

Warning Signs

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[0 : 00] Turn on your bravles, if you would, with me to Romans chapter 9. How many of you take great care of your vehicles?

! Wow! There's like one, two, hands up, three, four, five.

The rest of y'all have a problem, man. You can take care of those cars. How many of you ignore the check engine light when it comes on? There's some very honest people in here.

Why are they all female? I'm just kidding. Listen, I don't want to make half of you mad at me just like that. There's a reason that those lights are there.

They're not just pretty lights for you to look at. They're there for a purpose. They're not there to annoy you. They're there to keep the car from destroying itself.

[1 : 12] Okay? So here they are. Some of the most common ones. Does everybody know what these mean? Top one, the yellow one here, what is that? Check engine light.

Then the next one down? Oil. Right. And then the next one? Battery. There we go. All right. So you know better. You just don't pay attention to them. All right. Can't claim ignorance.

Well, every car built today has these lights. They might be varying in colors and such, but they all have these lights.

The most dangerous thing you can do is to ignore them. In Romans chapter 9 and into Romans chapter 10, Paul is giving us some warning lights or some warning signs.

We're going to look at three of them today. All right? So let's look at what Paul's looking at.

Remember, this is the church in Rome. It was split up into different house churches.

[2 : 12] They had had an established church going in Rome. This was the very, very early days of the church. Today's world, we got churches all over the place. Right? They weren't as common back then. This was the early days after Christ had risen from the dead and the church is just getting its feet under it.

And the church in Rome was full of both Jews and Gentiles until the Edict of Claudius. And the emperor of Rome kicked all the Jewish people out of Rome, including the Christians.

So they had to leave. And the church was reduced to only Gentiles, non-Jews. Right? So then during this time, what happened to all the Jewish customs and traditions that the Jewish Christians had grown up with before turning to Jesus Christ?

And then even after faith in Christ, they kept their Jewish traditions alive, believing this is what God wanted them to do. Well, when they left the church, the Gentile Christians didn't see the point for the Jewish traditions and customs.

So they stopped doing all these things. And their faith in Jesus alone was enough. So Paul refers to them as you have stronger faith because you don't need these other things.

[3 : 23] And then he says the Jewish Christians then, he's calling them weaker in the sense that they feel the need to keep all these Jewish customs and law-abiding alive along with their faith in Christ.

So he's referring to them as such throughout this passage. And then in Romans chapter 9, let's look at verse 30. Would you stand with me for the reading of God's word?

What shall we say then? That Gentiles who did not pursue righteousness have obtained it. A righteousness that is by faith.

But the people of Israel who pursued the law as the way of righteousness have not attained their goal. Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith, but as if it were by works.

We pause real quick. Not saying they believed it was by works, that their faith came by works, but they pursued it as if it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone.

[4 : 36] Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved.

For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. You may be seated. We're going to continue on into chapter 10. We're going to go from verse 30 of chapter 9 all the way into verse 21 of chapter 10.

As we go through Romans, we're not able to exhaustively cover the entire book and every little piece. There's so much you could spend about five years in Romans and probably not exhaust everything that Paul is teaching in that book.

But we are going to stretch this out. We're going to take the next several months. We might even break for other series at different times and then come back to our study in Romans. Because this is arguably Paul's most influential letter and the things that he's teaching in here are especially relevant today.

So warning sign number one is this. Relying on good works instead of faith. Here we go. Relying on good works instead of faith.

[5 : 50] I want to back up for a minute. I want to go back to those check engine lights. Let me tell you a story of something that happened in Atlanta, Georgia when a lady was buying a used car.

She found it online. She went to a small car dealership, independently owned. It wasn't a licensed Honda dealership or Chevy dealership or whatever.

It was just an independently owned private small dealership in the Atlanta area. And she went in and she looked at the car. Everything looked great. There were no warning lights on on the dashboard.

Everything looked good. The car was in good shape. She bought it. She took it home and just in a few days the car started having all kinds of mechanical problems. What happened?

She took it in to a mechanic and he realized that what they had done at the car dealership was they had taken off the cover of the instrument panel and they had put black electrician's tape over the warning lights underneath.

[6 : 54] So the warning lights were on but they weren't visible. Listen, let me make a little application here.

Sometimes in a church, warning lights can be on but not always the most visible because we cover them up with different things.

We need to pay especially close attention to Paul's warning signs here in Romans 9 and 10. You can say, I already know these things.

I already know that faith, salvation is from faith in Christ and not by our good works. Maybe you're having a hard time with that. We're going to show you from the scriptures what God has to say about it.

But even if you already know that and you've come to terms with that, what Paul is saying is these Jewish Christians knew that too. They were having a hard time living by it.

[7 : 51] And some of their faith was being undermined by their desire for good works. So let's look at this. Warning sign number one, relying on good works instead of faith.

Go to Deuteronomy chapter 9 if you would. We're going to go back and forth between Deuteronomy and Romans. Why? Because Paul quotes Deuteronomy quite a bit in this passage.

Isn't that interesting? When Jesus or Paul or one of the New Testament writers goes back and quotes the Old Testament writers. So you can't say, man, I love the New Testament.

I'm not crazy about the Old Testament. Jesus was, okay? So you've got to embrace the Torah. You've got to embrace the Old Testament that God included for us as we see the New Testament writers do so.

The first warning sign is trying to earn a right standing with God but by your own behavior. This is either before or after salvation. Some of you in a Baptist church, we believe that salvation is by what?

[8 : 58] Grace through faith. God's grace shown to us, activated by our faith in him. God's grace alone was not enough.

We need faith. Our faith alone is not enough. We need God's grace. We need both. We need salvation by grace through faith. Paul looks at his fellow Israelites.

And he sees that they have an incredible passion for God. If you know anything about growing up in the Jewish religion, you would start very, very early in memorizing big passages of the Torah.

Everyone would go to the same rabbi school. Everyone would go to the same religious education. That's the schooling that they received. It was based in the Torah, the first five books of the Old Testament.

They were intense. They were committed to it. But their zeal had blinded them. Their passion had blinded them. So even though many of these placed their faith in Jesus, they believed that he was the promised Messiah, they still held on to this way that they had brought up with.

[10:09] How many of you realize that some of the things that you learned growing up, you see coming out in yourself later in life? How many of you find yourself acting more like your parents than you ever thought you would?

Me too. I'll say things and like, man, that sounds just like my dad. It's because it's learned behavior. We get that ingrained into us.

Sometimes it's a good thing. Sometimes we're like, man, I swore I'd never do that. And here I am. But we see that with the Israelites. It's hard to divorce themselves from what they had been brought up in.

This culture, this religious culture that they had brought up in. And they're so busy trying to keep the traditional rules to prove they are righteous. They ran right past the Messiah himself.

Some of them stopped and saw and embraced. They still had a hard time having faith alone in Christ. Moses explicitly warned Israel about this exact same brand of pride.

[11:13] Because, by the way, it is pride even before the Israelites ever set foot in the promised land. If you're thinking about the days when they were wandering through the desert. And in Deuteronomy chapter 9 and verse 4, he says this.

Do not say. I'm sorry. That's in Romans 10 verse 6. He says, do not say in your heart. He's quoting Deuteronomy 9.4. After the Lord your God has driven them out before you, do not say in your heart. Here it is. It is because of my righteousness that the Lord has brought me here to take possession of this land. Did you catch that? It is because of my righteousness that the Lord has brought me here to take possession of this promised land.

That was the attitude of many of the children of Israel back then. And Moses warned them against that before Christ. Then Christ comes, puts an end to any kind of argument for pride or self-righteousness.

And Paul sees the same kind of attitude popping up in the church in Rome. And he says, I'm going to warn you just like Moses warned them back in the desert.

[12:14] I'm going to warn you. Do not say that your righteousness is what has brought you to this place of God's forgiveness and God's grace. It's God's grace alone through your faith.

Moses told the people of Israel from the very beginning, you're not getting into the promised land because you are better, holier than anybody else. It's because of God's grace to you.

God's favor. God's guidance. God's sovereign promise to you. His covenant with you. And that's what we are under.

We're under God's covenant. God's promise. Remember how we looked before? I don't believe at all in replacement theology. That the church that we see across the world now today as followers of Jesus, that it has replaced God's promise to the Israelites.

I see it as the expansion of God's covenant with Israel. And Paul seems to emphasize that here in Romans 11. And now we're on to 9 and 10.

[13:17] Christ is the end of the law for everyone who believes. When we treat our religion like a moral checklist to prove we are good people, Jesus stops being our foundation and he becomes a stumbling stone.

So the question is, is Jesus your cornerstone, your foundation on which you're building, or is he your stumbling stone? Does his grace and his eradicating, his putting a stop to your pride and ego, is that a stumbling stone that you're tripping over?

Or is that the very cornerstone on which you're resting your faith? I loved. And I didn't ask them to sing the song Cornerstone this morning, but it went along perfectly with this passage.

Christ alone, cornerstone. The weak are made strong. Those weak Christians that Paul's talking to, they can become strong in the Savior's love, not in their adherence to the law, but in the Savior's love.

They become strong again. Warning sign number two. Setting your own standards for salvation. This is closely linked to warning sign one, relying on good works instead of faith.

[14 : 34] But there is a little distinction here. Setting your own standards for salvation. Look back at Romans 10 again. We were in chapter 9. Now go with me back to Romans 10.

Moses writes in verse 5. Moses writes about the righteousness that comes from the law. The person who does these things will live by them. But the righteousness that is by faith says, do not say in your heart who will ascend into heaven, that is to bring Christ down, or who will descend into the deep, that is to bring Christ up from the dead.

But what does it say? The word is near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart. That is the message concerning faith that we proclaim. If you declare with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and you believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be, what's that word? Saved. Salvation. Salvation from what? Salvation from godlessness. Salvation with being apart from God.

Salvation from being strangers from God. Salvation from being lost in the darkness of being without God.

[15 : 48] That is what we're saved from. Both in the present and for all of eternity. We can be saved from this. And he gives you an absolute declaration of how.

How to achieve this. The plain truth. Something went wrong. Please try again. Wow. I don't know if anybody heard that. My iPad started going crazy.

That's when it's better to have a notebook instead of an iPad. It doesn't talk back to you. All right. Here we go. Paul quoted in this passage that we just read. He quoted Deuteronomy again.

And we've got it up here on the screen. Here we go. Deuteronomy 30 and verse 14. The word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it.

In Deuteronomy chapter 30 verses 11 through 14. Moses is teaching us that the word is not far off. You don't have to go up to heaven. You don't have to go across the sea to find the word of God.

[16 : 54] It's there with us. It's in our mouths and in our hearts. And then Paul draws this again from Deuteronomy. I don't know if Paul had been reading Deuteronomy right before he wrote this letter.

But the Holy Spirit guided him to include all this in his writing to the Roman church. And he says the word is near you.

In your mouth and in your heart. And then he links that to that is exactly how you are saved. That's how you receive the spirit of God.

That's how you receive forgiveness of your sins. That's how you receive right standing with God. Number one. Who is the word of God?

Y'all looking at me. Who is the word of God? Jesus. Jesus Christ is the word of God. He is the living word of God. We have written words of God in this book that we hold so dear.

[17 : 59] Jesus is the living word. So when we buy the written word of God. Do we know what that is? Is that me or?

Hang on. I remember what I did last time and it fixed it. We're just going to do it again here. Just turn that thing off and we are good now.

All right. Sorry for the. Listen. Satan doesn't like this stuff and he's going to try to fight against it with as much as he can. He doesn't like teaching about how to be saved from your sins. So this is how you do it.

But it's always been the way. That the word is in your mouth and in your heart. And so when Paul writes in Romans 10 and verse 9. That if you declare with your mouth that Jesus is Lord.

That is the outward expression of an inner faith that God has born in your heart. Because then you believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead. You will be saved.

[19 : 01] It's how they were saved in the Old Testament. It's how they're saved in the New Testament. Faith in God. They had faith before that the Messiah would come. And that he would die according to the writings of Isaiah and the prophets.

And that he would be raised. And then he came. And he died. And he was raised from the dead.

And if you place your faith in Jesus who said. Yes I am God. If you've seen me.

You've seen the Father. We are one. And I will go to the cross. And I will break the power of darkness that holds you. Binds you.

Imprisons you. And then I will rise from the dead. And I will bring you back into right standing with God. But only if you have faith in me.

Many will choose not to. Many will choose not to have faith. You know them. You see them. Sometimes they're sitting in church. It's people that.

[20 : 04] Want to have faith in God. But they can't get past. They keep stumbling over. Their faith in their own good works. Faith in themselves.

And I think that's part of what Paul's saying here. Jesus is either the cornerstone of your faith. Or he's the stumbling stone that you just can't get past.

To have faith. So my question for you. Is what kind of faith do you have? Is it faith in yourself? Or is it faith in Christ?

Don't miss the context of Deuteronomy 30. That Paul's quoting from. Here in Romans 10. Moses speaks these words right after predicting that Israel will fail. They will break the covenant.

They will end up in exile. They will suffer the consequences of their lack of faith in God.

Deuteronomy 30 is what happens. It's about what happens after failure. God promises that he will circumcise their hearts.

[21 : 07] Which is really interesting. Because circumcision. As weird as that sounds. Everybody know what circumcision is? Right? It's what happens to a baby. Boy. Specifically. After he's born.

In the hospital. They wait a few days. And then take care of it. Kids. If you don't know what that is. Ask your parents after. Okay? Today it's common accepted practice.

Most people do it. Back then. It was uniquely an Israelite thing. Because God knew. That it was the healthiest practice. So he commanded his people to do it.

So if you were circumcised. You were a Jew. Back then. In the Old Testament. But circumcision then became a distinguishing mark. In the early church. Of if you're a follower of Christ or not.

They took that Old Testament commandment. And linked it to faith in Christ. They're adding on.

These extra requirements or qualifications. Well if you adult men.

[22 : 05] Really want to follow Jesus. Then you'll go be circumcised as adults. Gentile men. And I'm like. Ouch.

Ouch. Really? That's. What? Why? Peter and Paul went back and forth on this. With each other. But listen. God actually gave us a clue.

Back then in Deuteronomy. That the circumcision. Was more about their hearts. And then Paul's using that. As an illustration to say.

Today. These requirements. Were always about faith. From the heart. In God. Nobody else is doing this weird circumcision thing. Why do we have to do it? Well because God knows best.

And we put our faith in him. But now in today's world. He's not requiring that. Because the perfect picture of God has come. Back then in the Old Testament.

[23 : 03] They were seeing through a glass. Very darkly. They were looking ahead. To someone who had not come yet. Jesus Christ. Christ. But now we get to look back. At the perfect picture of God. In the face of Jesus.

And we get to see what he did. See who he was. See how he lived. See how he died. What he taught. And then how he predicted his own death. And resurrection. And then he lived out. His own death. And resurrection. And we get to have faith in that.

So he says look. Circumcision is a requirement. To have faith in God. It's a healthy practice. But that's not binding you anymore.

So the application is. Jesus already did. The heavy lifting for us. He came in the incarnation. And he came up.

In the resurrection. Salvation is simple. It is near. It is accessible to all of us. Jew or Gentile. Who confesses with their mouth. And believes in their heart.

[24 : 00] That Jesus is Lord. And we have to stop judging one another. Based on our unwritten traditions. Standards. And realize that the ground.

At the foot of the cross. Is level. All of us have the same standing. Before God. Jew. Gentile. Circumcised.

Uncircumcised. White. Black. Hispanic. Asian. Rich. Poor. In between. Most of us are probably in between. Somewhere in this room. Maybe more on the poor side.

I don't know. Real talk right. The ground is level. Doesn't matter what your status is. God approaches us all the same way. We are all saved.

The same way. Everything else in this world is not equal. It's never going to be ultimately fair. We should strive for justice. In this world. But things are always going to be unjust.

[24 : 56] Until King Jesus rules over all. For the rest of eternity. And actualizes his kingdom on this earth. And reigns in person.

Until that day. Unjustice is going to be everywhere. Except at the foot of the cross. When we stand at the foot of the cross. And we fall to our knees.

And say God forgive me. For I am a sinner. I have faith in you. Then he takes all of us right there. He takes us all. Based on his standards of salvation.

Do you have a pulse? And do you have faith? Then you can be saved. Warning sign number three. We're almost done. Keeping the gospel to yourself.

Warning sign number three. That Paul was seeing in this church. And had to address. Was keeping the gospel to yourself. Look again in Romans 10. And down in verse 14. Romans 10.

[25 : 56] 14. How then can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how then can they believe in the one whom they have not heard? And whom. How then can they hear without someone preaching to them?

And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? You see the progression here? How is anybody calling the name of Jesus with their mouth and believe in their heart. If they haven't yet believed.

How are they going to call him with their mouth. If they haven't yet believed in him in their heart.

And then how are they going to believe in him in their heart. If they haven't yet heard of him. How are they going to hear about him. Without somebody telling them. Or preaching to them.

And then how are they going to preach. Unless somebody sends out the preacher. Trains up. In the word of God. Trains up in the doctrine. The faith of Christ. And then sends them out to go preach.

That's what churches are here for. We are the vehicles for sending out. We are all sent out. And Isaiah wrote about that. And Paul quotes it here. But concerning Israel he says.

[26 : 56] Well I'm sorry. But back up. As it is written. How beautiful are the feet of those. Who bring good news. And then further he says. But concerning Israel. He says all day long. I have held out my hands to a disobedient.

And contrary people. The final warning sign. Is a church that sits in silence. While the world around them. Is lost. Paul chains together Isaiah 52.

And then he jumps ahead to Isaiah 65. To show the heart of God. God is standing like a grieving parent. With his hands stretched out all day long.

Wanting people to come to him. But people cannot call on a savior. Of whom they've never heard. So God's chosen strategy. Is to keep.

His people. With their fires burning hot. Keep it with their light shining brightly. His chosen strategy.

[27 : 56] Is not sending down angels in the sky. To sing of his. Salvation anymore. That was the signal of his birth. Right. He's not doing that anymore. Now he has a people.

On the ground. On the ground. Who live among the lost. Because we were lost. Until he found us. We were.

Doomed. Until he rescued us. It's the people. Sitting. In our pews. The message.

Requires. Messengers. Can we say this together? The message. Requires. Messengers. Let's try to get everybody ready. The message.

Requires. Messengers. Who are the messengers. Supposed to be. You and me. We are the messengers. So how.

[28 : 52] Frequently. Has the message. Escaped your lips. Recently. How often. Does the message. Escape my lips. These days. Over summer break.

Young people. What are we doing. About the message. Of Jesus. When school resumes. And every. Everything happens. Starts back up again.

Athletics. And band. And all the extracurriculars. And all the study. And everything going on. How often. Does the message. Find its way. Into our daily lives. The message.

Requires. Messengers. Isaiah wrote about it. He said. How beautiful. Are the feet. Of those. Who bring good news. I don't normally. Think of feet. As very beautiful. You know.

Maybe not our best. Attribute. They get dirty. They get trapped. In shoes all day. And. Doesn't always smell the best. But God says.

[29 : 46] Those feet. Are beautiful. If they're carrying. The message of Jesus. To those who haven't heard it. Thank God. Somebody carried it to you. Who else.

Are you sharing that message with. But then all the way back there. He said. Concerning his people. He said. I've held out my hands to them. But they've been a disobedient.

And contrary people. Let that not be said. Of our church. Let that not be said. That first. First Baptist Henrietta. Was a disobedient. And contrary people. What does he mean? Well disobedient. That's pretty clear. Right? Yeah. God wants me to share his message. I'm just not going to do it. I'm shy. I'm embarrassed. I don't have all the words down perfectly. I'm just not going to do it. God didn't say.

Share the message. Of Jesus. If you're an expert at it. Share the message of Jesus. If you're a pro. Share the message of Jesus. If you've got a PhD in theology. And you know everything about everything.

[30 : 43] That's not what he said. There'd be very few people doing that. Right? I'm getting ready to start my doctorate. Y'all pray for me. It's going to be rough. How many of you remember. When Ted Traylor did his doctorate here.

There's a few of you. Yeah. That's going back a little bit. I don't know if I'm going to do it. As well as he did. But I'm going to try. Okay. But look. How many people. You know. Get a doctorate in theology.

Good luck with that. You can share Jesus. Jesus. Without having all the answers. About everything. Because you don't need to have all the answers. About everything. To have faith in Jesus Christ. You can point people to Jesus. And let the Holy Spirit. Fill in the blanks. He does that. Far better than we do. So. The message requires messengers.

And then the contrary part. That's usually what gets us more than even disobedience. We get bent out of shape. We get upset. We get distracted by the cares.

[31 : 42] And the toils. And the arguments. And the distractions of this life. We get pulled off sides. We get caught off guard. We get mad. We get tired. We get angry. We get out of sorts.

And that's usually what stops us from sharing Jesus. And God is still standing there. He didn't move. His arms outstretched. Saying. The message came to you.

Now you are the messengers. So let me close with this. Let's not be a church. That puts black tape. Over the warning signs. Let's look at those warning lights. And say. I want to look at my own heart. I want to check my own heart. Am I trusting my good works?

Or am I trusting Jesus Christ? Christ. Romans 10. 13. All who call upon the name of the Lord. Will be saved. Today. You can be saved from your sins.

[32 : 40] You can be saved. And become a child of God. Today. If you haven't done that. You can be saved from your self-righteousness. You can be saved. From your contrariness. You can be saved from your disobedience.

You can be saved from everything. God is in the saving business. He is the God. Who saves. And that's what we're closing with today. Jesus saves. If you believe that.

Would you join me in saying it? Ready? Jesus saves. Let's bow our heads. And close our eyes.

Let's ask God. To save us now. God. Every one of us in this room. Needs saving.

Some of us need saving. From our sin. Some of us are still trapped. Under the curse of sin. And you came to break us free from that.

Some of us need to turn to you for the first time by faith. And say Jesus I believe in you. I believe by faith from the heart. That you died. That you rose from the dead.

[33 : 39] That you are God. You are who you said you were. And you have the power to forgive me. Save me. And make me your child. Others of us in this room need to be saved from something else.

There might be broken relationships. There might be problems. That we can't see our way around. There might be sin. That we've been harboring in our life. That is hurting us.

In so many different ways. And you're here to save us. From that. I pray that we would turn. To you. In whatever the situation is. Maybe it's outside brokenness.

That's hurt us. Maybe it's the failures of others. That have left us in a bad situation. We just need saving. We need Jesus to step in. And heal. Restore.

I pray that every heart in this room. Would turn to you for salvation. Let your Holy Spirit have free reign to work right now. Church, I'm going to ask you this question.

[34 : 38] If you're a guest with us today. Or maybe you've been coming here for a while. And you felt the Holy Spirit. Working on your heart. Prompting you. Saying turn to me today.

You're ready for the first time. To place your faith in Jesus. Would you slip your hand up? I'd love to see your testimony of that right now. Thank you.

Let me ask you this. There's somebody in the room today. Who says. I need saving. I'm a child of God. But I need God. And his salvation to step in.

And save me from something. Could be. My own pride. Could be. A season of struggle that I'm enduring right now. But whatever it is. I need the Savior.

To step in and save me right now. Would you slip your hand up too? Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. God. All around this room.

[35 : 36] We know that things aren't perfect. Until you set up your kingdom on this earth that will last forever. However. We know that. We have to endure a lot of brokenness.

But thank God we have a Savior. Who never stops saving. So I pray that as we jump in. Many of us in this week of VBS. And we're teaching kids about you.

And having a lot of good times. That we would remember that Jesus is the point of it all. Your faith. That you've given to us. Is what saves us. Help us to not forget that.

And get so caught up. In all the other things. That we forget. What saved us. It's in Jesus name we pray.

Amen.