

**PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS - Part I**  
**ROMANS 9:30 – 10:13**

**By Pastor John Carlini, D.Mn**

**M.I. RELIGIOUS PASSION MAKES US PROUD AND ALIENATES US FROM GOD.  
FAITHFUL LOVE HUMBLER US AND MAKES US RIGHT WITH GOD.**

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# **PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS - Part I**

## **ROMANS 9:30 – 10:13**

**By Pastor John Carlini, D.Mn**

I want to remind you of my methodology in approaching Scripture. I like to approach each passage without coming to it with preconceived theology. These chapters deal with predestination and God's election. Last week we saw that God raised both Moses and Pharaoh up to positions of leadership. God ended up blessing Moses and the Israelites, while at the same time punishing Pharaoh and Egypt.

Please remember that we are in the middle section of this portion of Romans that deals with election and predestination. This passage seems to focus on the choices we make as free-will human beings. There is a strange twist in this passage, especially if we keep last week's example in mind where, the Apostle Paul's examples pitted the Egyptians against God's chosen people, the Hebrews. This week, the Apostle will compare God's chosen people, the Israelites, against a new chosen people that He has picked from among the Gentile nations and this time, the nation of Israel will come out on the short end of the comparison.

I want to give us two very stern warnings as we approach this passage: First, the criticisms leveled against the Hebrews are made by a Hebrew, and not just any Jew, but a very influential Jew. These criticisms are not meant to be taken up by Christians or anyone else and used as fuel for anti-Semitic sentiments or behavior.

Second, Paul will address this again in chapter 11 but let me remind us that we as Christians find ourselves today in the same position as Israel was in the time of Paul's writings, so the truths we examine today are applicable to us as well.

I know this has crossed my mind before, but a biblical definition of faith is a lot like gambling. Not in the sense of casino gambling, but a lot like when we were kids. I played a lot

of sports and grew up in a very competitive environment and we would sit around and argue who was the fastest runner, the best hitter, the strongest, toughest, etc. Invariably someone would say, “Yeah, put your money where your mouth is.” Then a small wager would be made, we would have a contest, and someone would walk away maybe a quarter richer. The money wasn’t the important thing; faith and honor were at stake, talk is cheap and if you really believed you were better, you would put your money where your mouth was and compete. If you weren’t willing to pony up the money and compete, then you were just blowing smoke and had to shut up after that.

To me, that’s what faith is all about; it’s putting your money where your mouth is. Why do we give 10% of our money to church? Because we believe that all we have comes from God and belongs to God. Why do we apologize when we are wrong? Because we believe that God desires for us to be at peace with one another. Faith is not just some intellectual idea. Faith is the action we take based on what believe about Jesus.

But putting your money where your mouth is; can be a tricky thing. Let me give you an example: As pastors, we often hope that our children will follow in our footsteps and go into the ministry. One of my friend’s children became a jockey at a racetrack. He was really distraught ... until I told him, “Fred, I’d be willing to bet that your son will bring more people to repentance than you will over the next few years, and I’m willing to put my money where my mouth is.

But really, for me, if someone wants to call themselves a Christian, they will have to put their money where their mouth is, because talk is cheap.

Again, we are going to see some very technical, theological words in today’s passages. The words righteousness, righteous, justified will dominate this section. So let me define them again. Righteousness, right, just, justify, justified, all come from the same root word. In the

Bible, to be righteous means to be right with God, right behavior is that type of behavior that is consistent with God's character and personality. If I am in a right relationship with God, then I am righteous.

To be justified or just means the same thing, only it is used in a technical sense, describing my status with God. It is a decree that comes from the mouth of God. I cannot attain this on my own. We are all sinners and in our natural state, we have no relationship to God. Sin has separated us from God and we are hopelessly lost. When we give our lives to Jesus in faith, God declares us to be "not guilty," which puts us in a right relationship with God. An easy way to remember what justification means is this: when we receive Christ, He looks at us "just-as-if-I-never-sinned / justification."

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Salvation is a different word but in this context basically they mean the same thing. In our natural state, we are all headed towards an eternity in hell. Jesus saves us from that eternal destiny when we place our faith and trust in Him. He changes our eternal destiny from death to life; He saves us from a horrible fate.

Here is what the Apostle Paul wants us to understand in this passage: **RELIGIOUS PASSION MAKES US PROUD AND ALIENATES US FROM GOD. FAITHFUL LOVE HUMBLER US AND MAKES US RIGHT WITH GOD.** I hope you didn't miss that. Here I am, a pastor, dressed in a clergy robe, telling you that being religious is a bad thing and that it can actually take us further away from a right relationship with God.

I. **WON'T WIN WITH RELIGION (Vs. 9:30-33)**  
**BEING RELIGIOUS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH MAKING US RIGHT WITH GOD.**

At the end of chapter 9, verses 30-33 inform us that we won't win the day with religion. In fact, the Apostle Paul says here that: **BEING RELIGIOUS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH**

**MAKING US RIGHT WITH GOD.** In sports we always talk about the underdog, the long shot, and the dark horse; if we were living during the time of Jesus, we would have to conclude that non-Jews were long shots to ever win a race of righteousness. The Jews were God's chosen people. They had the words of God encoded in the Hebrew Scriptures, our Old Testament. God gave them priests, prophets, and kings to guide them through their history. To the Jew, everybody else in the world was considered to be non-Jews; they referred to all the other peoples and nations as Gentiles and the Gentiles were considered to be out and out pagans.

**A. THE NON RELIGIOUS (V. 30)**

Verse 30 describes the beginning of an ironic twist as the non-religious are described. In the 2,000 years of Jewish history between Abraham and Jesus, there were very few Gentiles that expressed any interest in worshipping the God of Israel. But last week, and throughout our study of the Book of Romans, we see that since the death and resurrection of Jesus, God chose for Himself people from Gentile nations and cultures as well. All of a sudden, Gentile people were giving their lives to the Jewish Messiah. Now Gentile believers are interested in being in a right relationship with the God of the Jews.

Keep in mind that the early church was primarily made up of Jews so many of these Gentile believers were forced to become Jews before being accepted into the fellowship of believers. Quickly the church dealt with that and then overturned that. Paul said, "If you come to Christ as a Jew, remain a Jew. If you come to Christ as a Gentile, remain a Gentile.

Why? Because we all come into a right relationship with God the same way, by grace through faith.

I've got to tell you, it's refreshing to be around unchurched people. They don't hide behind religious language, and they don't know enough to try and hide their sinful behavior.

They are who they are. When you explain to them what sin is, they openly acknowledge it and own it. It's really fun to watch them come to faith in Christ. I think that's what appealed to Jesus about the unchurched.

My guess is that is where most people under the age of 30 are today in the United States. Most young people have no religious vocabulary, no idea of what the Bible is, and no real idea of what church is all about. This should be exciting news to us. Why? Because they are searching for something to make sense out of their lives. We have the answer.

#### B. THE VERY RELIGIOUS (V. 31)

Verse 31 describes the very religious. Let me make an aside comment here: some day, I would like all of us to read through the Gospels and look for this one point: who does Jesus have no patience with? Who does Jesus get angry with? Who does Jesus go absolutely crazy over? Jesus has no time for and no patience with religious people. The Pharisees, the sect that Paul belonged to, were the most religious people of their day. In fact, the word Pharisee means "separated ones." What separated them from the rest of society was their commitment to the Jewish religion. They were careful to obey all the religious laws, they watched what they ate, who they came in contact with, they were careful to read and study the Bible every day, pray and go to church. They criticized society at large for their lack of concern for religion and their sinful behavior.

Who does that sound like to you in today's world? It sounds a lot to me like us. If someone were to ask us what it meant to be Christian, I think it would be our natural inclination to answer in terms of religious beliefs and behaviors. We would talk about faith, and then quickly move on to what sorts of things Christians should do and not do, and then spend time talking about our church.

However, why is it that we never seem to answer in terms of our personal, day to day relationship with Jesus? I know even in my interaction with unbelievers, I spend much too much time talking about church and religion rather than what Jesus has done and is doing in my life. I think I invite people to come to church more often than I invite them to come to Jesus. I decided that is one thing I want to change this year; I want to become less religious and more Christ-like.

I said all that in order to encourage us not to just study this as informational or look down on the Israelites, but that we would take this as a serious warning about what we should be doing with our free will and what truly makes us right with God. Look at verse 31. Paul says Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, didn't attain the righteousness they were looking for. God chose the nation of Israel to be His messengers to the whole world; God chose them out of all the nations. He chose them first so they could enjoy a right relationship with Him, and secondly that they might show all the other nations how they could be in a right relationship with God.

God gave them the law that was to lead them to this right relationship. Here Paul is talking about the Mosaic Law. This is the history, the records, along with the social, religious, and ceremonial laws found in the first five books of the Bible. They are called the Torah, the Pentateuch, or the Law of Moses, since Moses is the author. In our Bibles, the books are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. In them, God gave Moses specific instructions on how He wanted the Israelites to live. Add to that the rest of the Hebrew Scriptures, and we can easily see why Israel had a huge advantage over all the other nations in achieving a right relationship with God. They had the Bible, the presence of God, and great leaders throughout their history.

That's exactly what we have as the Christian church. We have the Bible, the presence of God, and great church leaders throughout the centuries. We have all we need to achieve a right relationship with God.

But here is where the irony takes place. The Gentiles who didn't have any of these advantages, ended up in a right relationship with God, while the nation of Israel, with all the benefits, ended up missing God's blessings. Here is a clue to what went wrong; look at the last phrase in verse 30; it's like a transitional phrase between verses 30 and 31. The Gentiles ended up in a right relationship, not by being or doing religious things, but by placing their faith in Jesus. So by implication, the Jews missed a right relationship with God because of their lack of faith in Jesus.

#### C. THE WEAKNESS OF RELIGION (Vs. 32-33)

And this is the problem with religion; it fosters spiritual pride and totally misses the proper object of faith, Jesus. Verses 32-33 clearly point out the weakness of religion. Paul, thinking out loud, is stunned. "Why not?" he says. How could Israel possibly miss a right relationship with God considering all the benefits we had? How could the majority of Israelites, especially the religious leaders miss the fact that Jesus, our promised Messiah, was in our midst? How is it that they came to reject Jesus? He answers his own question, "Because they pursued it (a right relationship with God) not by faith but as if it were by works." I have never seen this written anywhere, although I have touched on it before in preaching. I have never seen it more clearly than this week in studying through this passage. The Old Testament saints were saved exactly like the New Testament saints, exactly like we are saved. They were saved by grace through faith. They were not saved by keeping the law; in fact there were provisions in the law to cover the times people would not be able to live up to the law.

I want to explain this in terms that we can understand so I will use modern day Christian examples, but it applies equally to the Jewish law. First, let me explain the Old Testament quotations Paul uses here and the background to the texts. These quotes about stumbling over the stumbling stone come from the prophet Isaiah. In Isaiah's day, the Israelites were faced with a threatening situation. The Assyrians were threatening to come down from the north and wage war on Israel. Instead of turning to God, Israel turned to everybody and everything else to save them. They worshipped idols. They turned to Egypt for help. The prophet Isaiah went to King Ahaz and challenged him to ask God for help. Ahaz made excuses and threw some religious mumbo-jumbo at Isaiah that he would not ask God for a sign, and God responded by saying, "Tough, you'll get a sign." Then Isaiah gives the prophecies that we talk about every Christmas concerning the birth and ministry of Jesus. These are the prophecies predicting the virgin birth of Jesus and His ministry as Prince of Peace, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God and Eternal Father. The stone that the Hebrews tripped over was their lack of faith in God to deliver them. The stone they tripped over concerning Jesus was their lack of faith in recognizing Him as the Promised Messiah. The issue is faith in God.

Now to religious laws and doing good; Jesus tells us that we are to feed the poor, visit the sick, clothe the naked, and give 10% of our money to the church. These are the laws. Add to that Bible reading, prayer, and attending church. Now let's say that I give 20% of my paycheck to the church or let's say I go to the hospital and visit 3 sick people, then take 5 homeless people to lunch and buy them coats. I get up early every morning, read my Bible, and pray every night. I come to church every Sunday and teach Sunday school. If at the end of the day, I think that somehow I am good in any way or if I think doing these things puts me in a right relationship with God, then I would miss Jesus if He came and stood in my face.

Here is the problem: How can I say I am good because I am simply doing the things I am supposed to do? Does the IRS send me an award because I pay my income tax? Do the police follow me home and congratulate me because I stopped at all the stop signs on the way home? So I give 20% of my income to church. Big deal. 100% of the money I have belongs to God. Why did I just visit 3 sick people in the hospital? Why not 5 or 6 or 10?

There are two things wrong here; first, the motivation is wrong. If I am doing these things because I think they put me in a right relationship with God, then I have missed the whole reason Jesus had to come and die for my sins. The point is I can never earn a right relationship with God, no matter how much good I try to do, it will never be enough.

Second, I miss the real meaning of the law, Jewish or Christian. The law or the rules are opportunities for me to demonstrate my faith. Let me put it in terms I'm sure we all understand: Since I've been married for the past 31 years, I'll use marriage as an example, but any relationship will do. Let's say my wife and I have argued, and, let's say I was right, which is pretty much most of the time (just kidding), in the morning, I get up early, slip out the door, get into my car, and get ready to start it, when I hear God say, "Go back in there and make things right before you go to work." The law says I'm supposed to love my wife like Jesus loves the church. Jesus sacrificed His pride, His dignity, His comfort and His life.

If I go apologize and somehow feel spiritual and holy about the whole thing, I have missed the point. If I somehow think that makes me a good husband, I don't understand a thing about faith. The fact is I'll never be good no matter how I try.

Why do I go back and apologize? Because it is a way to demonstrate my love for God. It is a way for me to exercise my faith. The world says that if I'm right, then she is the one to apologize. So when the Israelites remained sexually pure, when they worshipped only one God,

and when they kept the laws concerning worship, it was merely a way in which they could demonstrate which God they were loyal to. Faith is a choice to follow God. I don't get any credit for being sexually pure. I'm supposed to be sexually pure.

As a nation, Israel never seemed to get that concept. From the beginning, they seemed to get tangled up in worldly thoughts and behaviors. Then they thought because they were religious that everything was all right. As Isaiah predicted, the northern part of Israel was destroyed by the Assyrians, and the southern part of Israel was destroyed by the Babylonians.

But look at the last sentence in verse 33. It says that the one who trusts in God will never be put to shame. Jesus quoted Moses when asked what the most important law was: Both Jesus and Moses said that we are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with our entire mind, and with all our strength, and we are to love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

The whole sacrificial system in the Old Testament was a visual reminder that we can't live up to the law. Jesus on the cross is a constant reminder that I am not good, nor can I ever put myself in a right relationship with God by doing good or keeping religious rules.

I hope we understand this because: **BEING RELIGIOUS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH MAKING US RIGHT WITH GOD.**

II. **WON'T WIN WITH PASSION (Vs. 10:1-4)**  
**PASSION IS NOT USEFUL UNLESS IT IS HUMBLY SUBORDINATED TO THE WORD AND WILL OF GOD.**

You see, what follows next if we are religious people, is pride and passion. Verses 1-4 in chapter 10 tell us that we won't win with passion. I want us to hear this loud and clear because somehow our culture thinks that passion is noble. We think if someone is sincere and they're passionate, then they are on the right track. The fact is most people are sincerely wrong and passionate about sinful things. Think about sincere, passionate, religious fanatics. Today we

have passionate Muslims blowing themselves up and killing others in the name of religion. We Christians had the Crusades; sincere, passionate soldiers marched through Europe and the Middle East killing people and converting them at the point of a sword. Sincere, passionate, Christians, Jews, and Muslims have shed an awful lot of innocent blood in the name of religion. The truth is: **PASSION IS NOT USEFUL UNLESS IT IS HUMBLY SUBORDINATED TO THE WORD AND THE WILL OF GOD.** Passion should always be tempered by humility and love.

A. RIGHTLY DIRECTED PASSION (V. 1)

In verse 1 we can see rightly directed passion. If we were to ask Paul where his passion was, he would say that he would give anything to see people from all nations give their lives to Jesus in faith. But in particular, he would like to see his fellow Jews come to Christ and be saved. Paul ached to see his people saved.

I'm afraid that as Christians, we have lost our way in society. If asked what our passion is, we would answer with all sorts of stuff, and probably be able to attach religious language to it. The passion of God is that no one spends eternity in Hell. That's why He sent His One and Only Son Jesus to die for our sins. Jesus' passion was to rescue us from the penalty of sin and death. He suffered and died for us. If God's passion is to save every person from the fires of hell, and if we are to be Christ-like, when we are asked what our passion is, there should be no ambiguity as to our answer. Our passion should be to win souls for Jesus Christ because we are passionately in love with Him.

B. WRONGLY DIRECTED PASSION (Vs. 2-3)

Verses 2-3 probably describe most of us with our wrongly directed passion. Paul said that his people were zealous for God. In the 2 to 300-year time frame before the coming of

Jesus, the Jews tended to elevate religious zeal to one of the most valued emotions. In the books of The Maccabees, Jewish life under the oppression of the Greeks and Romans was described in graphic detail. A Greek official commanded an old Jewish man named Matthias to offer a pig up as a sacrifice on the altar. If he didn't, the official threatened his life and the lives of the people in the town. Matthias refused because that was an abomination according to God's law. Another Jewish priest stepped up to the altar to offer up the sacrifice, the text then says that Matthias was filled with zeal. He took the sword from the official, killed the priest and the official and led the Jews in a revolt against their oppressors. His last words to his sons were, "Be zealous for the law and give your lives for the covenant of our forefathers."

By the time Jesus comes on the scene, there is a whole sect of underground, guerrilla-warfare Jews called Zealots. They were kind of the Jewish folk-heroes of the day, they constantly fought against Rome.

The Pharisees were zealous for keeping Jewish laws. Again, their passion was for keeping laws, not for submitting to God in faith. As I read through the Hebrew Scriptures, I am amazed to see how Israel is driven by passion. However, rarely is their passion to love God and submit to Him, their passion is almost always directed towards worldly things.

I don't why I should be so amazed. When I examine my own life, I can see that my passions are directed towards worldly things. Rarely do we submit passionately to God's plan for our lives. We want to be Christians, but we want to pursue worldly things. We value money, success, power, sex, and youth. We want to claim to be Christian, yet we don't have enough humility to give up, my way, culture's way, my parents' way, or the world's way. Our passion is diffused in so many directions, that we don't do very well at anything.

Don't miss Paul's point here. Passion is useless unless it is in submission to God's plan. Hear this very carefully because I think we reverse the order; we want God to submit Himself to our passion. However, God doesn't play that way. If we want to be saved, then we must submit our passion to God. Listen, I know me, and I know most of you, we try to make our own rules and plans, then we put religious language on them, and then have the audacity to tell God to get on board and make it happen.

#### C. THE WEAKNESS OF PASSION (V. 4)

Verse 4 points out the weakness of passion. The weakness of passion that is not submitted to God is that it always results in pride and pride leads to arrogance and elitism. I have seen too many Christians have this holier than thou attitude. The truth is that I'm no better than anyone else. Verse 4 says that, "Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes." The word for end in Greek is telos. Telos means end, purpose, or fulfillment. Jesus is the meaning of the law. The law makes it clear that we can only be made right with God through faith. We are all dependent on God's love, mercy and compassion. Actually, Jesus is the fulfillment of all the Old Testament and the whole history of Israel. Since it is by faith that we are made right with God, everybody in all of human history, including you and me, is made right with God the same way, by the blood of Jesus Christ. Our passion should be to fall in love with Jesus, and to save the lost because He died for them as well: **PASSION IS NOT USEFUL UNLESS IT IS HUMBLY SUBORDINATED TO THE WORD AND WILL OF GOD.**

III. FAITH WINS EVERY TIME (Vs. 5-13)  
**IT IS ONLY BY PLACING OUR FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST THAT CAN PUT US IN A RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.**

I think this message is pretty simple and we will finish it next week in part II. But for now we must know that religion and pride take us in the wrong direction. Church people start to think they are better than other people. Combine that with worldly passions and we have a deadly combination: **RELIGIOUS PASSION MAKES US PROUD AND ALIENATES US FROM GOD. FAITHFUL LOVE HUMBLER US AND MAKES US RIGHT WITH GOD.**

This is serious business. We as church people better take this seriously. If in any way we think we are better than anyone else, or if in any way we think we are good, then I would like to leave us with the words of Jesus.

LUKE 18:9-14 (NLT)

**Then Jesus told this story to some who had great self-confidence and scorned everyone else: “Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other was a dishonest tax collector. The proud Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer: ‘I thank you, God, that I am not a sinner like everyone else, especially like that tax collector over there! For I never cheat, I don’t sin, I don’t commit adultery, I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my income.’**

**“But the tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying, ‘O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner.’ I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God. For the proud will be humbled, but the humble will be honored.”**