimately says if you want that life and you want to do it by the law, then you're going to have to obey all of the law.

[26 : 54] You're going to have to do, you're going to have to perform all of these commandments. Which we know of course we can't do that.

I know that in at least three ways. I know it from experience. I know just from my own life, 38 years on the earth, not one of those years without sin.

Not one. You would think I'd get one, not one without sin. Not even a day without sin. I'm well aware. I'm incapable of doing this. So if Paul stops there or if that's the only thing that Paul writes and we don't have the rest of Romans and the rest of the scriptures, if that's all we get, you want

life?

Perform the law. Then I'm in trouble just based on my own experience. I'm doomed. I'll never experience that life. It's never going to happen. I know it from experience. I also know it from all the other things that Paul has said throughout this letter.

Romans 3, 23, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Romans 3, 10, 11, 12, there's no one righteous. No, not even one. There's no one who does good.

[27:59] No one. No one righteous. We're all unrighteous. And in light of Romans 1, 18, the wrath of God is being revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.

That's bad news for us. So I know from my own life I cannot do this. I know because Paul has already said nobody can do this. Everybody has failed to do this except for Christ. I know that. But I also know because of what Paul continues to say here, right here in this passage, he continues to help us to understand. If you want life by the law, you're going to have to perform the law.

But of course, you cannot do that. You cannot obtain the life promised in the law by obeying the law. Notice how he words this.

Moses writes, and he's very specific, about the righteousness that is based on the law. That's what he writes about. It's unattainable to us.

[28:57] The righteousness based on the law out of our reach. But then the good news, verse 6, but in contrast to that, there's another righteousness.

But the righteousness based on faith says, and this is where things get interesting for me. This is where Paul shows his absolute brilliance in how he handles the Old Testament.

And it's very easy for us to miss because quite frankly, most of us, even if you grew up in church, we weren't taught the Old Testament well enough to even recognize all this. So if you have a study Bible that points you back to all these Old Testament passages and gives you clues, good.

That's a good thing. That's helpful because if you don't have one, we're going to miss it a lot of times. But I'm going to help you to see it real quickly this morning. In these verses, verses 6, 7, and 8, Paul actually quotes from the book of Deuteronomy.

But he doesn't just quote from Deuteronomy. He picks from two passages in Deuteronomy, takes phrases out of two passages, and then in the middle of those phrases, he inserts information about Christ.

[30:08] We're going to see that that's really, really significant. But first, I want you to see those passages in their context. He quotes from a passage early in Deuteronomy from Deuteronomy chapter 9.

We'll go there in a bit. But he also quotes from Deuteronomy chapter 30. That's where most of his language comes from. So turn back to Deuteronomy chapter 30 or simply look at the screen if you want.

I want you to see this. It's really important for us to see this. In Deuteronomy chapter 30 verse 11, we read this. This is the commandment that I command you today.

Or this commandment that I command you today. Moses is talking about the law that he's given them. All right? This commandment is not too hard for you. Neither is it far off. It's not in heaven that you should say.

That's what Paul quotes, right? It's not in heaven that you should say. But then Paul interrupts his quotation and he says something different. Deuteronomy continues on and says, it's not in heaven that we should say, who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us that we may hear it and do it?

[31:12] Neither is it beyond the sea. Paul quotes that but he uses the word abyss which is a common word for both the sea and the underworld, the place of the dead. It's not over the sea that you should say, who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us that we may hear it and do it?

But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart so that you can do it. So clearly, very obviously as you read here, the word that's being talked about by Moses in Deuteronomy chapter 30 is in fact the law itself, the commandments that he has given.

But that's not what Paul says. Paul says that he's talking about the righteousness based on faith and he even goes on later on to call this the word of faith, the word about faith.

So Paul is being very, very clever here. He's taking a passage from Deuteronomy 30 that's about the law. He's taking snippets of it and he's not using it to talk about the law.

He's using it to talk about Christ and the gospel of trusting in Christ for the gift of righteousness. But why is he doing that? I mean, should we think of the apostle Paul just randomly grabbing phrases and statements wherever he can in the Bible to support what he's trying to say?

[32:28] I don't think so at all. There are a couple of reasons why I don't think so. One is because of the broader context of Deuteronomy. But another is because he starts this quotation by not referencing Deuteronomy 30.

That phrase, do not say in your heart, is verbatim from Deuteronomy chapter 9. Now you've got to know a little bit about the book of Deuteronomy to make sense out of all this stuff.

Deuteronomy literally means the word Deuteronomy and little kids always laugh the first time you teach them about the book of Deuteronomy. It's hilarious to them. But it literally means second law. That's what it means.

Because Moses gives them the book of Deuteronomy. He speaks it to them and it's written down as the people of Israel are standing just outside the promised land.

They're about to cross over. Moses knows. God has told them you don't get to go with them because of your sin. You can't go across. Moses knows he's not going with them. And so Moses begins to recite for them first at the first part of the book some of the significant events in their journey from Egypt to where they are now.

[33:35] But then he begins to summarize for them the law that is found in a more lengthy form throughout the rest of the Pentateuch. So the last part of the Pentateuch is almost a summary of the first four books of the Pentateuch.

That's kind of how it works a little bit there. And so in chapter 9 Moses is about to begin that review of all the sundry laws of Israel.

He's already restated the Ten Commandments. That's why you find them in Exodus and in Deuteronomy. He's already restated a couple of things. But now he wants to say a few words to them before he gives them the law in more of its detail.

And what he says to them is incredibly significant for our understanding of Romans chapter 10. Chapter 9. Jump in. Deuteronomy chapter 9.

I've got to turn there first, right? Verse 4. Do not say in your heart. Those are the very, that's the exact wording that Paul uses.

[34:35] In the original language of the New Testament in Greek, it matches the very common well-known Greek Old Testament that many of the Jews and the Gentile Christians used, and it's verbatim. Do not say in your heart.

Here's what they are not to say, the people of Israel. Do not say in your heart after the Lord your God has thrust them out before you. It is because of my righteousness that the Lord has brought me in to possess this land.

Don't say that. It's not because of your righteousness. Keep in mind that land signifies something greater than Palestine. Ultimately, it signifies life in the new heavens and the new earth.

Do not say that you're entering this land because of your righteousness. They know that they're not righteous. He just gave them a catalog of their sins just since leaving Egypt. They know that. Verse 5, Not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart are you going in to possess this land.

That's not why you're getting this. It has nothing to do with your own righteousness. Again, in verse 6, Know therefore that the Lord your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness for you are a stubborn people.

[35:48] So over and over in Deuteronomy 9, God says, It's not your righteousness. You're not getting these things because you have earned them. You don't deserve them. In fact, the very law that I'm repeating to you, you have already broken over and over and you haven't even had it for very long.

You have broken it over and over and over. And then what's interesting is Deuteronomy gives a lot of laws and then towards the end of the giving of the law, starting in chapter 28, there's a list.

Blessings for obeying the law, curses for disobeying the law. Just a list. This is what's going to happen to you. If you obey the law, you get this. Disobey the law, these are the curses that will come upon you and the primary curse is you're kicked out of the land.

You're out. That's the main curse. He goes over that, Deuteronomy 28, 29, and then you get to Deuteronomy chapter 30 that Paul quotes from.

Then you get there. And in Deuteronomy chapter 30, verse 1, we read this. When all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you call them to your mind among all the nations where the Lord your God has driven you.

[36:57] So there's an assumption in Deuteronomy 30. I'm sending you into the land. While you're there, keep these commandments and I'll bless you. Break them and I'll kick you out of the land and these curses will come upon you.

And now he says in chapter 30, by the way, when all these things happen to you, when I kick you out of the land because of your sins, not if I do, but when I do, it is a certainty.

God is telling them you are going to break the law, the curses are going to come down on you and I will kick you out of the land. That is going to happen. Why is that going to happen?

Because they cannot obey the law any more than you or I can. They simply cannot do it because their hearts are not right. Their hearts are not capable of rendering the obedience necessary to obtain the blessing of long life in the land.

And for us, we understand of eternal life in God's presence. It's just not capable. Our hearts are not right. Their hearts were not right. And so God says, that's going to happen.

[38:01] The curses are going to come on you because you're going to disobey. And then jump down to verse 6. He says, And the Lord your God someday, he's saying, will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul that you may live.

In other words, the history of this nation now in its infancy about to enter the land that I promise will be a history of failure. Ultimately resulting in no life in the land.

You're kicked out. And that's because your hearts are not right. Because you don't have within yourselves the capacity to obey the law. You cannot love me the way that the law demands.

You cannot serve me the way that the law demands. You cannot do it. But after that happens, then there's going to come a time when I come and give you a new heart so that you will love me.

God knows and God recognizes that the people of Israel and the rest of the world, we do not have it within ourselves to earn a righteous standing before Him and thereby earn life.

[39:12] We don't have it. We don't have the right kinds of hearts. We need new hearts. That's what we need. But it would be very easy for someone to read through Deuteronomy, get to chapter 30 and think, you've doomed them to failure already?

Well then why didn't you give them a law that was so hard to do? Why'd you trick them, God?

Couldn't you give them something a little bit easier if you know they can't do this? Couldn't you have lowered the bar, given them an easier law to do?

It's your fault, God. You gave unreasonable requirements for life. That's not fair. Why would you do that? And that's when the verses that Paul quotes come in. Because that objection always sits upon us.

We always want to shift the blame to God. That's what happened in Romans chapter 9 with the doctrine of election. And Paul says, who are you to talk back to God, oh man? We always want to do that.

And so Moses anticipates that. He says in verse 11 again, for this commandment that I command you today is not too hard for you. In what sense is it not too hard?

[40:18] You've already said they're all going to fail at this commandment because they don't have the heart to do it. What Moses is communicating is the same thing that Paul has communicated in Romans. But the problem is not with the law itself.

The problem is with the human heart. But he wants to make sure that they get it. The problem is not the law. The problem is you. This command, it's not too hard. It's not too far off.

In other words, you can understand it. It's not like you need to have some sort of vision and go up into heaven and gain some sort of insight into the law. He says that's not necessary.

It's not difficult to understand. It's clear. It's right there. I've given it to you. You don't have to make a journey across the sea to obtain the right understanding. You don't need to do any of that.

It's right there near you. It's in your mouth. It's in your heart. I've given it to you. You've got the law.

It's not hard to understand. And it's not overly burdensome. It's just that you don't have the heart to do it unless God himself comes in and gives you a new heart and he will someday.

[41:17] They are promised. Paul is writing at a time when these promises have come to their fulfillment. And not merely for a stray individual here and there.

There are always people we've seen Paul calls them the remnant. There are always people in the history of Israel who did receive the new heart. There are always people who did trust in the coming Messiah and the promises and were indeed saved.

There's always a remnant. But Paul is now living in a day and age in which all the people of God that is under the new covenant all of the church all of us have received new hearts. We call it being born again regeneration with a lot of words for it.

Paul is living in a day and age where all those who trust in Christ have indeed received a new heart otherwise they wouldn't have trusted in Christ. And so now Paul draws upon this passage near the end of Deuteronomy in which we are told the problem is not with the law the problem is with you.

You should be able to do this. And now Paul begins to give the twist. The twist that comes by the way from Deuteronomy 9 that is you don't have a righteousness of your own to do it.

[42:25] And so he says let's read it closely back in Romans 9 this is what the righteousness based on faith says. says do not say in your heart Deuteronomy 9 who will ascend into heaven and in Deuteronomy 30 that was so that we can get the law so we can gain understanding.

Here he says who will ascend into heaven and then he clarifies that is to bring Christ down. So he's thinking about Jesus here he has replaced the law with Christ.

All right that's significant that's important. And then he says again verse 7 who will descend into the abyss that is to bring Christ up from the dead not necessary he's already been raised.

In other words everywhere where we might be tempted to think all I need to do is obey these rules. All I need to do is follow this course of action and in God's eyes everything will be all right.

Everywhere where that might be the case Paul comes in and says no it's not the law that you need it is Christ that you need. And guess what?

[43:40] Just as the law was not far off neither is Christ far off. You don't need to ascend into heaven you don't need to go to the depths of the earth to bring him up from the dead oh no.

Christ is ever living and through the Holy Spirit he is ever present among you and his gospel has been made known to you.

You know this now stop pursuing the law stop trying to check off all the boxes and do all the right things you have someone who stands in your place having fulfilled the law trust in Christ stop trusting in the law stop trusting in your ability to fulfill the law now trust in the one about whom the law was talking all along the law was always telling us you can't do this you need a new heart you need someone to provide righteousness in your place because you lack it that's what the law was telling us the whole time it was telling us that and now Paul wants us to see very clearly everywhere we might be tempted to turn to the law no you turn to Christ and in turning to Christ you don't have to do anything it's all been done already he's already come down from heaven he's already died and indeed risen it's all done now verse 8 what does it say what does the word of faith what does it say what does the righteousness based on faith say says that the word is near you in your mouth and in your heart that is the word of faith that we proclaim in other words it's not complicated it's not difficult at all it's very very simple the word has been given to you the message the good news has been given to you that there is another righteousness available and you need simply trust in the one who has provided that righteousness and it is yours and never mind that you don't have righteousness never mind that you deserve the curses never mind that

Paul says in Galatians Christ became a curse for us all of that that we should have gotten he takes upon himself and gives us for free by faith in him all that he has earned for himself it's free it's yours by faith in Jesus sometimes even as believers sometimes we are tempted at times to live the Christian life as if well I know I know that initially it was all about faith but now I've got to work really hard and I've got to try to earn things Paul says in Galatians when confronted with that sort of attitude of needing to submit to the law after having trusted in Christ he says to the Galatians you were running a good race you're doing well you're running the race of faith it was great you're doing well who cut in on you?

he asked them who has bewitched you? who has fooled you? who has tricked you into thinking that you were justified? you were declared righteous by faith and now everything is about your own effort?

[46:59] no why? why does the Christian life not work like that? because the very thing that leads us to trust in Christ is a new heart and that very thing produces by the power of the Spirit good works in us and therefore even the Christian life is not about renewed effort all the time it's never about renewed effort it's always about trusting in Christ whatever area of life it is that you struggle in

it's never about renewed effort it's always trusting in Jesus more so maybe maybe you really struggle with an addiction to pornography and you just keep clicking on things you keep going there and you don't know why you just keep doing it and so you come up with a long list of rules as to how and when and this and that and parameters over getting on the all these sorts of things and those aren't in themselves bad things but they're never going to be enough what's necessary is increasing faith in Jesus so that when the moment of temptation arises you have a superior satisfaction in Christ that nothing that this world has to offer could ever compete with but that only happens when your faith in Him is strong and you're resting in Him and you sense and feel and know the pleasure of being in

His presence and an object of His delight is a powerful weapon against erring passions we don't fight a wayward heart with logic and rules you fight a wayward heart with better pleasures namely Jesus in whom we trust for everything if your marriage is struggling feels like it's on the edge and you know that you're at least partly to blame for that but you just can't seem to change your attitude you just can't seem to be different in your home you just can't seem to do it the answer is not for me to get up here and preach a sermon on ten steps to a better marriage that's not going to help you guys I know there are a lot of people who would do that but the reason that they keep doing that is because the people that they keep telling that to keep needing a new list because they're not working so I'm going to give you that list

I'm going to tell you one thing marriage exists for the glory of God in Christ as your relationship with your spouse reflects the relationship of the church and Jesus and you develop a delight and a pleasure in seeing your spouse if it's a husband in seeing him like Christ if it's your wife in treating her the way that Christ treats the church and you begin to delight in that rather than try to check off a list of rules for how to have a better marriage and suddenly things begin to change and all that happens because you believe because you really believe in the gospel of Christ crucified and risen and you know that it's supposed to do something in your life it takes root it has an effect upon you the answer to waywardness in the Christian life is not it's not legal rules and regulations the answer is faith increasing faith and trust and therefore satisfaction and pleasure in who he is over whatever the world is pushing your way so that this gospel message this is not something that I preach to you at an evangelistic rally and you hear it and you get it and you go okay I got the gospel and then you come here on Sundays and I teach you something else further than that deeper than that beyond that that's not what the gospel is the gospel is your life beginning to end and you must rejoice in the gospel and look to the gospel every moment of every day that's what the Old Testament does that's what

Jesus tells us to do that's what the apostles do and we are never going to have hope in this life or everlasting life in new heavens and new earth apart from faith in the gospel of Jesus let's pray and