

# Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

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## *Seeing One Another Safely Home*

November 22, 2015

**Sermon Text:** Romans 9-10

**Scripture Reading:** John 9

### **Introduction-**

Rom 9:15-16 For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." (16) So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.

Rom 10:11-13 For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." (12) For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. (13) For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

We have been together in this church for many years. We are now over 20 years older than we were when we first met and some of you here have been born in those years. We have seen others depart this life, most of whom we have confidence are with the Lord.

Part of the business of loving one another in Christ is encouraging one another to press on in faith in the Lord's promises to us right up to the time at which He calls us out of this world to begin our real life with Him. That is to say, we as brothers and sisters in Christ have the privilege of seeing one another safely home. This morning, I want to call our attention to this fact:

***There is no reason that every single person here cannot arrive safely home in the presence of Christ.***

And it is a good thing that we remind ourselves of this fact regularly. We are Reformed in our faith. We believe in divine election, in the sovereignty of the Lord and in His unchanging

decree. But we must all be very, very clear in our thinking on these doctrines so that even though we cannot fully understand how they work together with other biblical truths such as the responsibility of every human being to repent and believe the gospel, we nevertheless realize that these promises here in Romans 10 are absolutely true. Listen to them again:

Rom 10:11-13 For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." (12) For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. (13) For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Think carefully now. How many people are there present here this morning, or in this community or state or nation or the world, who are going to end in hell because the Lord did not elect them to salvation? Let's ask further:

- How many people to believe the gospel in true faith will be shamed and rejected by the Lord because they are not elect?
- How many people are there in the world now, or in the past, or will be in the future, who genuinely call on the Lord for salvation who will not be saved no matter how sincerely they

call, because He has not chosen them?

- Why does anyone end in hell? It is for one reason. They would not repent and believe in Christ.

Let's ask some questions regarding those who are saved:

- How many people can boast of repenting and believing in Christ as the reason they are saved?
- What is the only reason anyone is saved?

Therefore, let's ask this:

- Is there any necessary reason that anyone here this morning should end in hell? Or, perhaps to put it this way, Is there any reason that every single person here should not be saved? Is that an impossibility?

Why then does anyone perish in their sins? This is why:

Rom 10:16-21 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" (17) So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ. (18) But I ask, have they not heard? Indeed they have, for "Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world." (19) But I ask, did Israel

not understand? First Moses says, "I will make you jealous of those who are not a nation; with a foolish nation I will make you angry." (20) Then Isaiah is so bold as to say, "I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me." (21) But of Israel he says, "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and contrary people."

*There it is – stubborn, contrary, disobedience to the gracious, ongoing invitation of the Lord. Look at it:*

*"All day long...All day long...every single day, 24/7, the Lord extends His hands to sinners to come to Christ in faith and be saved."*

Mat 23:37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!

The Lord is willing, He is merciful, He does not desire that anyone perish:

2Pe 3:9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

1Ti 2:3-4 This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, (4) who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Let's consider the personalities named in Romans 9 to see living examples of these things.

Rom 9:6-26 But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, (7) and not all are children of **Abraham** because they are his offspring, but "Through **Isaac** shall your offspring be named." (8) This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. (9) For this is what the promise said: "About this time next year I will return, and Sarah shall have a son." (10) And not only so, but also when **Rebekah** had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, (11) though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls— (12) she was told, "The older will serve the younger." (13) As it is written, "**Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.**" (14) What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! (15) For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy,

and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." (16) So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. (17) For the Scripture says to **Pharaoh**, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." (18) So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills. (19) You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" (20) But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" (21) Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use? (22) What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, (23) in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory— (24) even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles? (25) As indeed he says in Hosea, "Those who were not my people I will call 'my people,' and her who was not beloved I will call 'beloved.'" (26) "And in the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' there they will be called 'sons of the living God.'"

Consider the elect here:

- Abraham
- Isaac
- Rebekah
- Jacob

And in contrast:

- Esau
- Pharaoh

In these lists, do you see anyone who ended in hell but in their life called and called and called out to the Lord to save them but were rejected? Do you see anyone with faith in God's Word and Promise who perished because they were "non elect"? Of course not. Such a person has never existed. We DO see Esau and Pharaoh, evil in their character, even despising the Lord. And we see in the elect, people who were objects of God's pure mercy.

And this is why Paul writes this admonishment to people who accuse the Lord of injustice:

(Rom 9:18) So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills. (19) You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" (20) But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?"

See it? The detractor says “if salvation depends entirely on the Lord, then people who want to be saved won’t be saved because the Lord refuses to show them mercy. There is injustice with God!” NO! says Paul. In fact, he essentially tells them to shut their mouths! It is a false and horrendous charge.

Listen once more, as Paul, who has just set out the sovereign election of God in salvation, announces the good news of the gospel invitation to all:

Rom 10:9-13 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. (10) For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. (11) For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." (12) For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. (13) For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

### The Fundamental Obstacle – “I’ve Got This”

Why, then, would anyone not call on the Lord, believe the gospel of Christ, and be saved? Paul identifies the reason in this same passage:

Rom 10:1-4 Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. (2) For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. (3) For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. (4) For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

Think of the Lord’s invitation to the lost. All day long. Day after day. His hand is stretched out. “Come to Me. Accept my salvation.” But the Pharaohs and the Esaus would not. The majority of Israel would not. And the majority of people today will not. Why?

Paul tells us. It is because they insist that they are going to establish their own righteousness before God. That is to say, they are going to save themselves. They can do it! They don’t need His hand. They don’t need Christ.

Now, listen very carefully:

***If anyone here is not in Christ, there is only one reason why this is the case. It is because you do not think you need Christ, but that you are really quite able and good enough yourself to set yourself right with God.***

Let's think through this in more depth. Consider two people, both adherents of the same false religion the Jews were following:

- Joe thinks that he is surely righteous in God's sight. Why? Because Joe has been a "Christian" his whole life. He was raised in church. He really looks down on others who aren't as "holy" as he is because they use vulgar language, and Joe doesn't (well, at least not out loud). They don't go to church, and Joe does. Joe is like the self-righteous Pharisee Jesus talked about:

Luk 18:9-14 He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: (10) "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. (11) The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. (12) I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.' (13) But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' (14) I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will

be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

But let's consider another kind of person, still dead in their sins:

- Jane believes in God. She believes Christ is the Son of God and Savior. But Jane has never called out to the Lord to be saved. Jane has never reached out in faith to those outstretched, inviting arms of the Lord. Why? Because Jane actually shares the same religion as Joe, but expresses it in what appears to be a quite different way. Jane does not believe that God will save her if she calls upon Him because Jane thinks that she is far, far too wicked for the Lord to accept. Jane has, indeed, led a rather notoriously sinful life.

But just like Joe, though at first she may seem to be quite different than "Holy Joe," Jane makes the very same mistake Joe and those Jews of Paul's day make. Listen again:

(Romans 10:3) For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.

See it? Joe insists that his performance is what sets him right with God. Jane insists that her performance is what

condemns her before God and prevents her from any hope. Both of them believe that the righteousness which God accepts is the righteousness which WE produce ourselves by adhering to the Law.

But in fact, there is another righteousness which turns out to be the only real righteousness God accepts. It is called here, the “righteousness of God” NOT because it is the righteousness which God is righteous in Himself, but because IT IS A RIGHTEOUSNESS THAT COMES FROM GOD, THAT IS MADE BY GOD, THAT IS PROVIDED BY GOD IN JESUS CHRIST. Totally apart from our performance.

Listen to Paul speak of it again in his letter to the Philippians:

Php 3:8-9 Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ (9) and be found in him, **not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ,** the righteousness from God that depends on faith—

There is something in us as human beings, something that is a blindness, that will not see this righteousness

from God in Christ. No doubt the devil has something to do with this blinding, as does our own fallen nature when we are born into this world. But Christ is in the business of giving sight to the blind. He is the Light of the world.

Listen now, listen very, very carefully. If you are not in Christ this morning, it is a certainty that the reason is because you are holding onto the religion of Joe and Jane. And because you are either a Joe or a Jane. Arrogant and self-righteous Joe, just certain that by your own righteousness and “religion” the Lord accepts you. Or beaten down by the lies of the enemy like Jane, unable to conceive of any way that the Lord would hear your call for forgiveness in Christ. In either case there is an ignorance of the real righteousness of God by which He saves sinners.

In one case, that of Holy Joe, such a person enlarges his “goodness” and minimizes or ignores his own sin.

In the other case, that of lowly Jane, the person enlarges her sin and minimizes the grace of God in Christ.

And all because Joe and Jane both are ignorant of the righteousness of God, and are seeking to or at least believing that they must, establishing themselves righteous before God by their own

doing, apart from Christ. It really is this simple:

***Everyone who is dead in their sin is in that condition because they believe that man must make himself righteous before God. Joe believes he has. Jane believes she never can. But both cling to the same lie of a false religion.***

Here, however is the truth which Joe and Jane and all of us must see and believe lest they die in their sin:

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); because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." (Rom 10:8-13)