



Lesson 14 ~ "Stone Deaf"

Romans 9:30-10:21

Discussion Starter

- How carefully do you follow the instruction sheet in a ready-to-assemble product? What do you think this reveals about you?

Introduction

Do you consider yourself a responsible person? How important is responsibility to you? What are some responsibilities you have? What are some responsibilities you wish you did *not* have?

In **Romans 9** we learned about God's sovereignty and how some things are his responsibility and not ours. God made choices from among Abraham's descendants to create a nation through which the Messiah would come. God chose Jacob over Esau to carry on the line of promise and God chose to harden Pharaoh's heart to bring about his purposes and deliver his chosen people from Egypt. God has even called

and chosen you to hear his truth and know his love. These things are God's responsibility.

However, God's sovereignty does not mean he is responsible for everything. In this lesson (**Romans 10**) we learn about human responsibility. At the point that we hear the good news of Jesus Christ, we then become responsible for our response to it. This was true of the Jews and Gentiles of Paul's day and it remains true for people today. Exposure to God's truth always comes with responsibility. God has given us free will and the freedom to choose, but he will also hold us responsible for our choice.

Preparation

1. Before you read **Romans 9:30-10:21**, ask God to open your eyes so that you may see wonderful truths in his Word (**Psalms 119:18**). You may want to make the following prayer your own:

Triune God – Father, Son and Spirit,

I admit that I cannot understand the truth found in God's Word with only my mind.

I agree that spiritual truth has to be understood with my heart as well as my head.

So I ask You to give me spiritual understanding as I do this lesson.

*I pray that You would enable me to see, hear and understand,
with my spirit, all that You want to teach me.*

I ask this in the powerful name of Father, Son and Spirit.

Amen

2. Read **Romans 9:30-10:21** slowly and thoughtfully. As you read and reread, **underline or highlight** any verses, phrases or words that are meaningful to you. Put a **question mark** beside anything you don't understand. Put a ✓ beside anything you would like more information about.

You may also want to read the Scripture in another translation. The Scripture handouts for these lessons contain the *New International Version (NIV)* and the *New Living Translation (NLT)*. The questions are phrased to be answered from **either** of these versions. Other translations and paraphrases should only be used as supplementary texts to help your understanding.

3. Sum up the Scripture passage for this lesson in a short sentence, phrase or title.

Questions

Read **Romans 9:30-10:4**.

1. *Irony* is a state of affairs or an event that seems *deliberately contrary to what one expects*. What situation does Paul describe in **9:30-33** and what makes it *ironic*?
2. What is the deciding difference between people who have attained a right standing with God and people who have not (**9:30-32**)?
 - ♥ Regardless of your ethnic identity, in which of the two groups that Paul mentions, would you place yourself (**9:30-31**)? Why?
 - ♥ What is the basic problem with the “Jewish approach” to righteousness (**Romans 3:20; 7:7-11**)? If we *could* save ourselves by works or keeping the law, what would it take?
 - ♥ Why will there *always* be something in us that wants to earn our right standing before God? What is this “*something*?”
3. In **9:33**, Paul quotes from two verses in Isaiah that point to Jesus Christ as a *stone* or *rock*, that has been placed by God. According to **1 Peter 2:4-8**, how is Jesus *either* a *precious cornerstone, safe to build on* (**Isaiah 28:16**) or a *stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall* (**Isaiah 8:14**)?
 - ♥ What are all the things you learn about Jesus in **9:33**? How do you picture Jesus as a **rock** or **stone**?
 - ♥ Read **Psalms 118:22-23**. What is Jesus saying about himself in **Mark 12:1-12**? How does this relate to what Paul is saying in **9:30-33**?
 - ♥ What is it about Jesus that causes people to spiritually stumble and fall? Why is Jesus a stumbling stone to *anyone* who tries to earn a right standing with God by being a good person or doing good works (**Galatians 2:21; Ephesians 2:8-9**)?
4. **Zeal** means *to have great energy and enthusiasm in pursuit of a cause or objective*. Why wasn't Israel's zeal for God enough to keep them from stumbling (**10:1-3**)?
 - ♥ Can you think of a time when you were zealous for something good, yet were wrong in the way you tried to attain it? What was the outcome?
 - ♥ How did the Jews' zeal actually keep them from understanding God's way of salvation? What does zeal need in order to make it beneficial (**10:2-3**)?
 - ♥ How was Paul's life before he met Christ on the Damascus road an example of misdirected zeal (**Galatians 1:13-14; Acts 22:3-5**)? What are some contemporary examples of people showing zeal in the wrong way or for the wrong cause. What are the consequences?

5. In what ways is Jesus the *end of the law* (10:4), *accomplishing the whole purpose of the law* (Hebrews 10:1-4)?

- ♥ God's way of salvation through faith is quite simple and easy; there is righteousness for everyone who believes in Jesus (10:4). Why do people cling to their own ways of getting right with God instead of accepting God's way (10:3)? How do you sometimes try to get right with God?
- ♥ Is it possible to believe in the one, true God but not accept that belief in Jesus as the only way to be righteous before God? Why or why not? (John 14:6; Acts 4:12)
- ♥ What are some reasons why we can't establish our own way of getting right with God (10:3)?

Read **Romans 10:5-13**.

In these verses, Paul quotes freely from the writings of **Moses** in the **Old Testament scriptures**. He does this for two reasons. First, he is primarily speaking to Jews who know and respect the writings of Moses; and second, because he wants to show that the law and the Old Testament scriptures have always pointed to and anticipated a righteousness that is by faith alone. This does not mean that the law is tossed aside and has no value. It is still a guide and standard on how to live life. However, keeping the law is no longer the means of attaining a right standing with God. Faith in Jesus Christ, who perfectly fulfilled the law, is now the way to gain righteousness. When we believe, we are clothed in the righteousness of Jesus. We receive a righteousness that was never possible under the law.

6. Read 10:5-8 in the NLT. What are some of the differences you see between attaining righteousness under the law and attaining it through Christ?

- ♥ Apply what Paul was saying to the Jews about how we are made righteous to what you could say to a devoutly religious person in our day who is trusting in religious practices.
- ♥ God makes salvation *near to or within easy reach of everyone* (10:8). What does this tell us about the character of God? Does your concept of God agree with this picture of God? Why or why not?
- ♥ What is the main problem in trying to earn our way into God's good graces by being a good person (James 2:10)? What does it mean when we say, "God doesn't grade on a curve?"

7. What are the simple instructions Paul gives regarding personal salvation (10:9-10)?

8. *Believe* means to *be convinced of* and to *entrust oneself to* and *confess* means to *acknowledge* or to *say the same as*. Why is both *believing* with the heart (inward) and *confessing* with the mouth (outward) necessary for salvation?

- ♥ When did you first *believe* and *confess*? Were these two actions simultaneous for you? Could there be a gap of time between them? Why or why not? How have you confessed that Jesus is *your* Lord?
- ♥ Is it possible to **believe** without **confessing**? Why or why not? Is it possible to **confess** without **believing**? Why or why not?
- ♥ Why are believing both **truths**, *Jesus is Lord* and *God raised Jesus from the dead*, essential to salvation? If one or the other of these truths were left out, what difference would it make?

9. Paul has already stated that Jesus Christ is *easily* accessible to all (10:6-8). In 10:11-13, how does he show that Christ is *equally* accessible to all?

10. In each of the three verses below, what action must we take to receive God's response? Who gets the better end of the deal? Why?

Verse	Our Action	God's Response
10:11		
10:12		
10:13		

- ♥ On what basis is Paul saying that there is no difference between Jew and Gentile (10:12)? What else does he add in **Galatians 3:28**? What significance does this have for you? How have you seen Jesus to be an equalizer in our culture? Where does his equalizing effect still need to be seen?
- ♥ The main declaration of the early church was, "Jesus is Lord" while the culture of the day said, "Caesar is Lord." **Who** or **what** are some gods of our culture that compete with your allegiance to Christ?
- ♥ If you believe in Jesus, is he automatically Lord of your life? Why or why not? What does it mean to have Jesus be Lord of your life? How important is it? What or who else could be lord of your life?

Read **Romans 10:14-21**.

11. Jesus is *easily* accessible and *equally* accessible, but what must happen before *anyone* can call on the name of the Lord to be saved (10:14-15)?

- ♥ *Preach* means to *announce* or *proclaim*. Is it your responsibility to preach the gospel? Why or why not? Can *living your life for Christ* be a form of preaching? Why or why not? Is it enough? Why or why not?
- ♥ Have you ever shared the good news with someone? What happened? Who is someone you know who needs to hear the gospel? What will you do about it?
- ♥ If someone asked you, "What's the difference between Christianity and other religions?", how would you answer? Do you think this is an important question? Why or why not?

12. In 10:16-21, Paul considers Israel's unbelief. What two questions does he ask in 10:18-19 and what conclusion does he come to about why Israel has not accepted the good news?

- ♥ How are the reasons for Israel's unbelief similar to or different from reasons people have today?
- ♥ Isaiah described Israel as "a disobedient and obstinate people" (10:21). How do you think he would describe contemporary culture? How would he describe you?
- ♥ What groups of people in our society resemble the unbelieving Jews of Paul's time?

Response

What is your responsibility once you have heard the good news about Jesus (10:9, 13)? What is your responsibility once you have believed in Jesus (10:14-15)? How responsible are you being?