

Religion of the Heart

Faith is a matter of the heart. What we believe in the deepest part of our soul has a profound impact on how we live. God is very interested in matters of the heart, and wants our inner life to be a place of peace, wholeness, and restoration.

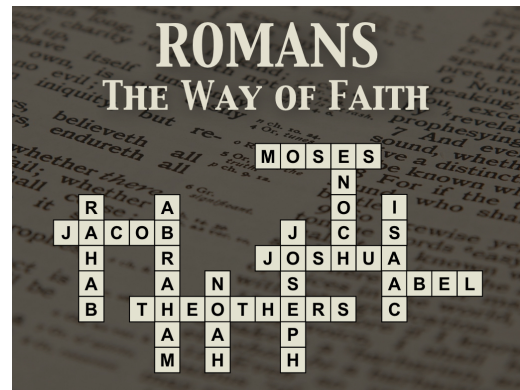
Romans 5:10-13

5 Moses writes concerning the righteousness that comes from the law, that “the person who does these things will live by them.” **6** But the righteousness that comes from 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,
on your lips and in your heart”

(that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); **9** because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. **10** For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. **11** The scripture says, “No one who believes in him will be put to shame.” **12** For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. **13** For,

“Everyone who calls on the name of
the Lord shall be saved.”



Observations

Righteousness from the Law

The righteousness that comes from the law refers to our external behavior. The Israelites assumed that if they were obedient to the Law, and observed religious traditions to perfection, they would be acceptable to God.

Righteousness from Faith

We are truly obedient when we not only keep the external law, but do so from the heart. This is the kind of obedience God is looking for.

Without faith, we will worry about how we can gain access to God. With faith, we know that God is near to us. His thoughts are in our hearts and his words are on our lips.

Justified by Faith

The main concept of Paul's letter is that we are justified by faith, that is, our lives are acceptable to God not by our external works alone, but by the faith that is in our heart.

Faith is for Everyone!

The gift of faith is for everyone. It does not matter what our background is or whether or not we were raised in a religious home. Anyone who puts their trust in Jesus Christ will be saved.

Application *for abundant living:*



Heart Time

Exploring matters of the heart takes time. Each of us should find heart-time to connect with God in the deepest way possible. We should explore our emotions and think about our motives. If we give God time, God will reveal things we've never seen before.

Further Study *for a deeper understanding:*

Jesus once told a story about two men who went into the temple to pray, one was a Pharisee, a religious leader who meticulously observed the religious customs of the Jews. The other was a tax-collector who collected taxes for the Roman government and was considered a traitor to his own people. Read about what happened in **Luke 18:9-14**.

Questions *for reflection or group discussion:*

Have you ever done something wrong as a child that you never told anyone about?

Do you tend to keep things locked inside, or do you find it easy to share your heart?

Why do you think God is so intensely interested in what is in our heart?

How can you arrange your time to reflect on matters of the heart?



Your Notes *what God is saying to you:*
