

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to Romans 3

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through this amazing letter that Paul wrote to the believers in Rome – about the fundamentals of Christianity

Why do we all need the gospel of grace?

Why do we all need Jesus?

And so Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit – opens up his letter, by revealing to us that we are all sick.

Chapters 1-3 Paul reveals to us man's condition - just how sick man is and how lost man is – apart from Christ.

Our problem – is that we deceive ourselves into thinking that we are not sick.

I am not sick – I am a good person

I am not sick – I go to church

I am not sick – I carry a bible around, I do religious things

Paul's response – “you're sick”

BTW – this is the same thing that Jesus spoke about during His earthly ministry.

This was His reason for coming – because we are sick.

[Mar 2:17 NKJV] 17 When Jesus heard [it], He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call [the] righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

In other words – Jesus came for those that know they are sick and have sinned against God.

Those that acknowledge they have missed the mark.

And we all miss the mark.

We all miss the bullseye –

This is what Paul is going to remind us of in our text this morning –

But here is the good news -

That even though our sin disqualifies us from heaven – the righteousness of Jesus qualifies us for heaven, if we will simply put our trust in Jesus.

If we simply allow Jesus to be both King and Lord

Let's pray...

Read Text

In our study last week, in the first eight verse of chapter 3, Paul asks and answers a series of questions that he anticipates some of his readers asking when they read his letter.

What is the advantage of being a Jew?

And Paul's response was – there are many advantages of being a Jew – the main advantage of being a Jew was that God entrusted to them the oracles of God.

Who He is

The Law – concerning their relationship with Him and their relationship with each other

Another question that Paul anticipates from the religious reader is – if our unrighteousness brings out God's righteousness, how could it possibly be fair for God to punish us.

So they were pushing back on the gospel of grace – they were making the allegations that what Paul was preaching – was a license to sin.

And so, some suggested that they would do evil so that good may come of it.

“I'm going to be bad so God will look good when He forgives me”

And Paul's response was – those who continue in that reasoning – their judgment is deserved.

And so today – we are going to look at another question that Paul anticipates from the religious individuals.

And so from verse 9-20 we have the question and Paul's answer to the question.

[Rom 3:9-20 NKJV] 9 What then? Are we better [than they]? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin.

Are we better than they???

In verse 1,2 Paul has already revealed that there are advantages of being of being Jew.

But those advantages did not make them better.

Everyone, regardless of who or what they are, are sinners.

There are no preferred people

There are no special cases

There are no exceptions

Every human being is a sinner

You see, Paul in writing this letter

He knows the reluctance of the religious person to admit that they are a sinner

He knows the reluctance of the self righteous person to admit that they are a sinner

In the same way many people today get angry when we share the gospel with them.

As soon as we mention the cross and that Jesus died for sinners – they balk.

“Sinner, Are you calling me a sinner?”

“I’m no sinner – I may not be perfect, but I’m certainly no sinner”

I’m a good person. I haven’t murdered anyone.

BTW – when they make that statement – they are making the same statement as the question that is asked here in verse 9.

“I have not murdered anyone, therefore I must be better than that person”

It is offensive to admit that we are sinners.

And the thing to understand is that this objection is nothing new.

It’s as old as the human race.

Think about it?

When God challenged Adam just after he ate of the forbidden fruit, (Gen 3:11)

“Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?”

Instead of accepting his guilt & admitting his error (that he sinned), he put the blame on Eve – in fact, Adam put the blame on God. **“The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.”**

God goes to Eve - **“What is this you have done?”** The woman said, **“The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”**

Adam’s response – I am no sinner

Eve’s response – I am no sinner

All mankind in under sin

I had you make a note of that at the end of verse 9

Now, here is the interesting thing – we view as sin as something we do or don’t do.

“I am not a murderer”

But in the bible, sin is much more than just breaking the rules

Sin is much more that choosing our will over God’s will

Sin is much more that what it is –

it’s what it does.

Sin makes fellowship with God impossible.

And so – if we are left in our sinful condition, we will never become what we were created for.

To have an intimate relationship with God and experience fellowship with God

We will never experience the fullness and the richness of God's blessing – apart from Christ.

And apart from Christ – we have no hope – being deceived, thinking everything is ok when it is not.

So the whole world lies before God guilty –

Paul now, is going to use Old Testament scriptures to prove God's point home – that man is guilty.

10 As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one;

Question –

Why is it true that there's none righteous?

Because God's word says so.

Remember, I told you last week – that when Paul uses the phrase, "it is written"

He is not simply inviting us to turn back to the scriptures.

He is saying – God has already revealed this to be true in His word.

Paul is quoting Psalm 14:1

And we might paraphrase the verse to read –

there is not a single righteous person.

there is not a single righteous person.

there is not a single righteous person.

None.

Now – remember what righteousness is

Righteousness means the ability to stand before God accepted.

So what Paul is saying here in verse 10 is that apart from God, apart from Christ, apart from grace, apart from the gospel and apart from mercy – no one can stand before God on their own and say – “I’m fine the way I am”

You see, if we use other people as the standard for good –

We may find other people better than us and we might even consider ourselves better than other people.

But you are not the measure and I am not the measure that God uses for righteousness.

He is the measure

He is the standard

And that standard is absolute perfection.

No one meets the standard

Everyone has missed the mark

11 There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.

Let's look at the first part – there is none who understands

[1Co 2:14 NKJV] 14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know [them], because they are spiritually discerned.

Now, the point that Paul is arguing here in Romans and in his letter to Corinth is that because of our sinful nature – we are incapable of understanding spiritual things.

The only reason we enjoy spiritual discernment as a believer is because we have the Holy Spirit residing in us.

He has given us spiritual discernment.

His wisdom comes with divine revelation.

The same thing applies for those who seek after God.

No one – not one person has sought God with perfect motives.

Paul is basically saying that it is the work of God and it is the work of the Holy Spirit and the revelation of God that would prompt any person to even ask the question, "Where are You and who are You?"

Jesus said it -

[Jhn 15:16 NKJV] 16 "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and [that] your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.

12 They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one."

What about the person that does charity work.

What about the person that helps the needy

The person who opens up their home as a soup kitchen?

Paul is not saying that people are incapable of doing good deeds.

What Paul is speaking about are the individuals who do those things in hope that the accumulation of those good deeds will merit acceptance on the day of judgment.

And so, on the day of judgment, we come before God on the basis of what Jesus has done or we come before God on the basis of what we have done.

Are people capable of doing good things – absolutely.

But never profoundly and never consistently and never in such a way that it will undo the tragedy of sin.

Church, billions of people hold to the belief that if I put my good deeds on one side and my bad deeds on the other side – if my good deeds outweigh my bad deeds, God must accept me.

And Paul says – no.

13 "Their throat [is] an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit"; "The poison of asps [is] under their lips";

My very first job was working in a retirement home – the dining room was over a creek and one day a giant possum died underneath the floorboards of the dining room.

After three days of the smell – the manager started cutting holes on the walls and on the floor – because the smell was simply unbearable.

And after we finally found the possum – it took forever to get that smell out of the dining room.

That smell was unforgettable.

It was vile.

This is how Paul describes the depravity of humanity.

God knows what is inside of us

He knows the damage that sin has done to us

And He is being very real about it.

Not only do we have the smell of death –

But because of our sinful nature – we also have the habit of telling lies and using our words to hurt one another.

Paul says that we have these sacks of poison hidden under our lips.

Jesus puts it like this -

[Mat 12:34 NKJV] 34 "Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. 14 "Whose mouth [is] full of cursing and bitterness."

As horrible as the mouth is, it's only an extension of the heart. You can tell a lot about a person by the kinds of words that consistently come from their mouths.

Are we constantly complaining

Are we constantly being openly critical about people

Are we constantly voicing our bitterness.

If so, what does that tell us about ourselves?

You see church,

They key to the whole thing is the heart

And God wants to deal with the heart

Because if we deal with the heart, we have dealt with the throat and tongue and lips

This is why Jesus says later on in Matt 12

[Mat 12:36-37 NKJV] 36 "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. 37 "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

15 "Their feet [are] swift to shed blood; 16 Destruction and misery [are] in their ways; 17 And the way of peace they have not known."

Human beings, given the opportunity to act on their deeply held convictions – will.

Humans left to themselves are self-destructive.

Corruption, decay and deterioration are the inevitable outcome of humans left without Christ.

We see it in the world today.

Cities over ran with chaos.

And so what Paul is saying here is that human beings are incapable of experiencing peace because in their mind and in their heart and in their conduct and in the words that they speak, they have not known peace.

Paul writes that the presence of sin guarantees the absence of peace.

So the person who says, "I want peace"

"I want the peace that the bible speaks about"

Paul will tell us later on -

[Rom 5:1-2 NKJV] 1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

Why is it that our condition is so messed up? Why are our conversations filled with decay and death?

Why is our conduct so violent?

We have become complacent towards God.

We take our sin too lightly because we take God too lightly.

The vast majority of people refuse to retain God in their thinking

They don't trust Him

They don't respect Him

They don't have affection for Him

They won't submit to Him

And they won't embrace Him

The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." (Psalm 14:1)

He does not want to have to be accountable to God.

He pretends there is no judgment and so there is nothing to be afraid of.

So again, we see the depravity of humanity.

19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

If the Jews, who were God's covenantal people, could not even keep His Law, then it follows that no one else could keep it either.

The failure of the Gentiles is obvious (1:18-32), but here Paul is indicting the self-righteous Jews.

If they are guilty, then the whole world is also accountable to God.

If God would have chosen the Mayan people over the Jews – would they have kept the law? No

If God had entrusted any other group with the law would they have kept it? No

None will escape His judgment.

The Jew was thinking that he had it made because he had the Law.

What he didn't realize was that the Law didn't make him more righteous, it just showed him how sinful he was.

The law's purpose is to show us how guilty we are.

And we are all guilty.

20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law [is] the knowledge of sin.

For the person who continues to hold out hope

For the person who continues to say that people are basically good and they can be justified by their own good deeds.

That they can be justified by knowing the law and keeping the law and being a good person.

But the law was not given to justify people but to produce the knowledge of sin

I had you make a note of that very important

The law produces -

The knowledge of sin – not the knowledge of salvation

Paul is going to argue later on that the law is a mirror that reveals our defects

Just like when I get up in the morning and look at the mirror.

I got ear hair now!

If I rub the mirror on my face – will my ear hair go away? No

It challenges us, it convicts us – but it can't change us

The law is useless as a Savior from sin

The only real solution is Jesus

The is why it is so important to know Him and to love Him and to trust Him

The bible says that the Lord is patient toward you not wishing that any should perish but all should come to repentance.

Yet some – will still continue to be self-deceived into thinking that everything is good.

I am fine just the way I am

I don't need God

I don't need Jesus

I don't need the gospel

I am not sick.

So Paul coming to the end of his argument

Basically says, once we understand our true condition of our heart and our mind and our circumstances – we understand that we are sick

The question is – how will we respond.

Once we know what the problem is we can start seeking the right solution.

For me, it was never the threat of hell that brought me to a place of submission

It was the possibility that God could forgive someone like me

It was the idea that God loved me unconditionally – that He could never love me any more and He could never love me any less.

And loved ones – this is what makes the Book of Romans so powerful – this is grace.

Amen

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

Before we can be rescued by the Savior, we need to recognize that we are sinners in need of Him.

And those who put their faith and trust in Him are justified – just as if they had never sinned.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

