

Transformed!

How God Renews the Lives of His People

Get Personal

Part 12: *Why Being Spiritual Isn't Enough*

A Note from Pastor Keith...

Being God's people is not the same as being religious, or even very religious. Consider what the Apostle Paul said to a group of very religious Greeks:

Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: "Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you."

Acts 17:22-23 (NIV)

Though calling someone "religious" almost sounds like an insult, a rapidly growing number of people do like to think of themselves as "spiritual." Interest in spiritual things is wonderful! Wonderful—but not nearly enough. One of the most spiritual groups of people in history was Israel at the time of Christ's first coming. They were zealous, yet their zeal was misdirected. How about us? We may be *intensely* spiritual, but is that what God wants?

As God's people, we can't depend on zeal, good intentions, or good behavior to save and transform us. We must depend on Christ.

^{10:1}Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. ²For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. ³Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. ⁴Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

Romans 10:1-4 (all references are NIV)

1. Don't put your hope in what you can DO.

⁵Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law: "The man who does these things will live by them."

Romans 10:5

2. There's nothing that needs DOING that isn't already DONE.

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

^{8a}But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart..."

Romans 10:6-8a

3. Instead, put your is FAITH, TRUST, BELIEF in Jesus Christ.

^{8b}...that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: ⁹That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God

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What are you depending on to get you to heaven?

What are you depending on to transform your life?

What does it mean to trust Christ? (You need to be clear on this.)

raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. ¹¹As the Scripture says, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” ¹²For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, ¹³for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Romans 10:8b-13

So where did Israel go wrong? Where are WE going wrong?

1. We have to hear the truth.

No problem here. Israel heard the truth and we did, too.

¹⁴How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ¹⁵And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”

Romans 10:14-15

2. We have to accept the truth.

Here’s the problem! Most of Israel rejected the truth and most of us have, too.

¹⁶But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our message?” ¹⁷Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. ¹⁸But I ask: Did they not hear? Of course they did: “Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.”

Romans 10:16-18

3. If we don’t, we’d better heed the warnings.

This is the other problem. Israel ignored the warnings... and so far we have, too.

¹⁹Again I ask: Did Israel not understand? First, Moses says, “I will make you envious by those who are not a nation; I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding.” ²⁰And Isaiah boldly says, “I was found by those who did not seek me; I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me.”

Romans 10:19-20

4. Bottom line: God get’s fed up with the stubbornness and moves on.

²¹But concerning Israel he says, “All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people.”

Romans 10:21

[Jesus said,] “Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.”

Matthew 21:43

5. One more thing: The right kind of zeal is good!

It is fine to be zealous, provided the purpose is good...

Galatians 4:18a

Get Personal!

(I love these quotes, so yes, you’ve probably heard them before...)

Chuck Swindoll defines “dead orthodoxy” as “trafficking in un-lived truth.”

Howard Hendricks once observed that most of us are educated far beyond the level of our obedience.

So let’s each do a little checkup: What percentage of what you know about God, His Word and His will, do you thinking you are actually living?

Pretty low number, huh? What’s the problem?

We’ve seen it on every page of the book of Romans: God calls us to turn to Christ—personally, radically, unreservedly—for salvation and transformation. How important is that if we are going to be effective as His people?

If we continue to turn our backs on Christ, how much longer do you expect God to put up with us before He moves on to someone else?