



# Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church

**Five Solas**

**Faith Alone**

**Romans 10:1-8**

**11/04/2018**

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## Main Point

We are made right before God through faith in Jesus alone.

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## Introduction

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**Do you keep a task list or a to-do list to manage all that you have to do each day? What do you use?**

**Do you feel a sense of satisfaction or accomplishment as you scratch off or check off each task you've completed? If so, why is that feeling so satisfying? If not, why are you keeping a task list to begin with?**

We live in a culture that highly values productivity. Task managements systems, be they notepads and pencils or apps for our smart phones, are abundant, giving every person virtually

no excuse outside of themselves for not being productive. Few things bring more satisfaction at the end of our day than a long list of tasks completed with excellence. It's no wonder that we often translate this experience over to our relationship with God. We view our righteousness (right standing) before God as something we achieve through a long list of obedient actions, when in reality, God is already completely satisfied with one accomplishment: the life, death, and resurrection of His Son. We are made right before God through faith in Jesus alone.

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## Understanding

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ROMANS 10:1-4.**

**What was Paul's main desire in these verses?**

**How do you define "zeal"? What do you think it means to be zealous for the Lord?**

**How can we develop this type of passion for a person's salvation that Paul exhibited?**

In Romans 9, Paul explained that Jews, people who should have accepted God's Son, rejected Him instead. The Old Testament Scriptures pointed to the good news about Jesus, but they walked away from it. The Jews' rejection of the gospel's good news was not because of apathy toward spiritual matters. In chapter 10, Paul pointed out the Jews were zealous for God, but in the wrong way. He coupled his heart's desire—his earnest and sincere wish—for them with prayer for their salvation. All believers should have heartfelt desires and prayers for lost people to be saved.

**Can a person know about God, and even Jesus, and still not experience salvation? How?**

**Paul drew attention to righteousness in these verses, which refers to a person being right in reference to the standard of God. What are some ways that people try to “establish their own righteousness” today?**

Righteousness in the Bible refers to a person being right in reference to a standard, and that standard is God Himself. God alone is perfect. All His actions are pure and righteous. Unlike God, people are incapable of living up to God’s perfect standard. Righteousness can come only from God. The Jews were blind to the reality that no matter how sincere they were, they could never achieve their own righteousness before God. God had already provided righteousness through Christ. They needed God’s righteousness, not righteousness of their own making.

**According to verse 4, how are we made righteous before God?**

Based on Jesus’ death and resurrection, God will declare righteous those who believe in His Son. Until people submit to God’s righteousness through faith in Christ, they remain unrighteous in God’s sight. People can try (without success) to gain righteousness through keeping the law, or they can put their trust in Christ who gained righteousness for them. Trusting Christ for righteousness is Paul’s central point in this passage. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes, Paul wrote. Christ is the goal, the point, and the meaning of the law; He also perfectly fulfilled the requirements of the law.

**HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ROMANS 10:5-8.**

**What’s the difference between a righteousness based on the law (works) and a righteousness based on faith?**

**How would someone coming to God on the basis of works or performance be different from someone who comes to God by faith in God alone?**

Throughout his letters, Paul makes the statement that “the righteous shall live by faith” (Rom. 1:17; 4:1-5; Gal. 2:16; 3:11). In Romans and Galatians he points to the story of Abraham in Genesis 15:6: “Abraham believed the Lord and He credited to him as righteousness.” God did not state that Abraham was righteous because of anything he did (works), but simply because

he believed God. The word credited is an accounting term—righteousness was credited to Abraham’s account because of his faith alone.

It may sound too easy. The difficult task of obtaining righteousness is not for us to undertake. It’s already been done! Christ came down from heaven, suffered the punishment of our sin, died on the cross, rose, and ascended into heaven. So any attempt to win righteousness by bringing Christ down from heaven is unnecessary. And any attempt to bring Christ up from the dead is equally unnecessary. To do so denies Christ’s incarnation, death, and resurrection. So what is our responsibility? It is simply to receive the message of faith.

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## Application

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**We all struggle to earn our righteousness before God; it’s an inevitable aspect of our fallen natures. What is one way you have fallen into this trap recently?**

**What would you say to someone who insists that this message of righteousness by faith alone is just too simple, that there has to be more we have to do to earn God’s love?**

**The Jews knew the Scriptures, but Paul prayed for their spiritual discernment so they could see and experience the truth of the Scriptures about Jesus Christ. Who do you know who knows about Jesus, yet has not believed in faith? Take a few minutes to pray for these individuals by name.**

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## Pray

Pray for those you know and love who are not saved from their sins according to Romans 10. Ask God to give you the opportunity to share your faith with others who are not Christians, and pray for a zealotry for the gospel.

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## Commentary

### ROMANS 10:1-8

10:1. Paul saw no contradiction between election and prayer. Only a sovereign God, who has rights to move unilaterally in the affairs of humanity, can answer prayer. Among unbelievers we do not know beforehand who is elect and will come to faith upon hearing the gospel, but we can know that “God our Savior... wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1Tim 2:4). Paul therefore prayed for Jewish salvation, and we must be diligent to share the good news of Jesus with everyone. It is never proper to give up on someone as “non-elect.”

10:2-3. Both zeal and true knowledge are necessary if one is truly to know God and serve Him. In his zeal as a non-Christian Pharisee, Paul (then called Saul) persecuted the church (Ac 22:3-5). Likewise, zeal among unbelieving Jews led to Jesus’ unjust execution. In spiritual blindness they not only missed God’s way of righteousness, they opposed it.

10:4. Christ is the end of the law in being both its fulfillment and its termination. Any system of salvation based on performance is excluded.

10:5-7. Paul quoted Moses on both sides of the issue. In Leviticus 18:5 (cp. Gal 3:12) obedience to the law brings life, but no one can keep the law and gain righteousness (as implied by Paul’s citation of Moses in v. 6). Faith-based righteousness is from Christ. He is accessible. He died for us and was raised from the dead. Moses pointed out that God’s revelation was accessible, and Paul quoted his words to show that Christ is accessible.

10:8. The nearness of the message of faith is at the heart and mouth of people, just as Moses proclaimed the nearness of God’s revelation.

### ROMANS 10:1-8

10:1–4. Paul left no doubt about his deep affection for his fellow Israelites. He had just criticized their attempt to secure acceptance before God by performing all that the law required. They pursued righteousness but failed to achieve it because they sought it by personal merit rather than by faith. The deep longing of Paul’s heart was that his countrymen experience salvation. The reality of his love is seen in the fact that he prayed for them. He, like they, belonged to that special race through whom God had revealed himself in history. Reflecting on his preconversion days, he told the Galatians of his extreme zeal for the traditions of the fathers (Gal 1:14; cf. Acts 22:3). But God met him on the Damascus road, and his eyes were opened to God’s way of righteousness. The experience did not turn him bitter against his former associates but rather kindled within his heart a burning desire that they too might experience the forgiving grace of God through Jesus Christ.

There is no question that his Jewish compatriots were zealous for God, but unfortunately their zeal was not guided by knowledge (v. 2). They had no valid insight into God’s plan for providing righteousness. They failed completely to recognize the righteousness that comes from God. “In their eagerness to set up a righteousness of their own” (TCNT) they would not submit themselves to God’s plan. It is important to see that Israel’s failure resulted from its determination to achieve its objective in its own way. God would have to come to terms with them. Their lack of knowledge was self-inflicted. Refuse the truth and God will give you up to your own foolishness.<sup>44</sup>

The law, instead of providing a way to arrive at a right standing with God, comes to an end in Christ. Paul wrote, “Christ is the end of the law” (v. 4). The law is brought to an end so that righteousness may be within the reach of all who believe. As Paul said elsewhere, the purpose of the law is to lead us to Christ so that we might be justified by faith (Gal 3:24). Phillips translates, “For Christ means the end of the struggle for righteousness-by-the-Law for everyone who believes in him.” As the hymnwriter A. M. Toplady put it, “Nothing in my hand I bring; simply to thy cross I cling.” The only thing God requires of people is that they not persist in trying to earn what they can only receive as a totally free gift. Their problem is that pride stands in the way of receiving God’s gift. Deeply ingrained in people’s hostility to divine grace is a proud and stubborn self-reliance that would rather suffer loss than be deprived of an occasion for boasting.

10:5–8. In this paragraph Paul contrasted two kinds of righteousness. The first is the righteousness that has its origin in the law. Regarding this approach to righteousness Moses said, “The man who does these things will live by them” (Lev 18:5; cf. Gal 3:12). That is to say, if a person is able to perform all that the law requires, it will lead to life. The problem lies in the fact that no one is able to live up to the requirements of the law. Although law points us in the

right direction, it provides no power to achieve its demands. It was never meant as a way to merit God's favor. Its role was to reflect the character of God in terms of ethical goals. The Jewish legalists had perverted the divine intention of the law and made it into a way to gain God's favor based on personal merit.

The righteousness that is based on faith is quite different. It does not require valiant exploits such as bringing Christ down from heaven or up from the grave (vv. 6–7). Paul quoted freely from Deut 30:12–13, substituting a phrase from Ps 107:26 (“down to the depths”) for “beyond the sea.” In pesher style he interpreted the verses in reference to the incarnation and resurrection of Christ. In Deuteronomy, Moses was telling the people that they did not have to climb up to heaven or cross the sea to discover the will of God. Paul applied the passage to the availability of the message of salvation. Hunter writes: “No heroic attempts to storm the citadel of heaven or the kingdom of the dead are needed. Christ the Saviour is here, incarnate and risen.” Faith is readily available for those who will simply believe and confess that Jesus is Lord (Deut 30:14). The message concerning faith is “already within easy reach of each of us” (TLB).<sup>48</sup>

Robert H. Mounce, *Romans*, vol. 27, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 206–209.