

## Why More People Do Not Obey the Gospel

Romans 10:16 and 17

### Introduction:

Anyone who believes can be saved.

Follow along in Romans 10 as we consider an overview of what Paul wrote.

As he was praying for Israel's salvation, he saw that Israel had zeal without knowledge and works without faith (vv. 2 and 3).

Righteousness, a state of being right with God, cannot come from the man himself; righteousness is found in Christ (v. 4). God is the source of righteousness just as Moses foretold (Leviticus 18:5, seen in v. 5 of Romans 10).

In verses 6-8, we are told knowing what God requires, and doing God's will is not found by searching high and low; it is found through Christ and the gospel! Moses predicted this in Deuteronomy 30:12-14.

Reception of God's righteousness is conceived in the heart when a person believes then confirmed by the mouth when one confesses Jesus as Lord (vv. 9 and 10).

No distinction prevents a person from receiving God's righteousness, all who call on Him will be saved (Romans 10:13).

Notice closely, what Paul wrote in verses 14 and 15.

A sinner must call on the Lord to be saved.

A sinner must believe in order to call.

A sinner must hear in order to believe.

Someone must be sent to preach for a person to hear.

Following this logic, Israel should have been saved.

Paul proves that Israel had heard the good news (v. 18).

**"However**, they did not all heed (obey) the gospel (good news)" (Romans 10:16).

Why did Israel not obey the gospel?

"For Isaiah says, 'LORD, WHO HAS BELIEVED OUR REPORT?' So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (Romans 10:17).

Obeying the gospel is a matter of believing the gospel.

The gospel has no saving power for those who do not believe.

Paul stated earlier in this letter to the Romans (1:16), "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation **to everyone who believes**, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

Paul informed the Christians at Thessalonica, "We...constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but **for what it really is, the word of God**, which also **performs its work in you who believe**" (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

It is foolish to disbelieve (not come to belief) when prophets of God told what would happen so it could be believed, then the prophecies were fulfilled.

The Scriptures prophesied that the Messiah would die, then be raised.

Indeed, "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and...He was buried, and...He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:1-5).

Still, many today do not obey the gospel.

Why do more people not obey the gospel? The short answer is faith or belief in Christ and the gospel.

## **I. Why do people not obey the gospel? An Unwillingness to Believe and Obey**

The fact that few obey the gospel, while many more do not, is nothing new in the history of man.

In the days of “Noah, a preacher of righteousness” (2 Peter 2:5) the message was a flood is coming, but only eight souls were saved, “brought safely through the water” (1 Peter 3:20).

At the time of Abraham, there were not ten righteous people in Sodom (Genesis 18 and 19).

People openly, directly, and explicitly refused to walk in the path of God.

Jeremiah reported to the people this that the LORD said, “Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths (referring to the proper way to worship God), Where the good way is, and walk in it; And you will find rest for your souls. But they said, ‘We will not walk’” (Jeremiah 6:16).

God admonished the people for many years by His Spirit through His prophets, yet they would not listen.

“Therefore [God] gave them into the hand of the peoples of the lands” (Nehemiah 9:30).

When John the baptizer came preaching, many rejected his preaching (Luke 7:30).

Cities of people who saw the miracles of Jesus, “did not repent” (Matthew 11:20) because they were unwilling (Matthew 23:37).

3,000 souls obeyed on Pentecost (Acts 2:38 and 41), but this number is small in comparison to the hundreds of thousands that should have been there for this major religious festival.

Still, today many people do not obey the gospel.

Locate Matthew 7:13 and 14. “Find” = “Discover.”

## **II. Why do people not obey the gospel? A Lack of Knowledge**

Ignorance keeps many people in sin.

Paul recounted his former living as “a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor” as him acting in ignorance and unbelief (1 Timothy 1:13).

Peter preached to a crowd gathered in the Temple, in Acts 3, because they had rejected Jesus, acting in ignorance (v. 17).

Many people do not know the truth because they have not heard God’s message.

Sadly, some people close their eyes to keep from learning.

Jesus said He spoke in parables to accomplish two goals revealed in Matthew 13: The first goal was to reveal God’s truth to the righteous (people who want to do right). The second goal was to conceal God’s truth from the unrighteous (people who do not want to do right).

The first goal was God’s desire to help the righteous.

The second goal was because of man’s desire to reject God.

Jesus said “FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES, OTHERWISE THEY WOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN (to God that is), AND I WOULD HEAL THEM” (Matthew 13:15).

Where there is a lack of knowledge, we are willing to study together.  
Where there is willful rejection, we pray.

### **III. Why do people not obey the gospel? The Pleasures of sin**

The pleasures of sin keep many from obeying the good news.

Listen to Hebrews 11:24-26.

Moses chose ill-treatment with the family of God over passing pleasures of sin. He considered the reproach for the sake of Christ to be greater riches than the total wealth of Egypt.

Why would a man give up pleasures in this life? For the same reason, Moses did, “looking to the reward.”

Although there are rewards experienced in this life for obeying the gospel, the ultimate reward is still being looked toward.

Anyone who enjoys the pleasures of sin now will not receive the reward of eternal life. Some are so deep in sin that they cannot turn from it (2 Peter 2).

Since we do not experience the consequences of sin immediately some continue in sin.

The wise man Solomon put it this way, “Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed quickly, therefore the hearts of the sons of men among them are given fully to do evil.”

Many people have sinned so much that they love sinning.

Jesus said, “This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought (carried out) in God” (John 3:19-21).

Until there is a change in heart, sinners will be “lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God” (2 Timothy 3:4).

Lovers of pleasure need to stop sinning now before it becomes too late.

“Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord” (Acts 3:19).

Only God can help sinners change but the desire to change begins with the sinner having a change of heart; turning to God is a must to receive help with sin.

### **IV. Why do people not obey the gospel? They are Past Feeling**

Some people have gone on sinning until their hearts are hardened and their conscience is seared as with a hot iron (1 Timothy 4:2).

“Do not harden your hearts” toward God (Hebrews 3:7) because it leads to stronger rejection.

Do not become hardened “by the deceitfulness of sin” (Hebrews 3:13).

Sin deceives. Sin lies. Sin entangles. Sin numbs.

Sin will cause a faithful child of God to “fall away from the faith” (1 Timothy 4:1).

Sin will cause a callous whereby feeling is lost and shame is removed.

The quicker a person can recognize sin, acknowledge sin, and turn to God the less likely the person is to become calloused by sin.

Listen to those who warn you about sin, they want to help.

#### **V. Why do people not obey the gospel? The Praise of Men**

John 12:42 acknowledges that “many even of the rulers believed in [Jesus].”

Here again, one would reason that if a person believes in Jesus that person would obey.

“But because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue” (John 12:43).

These Jewish leaders believed Jesus was the Messiah they long-awaited, the Savior they needed, but they would not obey because they loved the praise from men more than the praise from God.

Give up the praise of men. There is greater praise from God.

#### **VI. Why do people not obey the gospel? A Lack of Conviction**

Some people are waiting for a convenient season.

Acts 24:25 tells about a man named Felix who was lacking in conviction, so he did not obey.

Obedience is not a matter of convenience.

One must obey God even if it cost him his life (Luke 12:4 and 5).

The unrighteous will forever be punished in hell after the judgment. This punishment is avoided by obedience to the gospel.

Believe that eternal life rests on the decision to obey the gospel, then by it be motivated to obey.

#### **VII. Why do people not obey the gospel? A Relationship**

Many are unwilling to leave their kin and friends to obey the gospel.

The death of Christ on the cross was to save us from the wrath of God.

The gospel message divides families, setting unbelievers against believers (Luke 12:51-53).

We are left then with a choice, obey the gospel, avoid the wrath of God, and allow the family time to get over their hurt feelings OR obey the family, receive the wrath of God, and allow the family to suffer eternally in hell.

Choose whom **you** will serve. When choosing God, you can take your kin and friends with you by teaching them to be disciples, teaching them the gospel, allowing them to know the truth.

Since we all must choose which wrath to suffer, choose to suffer for what **you** believe, rather than what your kin and friends believe.

#### **VIII. Why do people not obey the gospel? Wanting More Proof**

The wicked always want something else, something more than they have, to convince them to do what is right.

The rich man in Luke 16 was like this; after he died, he found himself experiencing punishment just as the Scriptures teach.

From there he wanted Abraham to send Lazarus from the dead to his father’s house because of his five brothers.

He desired that his brothers be warned so that they would not also come to the place of torment.

“Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’”

The Old Testament writings were not enough for the rich man, so he said, “No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!”

“But [Abraham] said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.’”

As Jeff spoke last week from Luke 11, the crowds were seeking a sign, yet they had all they needed in Jonah, The Queen of the South, and the men of Nineveh.

Through these examples, there is a clear understanding of the need to repent, to be determined and committed to seeking God, and to turn away from darkness to the divine light (Luke 11:29-36).

Jesus is more than enough to convince the person who is wanting to do right.

Those who want a sign or someone from the dead to convince them to obey God will not obey the gospel, even if more proof were to be given.

More proof is not needed; more action toward obedience is needed.

### **Application:**

The gospel message about Jesus Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection is all that we need to believe.

When God’s message is preached honest hearts believe it, believing hearts call on the name of Lord, and those who call on the name of the Lord will be saved.

### **Conclusion:**

Anyone can be saved at any time.

When the gospel is taught it is an expedient time for people to believe and obey.

Believe that God raised Jesus from the dead to forgive the sins of mankind and give mankind His righteousness.

Obey God by turning away from the sin that keeps mankind from God’s righteousness.

Turn to Christ in whom God’s righteousness is found (Romans 10:4).

Confess with the mouth the belief that Jesus is the Lord.

Obey the gospel by calling on the name of the Lord for salvation by being baptized, to wash away past sins (Acts 22:16).

The result will be righteousness and salvation.

Christians can become unwilling to believe and obey.

They can digress in knowledge; become lovers of pleasures or past feeling; love the praise of men; become weakened in conviction; be pulled away by a relationship or seek more proof rather than accept the proof given.

Wayward Christians need to obey the gospel repenting of sin and praying for forgiveness from the Lord (Acts 8:22).

Why do people not obey the gospel? There are many reasons, none more important than the reason which is keeping **you** from obeying.

Please, obey the gospel, now.