

**October 20, 2021**

## **Sincerity Cannot Save**

Understanding man's need for salvation in verse 1, Paul continues in **Romans 10:2-5** to discuss three things that cannot save, man's sincerity, man's righteousness, and the law. We will begin by considering man's sincerity. There are many who are sincere in their faith and practice, but unfortunately, they are sincerely wrong. Paul says the Jews, specifically the Pharisees, of whom Paul was trained, had a zeal of God, but they lacked the knowledge of God. Paul himself zealously persecuted the church, creating fear and havoc among the Christians of his day, **Galatians 1:13-14**, **Acts 22:3-5**; and **Acts 26:9-11**. Sometimes you may hear a person say, "It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you are sincere in your belief." Is this a true statement? The answer is a resounding NO. What you believe makes all the difference in the world. What you believe may very well be the difference between an eternity in heaven or an eternity in hell.

Paul testified against the Jews that their zeal lacked knowledge. Jesus condemned the scribes and Pharisees likewise in **Matthew 23:15**. They would go to great lengths to make a proselyte, but because of their lack of knowledge, they made them twofold more the child of hell. Those who practice a false religion are often difficult to win to Christ, because the false teaching is so engrained into their mind and manner of living. In Hosea 4:6 God said, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." Why did they lack knowledge? They had forgotten the law of God. What was true in the Old Testament is true for today as well. Churches are being destroyed for lack of knowledge. They have forsaken and turned away from the cardinal doctrines of the faith. They have rejected sound doctrine in favor of that which sounds good and is pleasing to the ear, **II Timothy 4:3-4**. The lack of knowledge of the truth binds men in darkness. In **I Corinthians 15:34**, Paul says, "Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame." We have a responsibility to proclaim the gospel of Christ and to teach people the knowledge of God that they might be saved and live a life that is pleasing to the Lord, **Romans 10:14-15, 17**. Were the people in **Matthew 7:21-24** sincere in their faith? Did their faith lead them to do many wonderful works? Why then shall they not enter into heaven?

A man's conduct is a result of His knowledge and faith. Man can only act upon that which he knows and believes. If a man has knowledge of the truth, but doesn't believe it to be true, he will act accordingly. In like manner, if something is not true, but a man believes it to be true, he will act accordingly. Knowledge and faith are the roots of the tree that produces fruit. If either the knowledge or faith are corrupt, the fruit of the tree is corrupt, **Matthew 7:16-20**. Essentially there are three types of trees, those who produce no fruit, those who produce evil fruit, and those who produce good fruit. What does the fruit reveal about the roots of the tree? What would you say to a person who knows the gospel and sincerely believes they are saved, but produces no fruit or evil fruit?

Read **Matthew 13:3-8, 18-23**, **Mark 4:3-8, 14-20**, and **Luke 8:5-8, 11-15**. In the parable of the sower, what are the four types of ground? Which ground produced good fruit? Did the

good ground always produce the same amount of fruit? Can you identify the four thorns which choke out the Word of God? What happens to the fruit that attempts to grow among thorns? What type of soil represents your heart and to what degree are you producing fruit? Are there some thorns that need to be weeded out of your life?