

Ron J. Bigalke, Ph.D.
P.O. Box 244, Rincon, GA 31326-0244
(912) 659-4212
ron.bigalke@capitolcom.org

Bad Made Good

CAPITOL BIBLE STUDY

monthly (interim) schedule

*** 1st Tuesday of the month ***

TUESDAY, 3RD OF NOVEMBER

12 NOON in 123 CAP

Capitol Commission (interim) Bible Studies are held the *first* Tuesday of each month at 12 Noon, in accord with the Public Service Commission devotional at 9:55am. The *monthly* Bible study is nonpartisan and non-denominational. We are currently studying the book of Romans, chapter-by-chapter, and verse-by-verse.

I pray that this study will be edifying to you. I labor to serve you and to be a resource for prayer and counsel. Please accept my study in the Word of God, as evidence of my desire to serve you.

– Dr. Ron J. Bigalke, Georgia State Minister, Capitol Commission

Capitol Commission (interim) Bible Study

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Tuesday, 3 November 2015

Romans 10 – “Bad Made Good”

Both doctors and leaders are two primary individuals who regularly must solve an old problem: how to deliver bad news. As often as they order blood work and review scans, medical doctors must be the bearers of unpleasant information. Leaders also regularly encounter the task to deliver bad news, as soon as reasonably possible, and with the appropriate level of discretion. Most people delight in sharing good news, whether it is birth announcements, congratulations, engagements, promotions, etc. Few individuals covet the responsibility that necessitates announcing bad news.

Those who would be faithful to the revelation of God’s Word, the Holy Bible, must also know how to speak “the truth in love” (Eph 4:15) by conveying the initially unpleasant facts of human sinfulness, in order to provide any genuine help to others. The gospel of Jesus Christ is good news, yet one must understand the bad news of human sinfulness and God’s holiness, in order to respond in a manner that will redeem and transform one’s fallen condition.

The theme of the letter to the Roman believers is the good news that “is the power of God for salvation” (Rom 1:16). The beginning chapters of Romans demonstrate how bad news can make good news truly majestic. Romans 3 concluded that the entire world is

guilty before God “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (v. 23). Subsequent to that bad news is the good news of chapters 4 and 5 of Romans, which reveal that all who have sinned can be justified (from sin’s penalty and power) by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

The good news of salvation – by grace through faith – is so wonderful that Romans 6–8 reveal how that gospel truth delivers the believer from both sin and the law, and redeems him/her into a newness of life (cf. Lev 25:25-28; Deut 25:5-10; 1 Cor 6:19-20; Gal 3:10-13; 2 Tim 2:26; Tit 2:14). The Bible will always confront you with the truth, which results in conviction with sometimes painful realities, yet it will never console you with deceit and trickery (cf. Eph 4:14).

Ephesians 4:14-15 – *As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ,*

The book of Romans could have been concluded with the bad news and good news section of the epistle (chs. 1–8), and progressed to chapter 12, which begins to address the practical ramifications of “the power of God for salvation” within the context of life as a member of the body of Christ. However, there is one more bad news and good news portion to address first, and this subject is the emphasis in Romans 9–11.

WITH OBTAINABLE FAVOR

(Rom 10:1-13) The final verses of Romans 9 form an introduction to Romans 10. Scripture indicated in Romans 9:30-33 that Israel “stumbled over the stumbling stone,” the Lord Jesus Christ. The question to arise in response to the nation’s stumbling is why Israel neglected what was so obvious: *that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah*. Even though the good news of God’s grace – through faith in Christ Jesus – was available to them, Israel did not pursue the truth, even though they had access to it. Israel failed to attain the truth because they were ignorant regarding certain spiritual truths.

Israel’s lack of knowledge is the theme that relates chapters 9 and 10 to one another. By prioritizing the sovereignty of God, Romans 9 explains the divine perspective as to why the promises of Israel appear to be unfulfilled. Romans 10 elucidates the human perception, particularly by emphasizing individual responsibility.

The explanation from the human perspective is that Israel did not satisfy God’s requirement. Similar to the Pharisees (and many religious people today), they thought only with regard to righteous works, and could not comprehend a righteousness that is attained by grace through faith. They ignored two crucial spiritual truths: (1) the manner in which God’s righteousness is obtained (10-1-13); and, (2) the response in faith and repentance to the good news of God’s grace when it was proclaimed (10:14-21).



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1st Tuesdays (monthly) @ 12 Noon - 12:45 pm, 123 CAP
lunch provided from ministry partnership by Capitol Commission donors



Enhancing Trust

Verses 1-4 indicate that Israel violated the exact principles that were so thoroughly clarified in chapters 1—8 of Romans. Israel believed their religious fervor would guarantee the reception of God's favor (cf. 2:17-29), yet zeal is dangerous unless it is properly directed and informed. God's favor is gained only by faith (cf. 3:20).

The futility of attaining God's favor *by earthly means* is stated in Romans 10:4. Christ Jesus is the goal of life for those who would realize God's blessing (cf. Phil 3:7-14). The contrast between two principles – “knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish [your] own” and “the righteousness based on faith” – is further explained in verses 5-13. “Seeking to establish [one's] own righteousness” is a matter of doing, whereas righteousness by faith does not attempt to accomplish the impossible.

. . . ZEAL IS DANGEROUS UNLESS IT IS PROPERLY DIRECTED AND INFORMED. . . PURSUING SPIRITUAL ENDS BY EARTHLY MEANS ALWAYS LEADS TO FAILING AND STUMBLING.

Pursuing spiritual ends by earthly means always leads to failing and stumbling. Is there any work in which you are engaged today that makes you vulnerable to failure because your trust in God is lacking? Depending upon the power of God in your life and your communities (*including the Capitol community*) will always lead to God's blessing (as a result of the finished work of Christ Jesus).

Romans 10:13 – *for “WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.”*

Calling upon God does not consist in the impossible, that is, ascending into heaven “to bring Christ down” (as though He had never been incarnated), nor is it a matter of descending into the abyss (as though Christ had never been resurrected). God's favor is near – accessible, easily obtained, and intelligible – and can be expressed in familiar conversation (“with your mouth”), in addition to being readily understood in the mind (“in your heart”).

WITH OUTSTRETCHED HANDS

(Rom 10:14-21) Scripture declares sincerely and truly that anyone who calls upon the name of the Lord God will be saved. One may object to that assertion by claiming, “Surely they have never heard, have they?” Perhaps the reason why the gospel was ignored when it was universally proclaimed is that not all heard. When one considers the Old Testament, such an assertion is deemed wrong.

Jeremiah 5:21 – *Now hear this, O foolish people, who have eyes but do not see; who have ears but do not hear.*

For someone to call upon the name of the Lord, a person must first hear the message of salvation. “So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ” (Rom 10:17). Only when people hear the good news of salvation, can they respond with faith and repentance. To hear that proclamation of truth, someone must be sent to declare the Word of God, as contained in the Holy Bible. God uses people with “lovely feet” to “bring good news of happiness” by announcing salvation (Isa 52:7).

The question of verse 18 indicates the problem for some, “Surely they have never heard, have they?” Scripture answers most definitely and unambiguously: “Indeed they have.” With a series of quotations from the Old Testament, the Bible indicates that many had heard the gospel. The truth was proclaimed. The problem is that those who heard did not heed the proclamation of truth (cf. Isa 6:10; Jer 5:21). God outstretched his hands to welcome those with a broken and contrite heart, yet the majority of the people were disobedient and obstinate.

Spiritual pride results in disobedience and obstinacy, which was especially characteristic of the nation of Israel, even until the time that the Apostle Paul wrote the book of Romans. During the time of the prophet Isaiah, the leaders of Israel believed they were too holy to associate with others (Isa 65:5), who they deemed the sinners of their era. The same attitude was prevalent even during the earthly ministry of Jesus (cf. Matt 9:11; Luke 7:39; 18:9-12).

How easy would it be to express the same sin (*viz.* spiritual pride) as those in the Old Testament times and those people throughout Jesus' ministry, who found God outstretching his hands to so-called “lesser” groups to accomplish his purposes? Even today, God outstretches his hands to those deemed “lesser,” as they call upon Him through faith in Christ (cf. Jas 4:6-10). Praise God that He never rescinds his outstretched hands toward the one who responds to his gospel of salvation!

Thank you for allowing Capitol Commission the nobility to provide Bible studies to you. If you have any questions, please talk with us, or contact by email or phone.

About Capitol Commission

The mission of Capitol Commission is to accomplish the Great Commission in the capitol arena. Scripture calls the church to pray for the salvation of our leaders, resulting in them having knowledge of the truth (1 Tim 2:1-4). As churches are faithful in prayer and proclaiming the gospel of God's grace, our society and government *will be impacted*. Capitol Commission, in partnership with the church, is committed to making disciples of Jesus Christ and promoting the biblical mandate to pray for those in authority in the Capitol communities throughout the United States and the world.

Romans 10-14-15 affirms, “How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher? How will they preach unless they are sent. . . ?” Please notice the reverse progression. If we desire anyone, including our government leaders, to (5) *call* upon the Lord and to seek Him and his Word for life decisions, they must prior to that (4) *believe* in Him, which means they must previously have (3) *heard* the Word of God, which means prior to that someone needs to (2) *preach* to them, which requires that others have first (1) *sent* someone to preach.

Capitol Commission is committed to the second part: *preaching* (proclaiming) the good news of salvation. Of course, that cannot occur without someone doing the first part: *sending*. All funding and prayer for this work comes from people who want the light of the gospel of God's grace brought into our State Capitol. As you do #1 and we do #2, we can rejoice together as the Lord accomplishes in the Capitol what only He can produce in someone: #3, #4, and #5. What an exciting co-mission! Please join us in this ministry!

NEXT CAPITOL COMMISSION (INTERIM) BIBLE STUDY:
Tuesday, 1st of December @ 12 Noon in 123 CAP
(always the 1st Tuesday of each month, during interim)