

Parson to Person

ROMANS 10 PART 2

“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, ‘The man who does those things shall live by them.’ But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, ‘Do not say in your heart, “Who will ascend into heaven?”’ (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or, “Who will descend into the abyss?”’ (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? ‘The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart’ (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, ‘Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.’ For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For ‘whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.’

How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!’ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, ‘LORD, who has believed our report?’ So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed: ‘Their sound has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.’ But I say, did Israel not know? First Moses says: ‘I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are not a nation, I will move you to anger by a foolish nation.’ But Isaiah is very bold and says: ‘I was found by those who did not seek Me; I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me.’ But to Israel he says: ‘All day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and contrary people’” (Romans 10:1–21 NKJV).

Few people if any will deny that prayer moves the heart of God and that the people of God are both privileged and commanded to pray. It is clear that Paul prayed and that he encouraged those to whom he ministered to pray as well. However, sadly, too many Christians either don’t pray (the average Christian prays 30 seconds a day) or they have misunderstood—through poor teaching and practice—the worship aspect of praying and how God designed us as a people of prayer.

We know that there is no innate “power in prayer” itself and that the expression “prayer changes things” carries the false claim that there is power in the act or ritual. Prayer serves no purpose unless the one praying knows the one to whom they pray and that the one who hears and answers those prayers is both willing and capable of answering. For this reason, mismanaged/misdirected prayer (which is a form of idolatry) serves no purpose but to disappoint the one praying, and moreover, it insults the One and Only, True and Living God.

The psalmist pointed out that those who put their attention, affection, or allegiance in or upon idols are ignorant and foolish. He wrote, *“Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men’s hands. They have mouths, but they do not speak; eyes they have, but they do not see; they have ears, but they do not hear; noses they have, but they do not smell; they have hands, but they do not handle; feet they have, but they do not walk; nor do they mutter through their throat. Those who make them are like them; so is everyone who trusts in them”* Psalm 115:4–8 (NKJV). However, those who humbly request of the Lord will not be disappointed—even if the Lord answers their prayers with *no*, *not now*, or in a way unexpected.

Here in our text (Romans 10:1), Paul’s prayer for Israel reveals two important things:

- 1) Paul’s heart of love for Israel. This love is documented throughout all of Paul’s epistles. He was a Jew, and it was “natural” for him to love his Israeli family. (“Natural” in the sense that our love for other human beings—especially family—is part of the creative work God instilled in man. Love and compassion are God-inspired attributes.)
- 2) The heart of God for Israel. Paul was inspired to pray for Israel and to communicate his desire with the Romans—and therefore all who read the epistle. This inspiration revealed the heart of God for Israel through Paul—and his letter. In addition, the revelation of God’s heart would in turn inspire others to pray. Moreover, God would not have inspired this kind of praying if He did not intend to answer.

As mentioned above, we as a people of God are both privileged and commanded to pray. However, one might suggest that we do not need to pray for Israel—or the restoration of the people and land—and they would be right! God’s covenant with Israel is unconditional and will be fulfilled in spite of man or the prayers of man. However, prayer honors the Lord and shows our recognition of His declared word. Therefore, praying within God’s will is worship—showing our

surrender to His person and plans. All praying should follow the same rule. We are called to pray according to the will of God, and when we do, He “hears” us. (That said, we also recognize that there are times when we pray without knowing the specific will of the Lord, and thus through the same form of worship we see the will of God revealed by the way He answers.)

Paul knew that many of the Jews would reject the Gospel during the present dispensation—but nonetheless prayed for them—proclaiming the Gospel to all he could. He knew that some (the elect) would believe and therefore taught them by all means and in every occasion possible. His prayers for them would be answered in the present dispensation by their belief in the Gospel. This would reveal to him the will of the Lord in and among the elect in this present time we call the Church Age. Furthermore, his prayers would likewise be answered by the whole of the Jews who will be saved at the time of the Second Coming of Jesus (following the Tribulation) when *“all of Israel shall be saved.”* (See Romans 9:27 and 11:26) Therefore, we pray! We pray for the salvation of souls; we pray for the peace of Jerusalem; we pray for the soon coming of the Lord; and we live as worshippers trusting the Lord for the outcome He intends as answers to our prayers!

I love you all,

Pastor Paul