



Part 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.

5 For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them. 6 But the righteousness based on faith says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' " (that is, to bring Christ down) 7 "or 'Who will descend into the abyss?' " (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). 8 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); 9 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."

Many of you probably saw [this video](#) which made the rounds on facebook where Victoria Osteen made the following proclamation.

I just want to encourage every one of us to realize when we obey God, we're not doing it for God. I mean, that's one way to look at it. We're doing it for ourselves, because God takes pleasure when we're happy. That's the thing that gives Him the greatest joy this morning.

So, I want you to know this morning-Just do good for your own self. Do good because God wants you to be happy. When you come to church, when you worship Him, you're not doing it for God really. You're doing it for yourself, because that's what makes God happy. Amen?¹

This morning we are in part four of our miniseries called *Proclamation*. What Victoria Osteen did was most definitely a proclamation. She meant what she said and said what she meant. Unfortunately, she was dead wrong.

Kellyn is taking a government class at TC and on her first day experienced more liberal bias than Ryan did during his entire freshman year. This past week her professor made mention of "Saul of Tarsus" stating that Saul did not allow women to vote. This too was a proclamation of this man's beliefs and like Mrs. Osteen, he was dead wrong.

A proclamation does not have to be in the form of a presidential press conference or a declaration from Congress. A proclamation is a simple declaration of truth. As I said last week, most of these occur over the back fence with your neighbor and at lunch with your coworkers. A simple statement of truth. And a gospel proclamation is a simple statement of gospel truth.

But from where do we get our proclamation? "Well from the Bible, of course" you are thinking to yourself. But where in the Bible is the gospel proclamation found? We tend to think that the gospel is found in the New Testament. And it is. But we make this unnecessary and incorrect division between the Old Testament and the New Testament. We think that the Old Testament is filled with law, judgment and bad news. We feel like there is a dark cloud of gloom and sin hanging over the Old Testament. But the New Testament opens up a brand new chapter and is spilling over with grace, forgiveness, good news. That is a caricature that we should not carry with us. Obviously, there is quite a difference between the Old and New Testament but we should also see the gospel being proclaimed all throughout its pages. This is what I want you to see this morning.

First, let me remind you of where we have been so far in this series.

- 1. Proclaim on your knees-***my prayer to God for them is that they may be saved*
- 2. Proclaim out of your heart's desire-***my hearts desire for them is that they may be saved.*
- 3. Proclaim with clarity-***they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge*
- 4. Proclaim with the need for submission-***they did not submit to God's righteousness*

And then this morning's outline begins with point number five.

5. Proclaim from history- *For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame."*

I started with verse eleven because it a direct quote from Isaiah 28. And Paul quoted it twice--at the end of chapter nine and here in the middle of chapter ten, so it must be important. This is a one verse summary of the gospel and it's found where? In the Old Testament. And this is just one of countless such verses. That's why this bullet point is called "Proclaim from history" because I want you to see that the gospel was proclaimed throughout history. It was fulfilled in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, but it was announced continually in the Old Testament. And what is the Old Testament except human history. It's our history. It's His Story, as we often say.

Appropriately, Paul began with Moses.

5 For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them. "Aha!", we think when we read this. "The Old Testament

really IS all about the law." It is about the law, for certain and this part is about failure to keep the law. Paul was quoting from Leviticus 18:5. *You shall therefore keep my statutes and my rules; if a person does them, he shall live by them: I am the LORD.*

There are two parts to this section from Moses.

1. The requirement of obedience-*You shall therefore keep my statutes and my rules*
2. The promise of life-*if a person does them, he shall live by them: I am the LORD.*

We are required to keep the law for it is God's standard of righteousness. This is, as Paul rightly states, "righteousness based on the law." And IF we keep the whole law, it promises to bring us life. But we know from real life and from Scripture that this is well beyond our reach. In chapter seven, Paul wrote, *The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me* (Romans 7:10). There you go. The commandment *did* promise life but because of our sinful nature, all that it can do is prove death to us. But listen--that doesn't negate the promise, does it? The promise was still true, but impossible on our own. But it still applies. We must obey the law and we must obey it perfectly. God's standard does not and cannot change. God never says, "Oh, wait a minute. No one can reach this standard so why don't we lower the bar a bit and let some folks in?"

It's like the standards in the military. In order to advance to a training batallion, male soldiers must complete 20 push-ups but female soldiers only need to be able to complete 6 push-ups. That's OK for pushups, but listen to these statistics for hand grenades. "Comprehensive tests at Parris Island in 1987 and 1990 found that 45% of female Marines could not throw a live grenade safely beyond the 15 meter bursting radius.² So what was the solution to this dilemma? The females weren't required to throw a hand grenade 15 meters in order to advance. They lowered the standard. This is not a slight against women but it is just the reality of military training.

But God doesn't lower his standard of righteousness. It remains the same in the Old and New Testament. But we are given a new way to meet this standard. The answer is found back in verse four. *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.* Christ completed the law. He fulfilled the law and he did so not just by dying in our place, but also by perfectly obeying the law. Jesus never sinned so his life was perfect. If he had not been perfect, then his death would have been meaningless to us. Christ completes the law, not so much through his death and resurrection, but through his perfect obedience to the law.

So to use the illustration of the hand grenades, it's as if you and I were lobbing hand grenades but can only throw them five feet. Can you see how that would turn out? We lob a grenade and it blows us sky high. We lob another grenade and it blows us to bits. Actually, that's not too far off from the way life feels sometimes, is it? It feels like bombs are blowing up in our face every day. But in this case, the explosions are eternally fatal. We *must* throw the grenades beyond the safe distance but we are not capable of doing so.

So along comes Jesus and he watches us throw the grenade five feet and blow up and says, "Would you like some help with that?" Do you see, God does not change his standard of righteousness but he did send someone who can fulfill his righteous standard. Christ is the end of the law to whom? "To everyone who believes." There is the first mention of faith in this chapter

and it continues in verse six. *But the righteousness based on faith says, "Do not say in your heart..."*

Let me stop right there and point out something. Please note that this is a comparison between verse five and verse six.

5 For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law

6 But the righteousness based on faith says

So at first glance, this looks like a classic battle between the Old and New Testament, right? The Old Testament has the righteousness based on the law and the New Testament rescues with righteousness based on faith. But the problem with is the fact that Paul proceeded to explain righteousness by faith by quoting from three different *Old Testament* passages. So this is not Old vs. New but law vs. grace. But that's not to say that the law is bad. Paul makes it very clear in this letter to the Romans that "the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good" (Romans 7:12). The law is good and the law demonstrates our sin, which is also good. We can't throw eternally fatal grenades beyond the kill zone.

The first OT quote is just a phrase. "Do not say in your heart." This is lifted from Deuteronomy 9:4. *"Do not say in your heart. He only quoted from the first part of this but the context is really important. "Do not say in your heart. after the LORD your God has thrust them out before you, 'It is because of my righteousness that the LORD has brought me in to possess this land,' whereas it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is driving them out before you.*

Now catch this. If the Israelites were to have any success in gaining the Promised Land, it was not going to be due to their own righteousness. God did not want them to get into the Promised Land and start patting themselves on the back saying, "God has rewarded our good works by giving us this land of milk and honey. Good for us!" This declaration from the Lord wipes out any possibility of good works, of achieving God's favor through their own personal righteousness, because they didn't *have* any personal righteousness! So with this short phrase, Paul wanted his readers to land on this section of Deuteronomy 9 so that they could again understand the futility of good works.

Now here's the big contrast.

6 But the righteousness based on faith says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' " (that is, to bring Christ down) 7 "or 'Who will descend into the abyss?' " (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).

Before we jump into the meaning of this section, we first have to see its Old Testament origin. Remember that before his miraculous conversion, Paul was a Pharisee. He was an expert in the Law. he knew his Scriptures--what we now call the Old Testament--forward and backward. Can you imagine the "aha" moments he must have had? He had all of this immense foundation in the Old Testament but almost no true understanding. But after his conversion, through the Holy Spirit, all of this understanding would have begun to trickle into his heart and mind. Maybe they came to him in large chunks or in lots of little pieces or as a combination of large and small

chunks. But either way, he started with the foundation of the Old Testament then reinterpreted all of his understanding based upon these gospel truths.

You and I are going the opposite direction, aren't we? Unless you grew up as an Orthodox Jew, you learned your Bible through the New Testament and then work backwards. You and I work from front to back but Paul worked from back to front, even though there was no front; there was no New Testament yet!

Paul pulled from Deut. 30.

“For this commandment that I command you today is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. **12** It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ **13** Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ (Deut. 30:11-13)

Doesn't that sound familiar? This is the confusing part of this passage that will soon be better understood now that we see its origin in Deuteronomy. Here's how Paul used the two passages from Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy	Romans
Do not say in your heart (9:4)	Do not say in your heart (10:6)
It is not in heaven, that you should say, Who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ (30:12)	‘Who will ascend into heaven?’ ” (that is, to bring Christ down)
Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ (30:13)	‘Who will descend into the abyss?’ ” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).
But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it. (30:14)	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)

I admit, when I read this section of chapter ten by itself, it's a bit fuzzy to me. What is all of this stuff about ascending into heaven and descending into the abyss. I realize that Paul can be hard to understand at times, but it seems to just be stuck in there without a context. Why not just skip this part and get right to important stuff. After all, what's really important is verse nine, right? *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.* Why should we get bogged down into ascending and descending when the real message is this message of salvation?

But once you see that Paul is pulling from Moses and Deuteronomy, it makes a lot of sense. Moses was saying Listen, you don't have to go to the ends of the earth to know God's commandments and to know his truth. It's not a big mystery, as if you need to somehow ascend into heaven, find it and bring it home with you. You don't have to go to the far end of the sea or dive into its depths to find God's truth.

You hear of these people who travel the world looking for truth. they ascend to peaks of Tibetan mountains to commune with the Buddhist monks. They say they are seeking truth but they really aren't. God brought his truth directly to the Israelites and he has brought his truth directly to us.

But notice how Paul applied this passage from Moses. *'Who will ascend into heaven?'* ” (that is, to bring Christ down) 7 *“or 'Who will descend into the abyss?'* ” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). He applied it directly to Christ. In other words, seeking God's commandments is the same thing as seeking God's truth. And why don't we have to ascend into heaven to bring Christ down? Because he already came in human flesh. And why don't we need to bring Christ up from the dead? Because the Father already raised him from the dead.

Then Paul takes it a step further. *But what does it say?* The "it" to which Paul is referring is the passage in Deuteronomy 30. What does it say? Do you remember? I'll tell you. "It" says, *“The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart”* The he applied the word of God's commandments in the Old Testament to the gospel message, (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim)

Let me give you another chart so you can see the comparison. The first question he asked is related to the first part of the gospel message. Christ came to earth as what? He came as sovereign Lord.

Old Testament & Interpretation	Gospel Proclamation
'Who will ascend into heaven?' ” (that is, to bring Christ down)	<i>if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord</i> LORDSHIP
'Who will descend into the abyss?' ” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).	<i>and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead,</i> RESURRECTION

Let me remind you of some of the implications of Jesus being Lord that we covered last week.

1. It means that there is only one Lord.
2. It means that Jesus is God.
3. The confession that "Jesus is Lord" means that must give up any pursuit of seeking my own righteousness.
4. It means that we are submitting to the righteousness of God and submitting to God himself.

Let me add a fifth implication.

5. It means that Jesus is the fulfillment of Old Testament law. Again, this goes back to verse 4. *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.*

So the first question is a Lordship matter. Christ did come down from heaven and he came as Lord. And the second question relates to the resurrection. So do you see what Paul did with Moses? He told us that Christ was the fulfillment of the Law and then he used this Deuteronomy passage to show us. In other words. Could we even say that Moses was preaching the gospel?

This becomes more clear when we get to verse 13. *For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”* Do you see that this verse is in quotation marks? Do you know why it is?

It's not because Paul was speaking it, but because he was quoting it. It is a direct quote from Joel 2:32. So does that mean that anyone who called on the name of the Lord under the old covenant, in Old Testament times could get saved just as can today? Absolutely! Salvation was always by faith. How was Abraham saved? By faith. How was Moses, the man who wrote Old Testament saved? By faith? How was David saved? By faith.

So it was the most natural thing in the world for Peter to have lifted this quote from the prophet Joel in his sermon on the day of Pentecost. *For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."* And what happened next? 3000 people called on the name of the Lord and got saved.

So do I expect you to be able to explain all of the details of this passage to an unbeliever? I'm not sure you would want to. But here's what I want you to take form this. The gospel of Jesus Christ, the greatest news to ever be proclaimed, is rooted in history. It has always been true. It was no an afterthought in God's mind. I want that to give you even greater confidence in the message so that you will be more likely to proclaim it.

Do you know what our real problem is? We have a old vs. new problem. It's not that we have failed to see the gospel in the Old Testament vs. seeing in the New Testament, although that much is true. The old vs. new problem that we have is that the gospel itself has become "old" news to us. The good news is old news. Jesus died to forgive our sins. We say it like we're reading the weather report.

You may have heard the old saying that sharing the gospel is as simple as one beggar telling another where he found food. That might work as long as there is plenty of food, but if food is scarce, there ain't no way that beggar is gonna tell the other beggar where he found food. The source of his food will become a secret stash just for him. he can't afford to share it with others. It's all just for him and only him.

This is how we treat the gospel--like it's our secret stash and there isn't enough to go around. We hide it from others and keep it to ourselves. It is our and our alone. But we need to understand that:

- the gospel infinite
- the gospel is glorious
- the gospel is necessary
- the gospel is transforming

But if you do not see the gospel as infinite, glorious, necessary and transforming, then you almost certainly will not proclaim it. The power and motivation for sharing the gospel with others is founded on our view and experience of God. If God and the cross looms larger in your heart and mind, then proclaiming his truth will flow much more naturally.

Rich Maurer
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¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=00-6OyXVA0M>

² <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/congress/3-17-98donnelly.htm>