***Romans 10:1-3 Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. 2For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. 3For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.***

Paul wrote the letter we now call the Book of Romans to the people who were part of the church of Rome around 56 AD. He wrote these verses more than 20 years after his Damascus Road conversion where he encountered the Risen Savior. As we open Romans 10 this morning, we know that, by this time in his life, the Apostle Paul has been beaten, threatened, imprisoned, stoned, and rejected by Jew and Gentile alike. In verse 1, we hear his heart’s desire. It’s not vengeance or ease or comfort or money or worldly goods. It’s not that all these people who’ve been mean to him would get their comeuppance! No, let’s notice Paul’s heart’s desire. Let’s notice his prayers rising to God… He’s praying that others may be saved, especially those that have treated him wrong, and he wants them all to come to the knowledge of Jesus. What do our prayers sound like? Are we praising God for our blessings, thanking Him for our trials, loving Him for choosing us, and beseeching Him on behalf of others, even those that have treated us not so kindly? The salvation of others must be our heart’s desire.

Verse 1 says - *Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.*Paul is praying that the people of Israel will come to the knowledge of Jesus. His heart is broken for the lost around him. In fact, in Romans 9:2-3, he says he is in great sorrow and continual grief for the state of his countrymen. He’s so distraught that he’s willing to be accursed that others may be saved! Our hearts must be broken for the lost around us. We too pray for our countrymen, and indeed the world, that all might find Jesus and be saved. No one is so hateful that we wish them an eternal death, eternal separation from God. There is sickness and we have the cure, separation and we know how to unite. How are we sharing the Gospel of Jesus to bring others to faith? Is this our heart’s desire? Are we desperate for family, friends, and strangers alike? We’re called to go and teach all nations. This is our Great Commission as believers.

Verse 2 - *For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.* Paul sees a zeal for God, a pursuit of rituals and traditions, people believing they’re worshipping God, going to the Temple and keeping the feasts, but their knowledge of God is wrong. They’re working really hard, but not growing closer to the One they claim to be working toward. Brothers and sisters – we see that today! In 2 Timothy 3, we read of perilous times in the last days. In verses 1-5, Paul says - *But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come:* ***2****For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good,****4****traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,****5having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!*** We can pick this verse up from 56 AD and plant it squarely in 2025. There are people today denying the Truth of Jesus. Choosing to resist Jesus. But, we know the Truth. It has set us free and informed us. It can do the same for others. We share the Gospel in hope that some may hear and come to knowledge of Jesus. Many will refuse and choose willfully to stay in their sin. Our heart must be broken for those that need to hear the Truth.

Verse 3 *For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God.* They think themselves wise, yet are ignorant and do not know the Truth. Instead, they substitute self-righteousness. But, righteousness created by a flawed creation has to be flawed. Imperfect cannot create perfect. Imperfect humans, who know no righteousness, cannot create righteousness. Instead, we know the righteousness of God, and this is our unfailing and unchanging standard. 1 Corinthians 1:30 *But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption*. Jesus is wisdom from God. When we are in Him, we are filled with the Holy Spirit and that Spirit teaches us, leading us to be passionate for learning God’s word. We, who know Jesus, must be willing to teach of Jesus - Romans 10:14-15 *How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?* How will they learn without a messenger? We are all messengers, and we must have broken hearts for the lost, if indeed we are following the Spirit and not the flesh.

This week, let’s ask ourselves - how are we teaching and spreading the Gospel of Jesus? Are we submitted to the Kingship of Christ and His righteousness? If not, we have substituted ***a form of godliness*** in its place called self-righteousness. Let’s pursue Jesus’ Great Commission with all our hearts desire and let our prayer be for the salvation of others. We want everyone to come to know Jesus. God loved us and sent a messenger into our life to introduce us to Jesus. Let’s let that be our hearts desire and most fervent prayer every single day.