

Romans 10:1-13
God's Plan

Wouldn't it be convenient if we could just fashion our own god. Kind of like build-a-bear. A god to our liking. Think about. All the stuff we don't agree with in scripture we could simply take out and leave all the good stuff. I would imagine this god would know nothing of human failure. Dirty words like sin, wrath, and hell would not be a part of this god's vocabulary. This god would be flexible, not so stringent and always willing to take the blame for all the bad stuff that happens in life. This god would accept whatever we dished out. This god would be amenable to change, agreeing that as human beings progress, we get better at this thing called life. This god would make sense to us, and our plans would always be this god's plans. A god like this would be very popular, don't you think? I say this to make clear that the God of the bible is the only God we have. I don't make this statement in the negative sense but rather to continue to emphasize that what we find in scripture is good and represents in totality God's plan for us all. God's good plan. And acceptance of God's plan requires that we lay aside our own, doesn't matter its origins (tradition, mommy, daddy, grandmama, etc.) or how good it may seem. With this in mind, I want share three important truths drawn the text.

First, only God determines what God will accept. V1-4 "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." Who is Paul referring to, here? **His Jewish**

sisters and brothers, but more specifically I believe, the Jewish leadership who refused to accept Jesus as God's righteous standard. Acknowledging that only belief in Jesus makes one right with God. And since they refused this truth, they taught the people to do the same.

Church, as the leadership goes, so go the people. Bad doctrine, creative doctrine, and to abandon doctrine all together is damaging. Only God determines what God will accept and God has made that known via His word. God is not a Mr. or Mrs. Potato Head. We cannot construct or dress Him as we see fit. We must believe and accept what the scriptures declare about God/Jesus/Holy Spirit and teaches about God's way. This is what we must preach, teach, and share if we truly desire for others to come to faith.

Isaiah 55:6-11 ““Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; ⁷ let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.⁸ For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. ⁹ For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.¹⁰ “For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, ¹¹ so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.”

Micah 6:6-8 “What can we bring to the Lord? Should we bring him burnt offerings? Should we bow before God Most High with offerings of yearling calves? ⁷ Should we offer him thousands of rams and ten thousand rivers of olive oil? Should we sacrifice our firstborn children

to pay for our sins? ⁸ No, O people, the Lord has told you what is good, and this is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.”

1 John 2:22-24 “²² Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. ²³ No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also. ²⁴ Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father.”

Second, no constructing our own plan or way of salvation. V5-10

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.” We must accept God’s plan of salvation. Simple enough, but in no way easy. We tend to disregard what Paul teaches here in two ways. Either we say it can’t be this simple and seek to shore-up God’s plan by adding whatever else we believe is required or we resist God’s plan all together, believing we must get our lives in order before we come. Both constitute works-righteousness and will keep one on the outside looking in. We must relinquish this type of thinking and it is hard to do so, especially if we have been taught this. No constructing our own plan of salvation. No

human being can possibly work his or her way to being right with God because of the sin nature. This is why we need a savior, a mediator, and Jesus is that Savior. Jesus is our Mediator.

Acts 4:11-12 “¹¹This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. ¹²And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

1 Tim 2:5-7 “⁵For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time. ⁷For this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.”

Phil 3:3 “³For we who worship by the Spirit of God are the ones who are truly circumcised. We rely on what Christ Jesus has done for us. We put no confidence in human effort.” **NLT**

Finally, salvation is simple, but it is in no way easy. V11-13 “¹¹For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.” ¹²For 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. ¹³For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” Simple, right? Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. But I am convinced there is nothing harder to do in this life than to believe in Jesus. It is so hard we cannot do it in our own strength. No one is capable of such a feat. Unless God pulls us from the darkness through the glorious gospel of His Son, Jesus the Christ, we will remain in darkness. It is God’s Holy Spirit that makes true faith in Jesus Christ a reality for every true believer. Only by the power of the Holy Spirit can we call on the name of the Lord. To invoke the name of Jesus is to utterly deny self and to confess an inability to approach God

in one's own strength or by one's own effort. No one can do this naturally. No one. Salvation is simple, but it is in no way easy.

Titus 3:4-7 “⁴ But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ⁵ he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, ⁶ whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

1 Cor 12:3 “³ Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking in the Spirit of God ever says “Jesus is accursed!” and no one can say “Jesus is Lord” except in the Holy Spirit.”

Not our plan. God's plan, revealed in God's word. Let us stick to it. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.