

## **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 the book of Romans

And we are actually going to begin a new chapter this morning.

And in this new chapter, Paul is going to continue to continue to lay the black velvet cloth to us before he reveals this glorious diamond – the Gospel of Grace.

And of course, we know the black velvet cloth as sin.

And the message the Paul wants to provide to the believers in Rome and to us – is that man without God, there is no hope in this world.

That hope is only found in Jesus Christ – that is the Gospel

Everyone needs Jesus -

We have already seen Paul make it very clear that those who are blatantly immoral – apart from Christ - they are condemned

Those that are self righteous, those that feel that they are good enough – apart from Christ – they are condemned

And even the outwardly religious person – those that are going to place their trust in their religious heritage or religious traditions / ceremonies – apart from Christ – they are also condemned.

Because as we know – God doesn't look at the outward,

He doesn't look at an individual and see if they are circumcised – like the Jews thought

(To many of the religious Jews – you had the circumcised line – going to heaven and the uncircumcised line going to hell)

He doesn't look at an individual to see if they have been water baptized, or if they have partaken of communion

Or what church they go to or what denomination they go to

God looks at the heart –

He looks at the inside – whether or not we have a relationship with Him.

Whether or not we have allowed the Holy Spirit to mark us from the inside – which would then, be manifested by the way we treat one another.

So Paul is going to continue to deal with the first major section of the book of Romans that deals with the wrath of God – we got about another week before we begin to look at the grace of God.

Let's pray...

## Read Text

One of my favorite folktales growing up was Hans Christian Anderson's "The Emperor's New Clothes."

If you never read it or don't remember reading it.

I am going to summarize it up for you.

It was about an emperor who all he cared about how people perceived him – particularly what clothes he wore.

In the story – it says that he would change outfits hourly – he lived in his dressing room - he was always looking for the next best outfit.

These two conmen they show up – they promise the emperor the most amazing outfit ever – this outfit was so amazing that it would become invisible to fools.

The emperor loves the idea – I could fire all the fools that serve me if I have this outfit.

So he pays these two guys a bunch of money, gives them the finest silk and thread in the land.

And the two guys pretend to go to work.

The emperor sends some of his men to check up on the progress of the outfit.

They see that it appears that the conmen are actually making an outfit – the problem is that they don't see an outfit.

They don't want the king to think they are fools – so they tell the emperor that the outfit is the most beautiful outfit that they have ever seen.

The Emperor goes in himself – he can't see anything either – but he doesn't want people to think that he is a fool –

And so finally the day comes when the emperor is going to show off his new clothes – he pretends to put on this outfit that was made, everyone in his court is pretending that they see it – there are even some pretending to pick up the mantle behind him – because nobody wants to be seen as a fool

And so, the Emperor stands in front of all his people – and a little child say, “he's got no clothes”

And then the people began to cry out – the emperor got no clothes.

The emperor suspected they were right –

but he continued the procession and walked more proudly than even.

Now, why am I using this illustration

Because Paul in his letter – he is the little child

Paul is telling the religious Jew, the religious person – apart from Christ – you got no clothes on.

The religious Jew, the religious Gentile – imagined themselves clothed in righteous garments that were nonexistent –

They were deluded with false religious confidence

And that is what Paul is doing here in our text –

He is peeling away the false religious confidence and demonstrating that it is not the external what matters but the internal.

**[Rom 3:1-8 NKJV] 1 What advantage then has the Jew, or what [is] the profit of circumcision?**

Over the last two Sunday's – Paul has made the argument to the religious Jew

That their heritage can't save them

That having the law can't save them

And that being circumcised doesn't save them either

So for the Jew who is reading this –

Paul anticipates the following questions

“If Paul is right, then what advantage is there to being a Jew if I am going to be judged just like the Gentiles”

“What is the point?”

“What does it matter if I keep the feasts?”

“Why even bother identifying with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob?”

And if there’s no advantage in being a Jew, why did God make Israel His chosen people in the first place?

Pause right there – because anybody who has studied the history of Judaism, might ask the same question.

Because of all the peoples who have ever lived, they have had a hard history.

They have seen slavery

Deportation

Persecution

Dispersion

Mass Genocide

Hardship after hardship

I am reminded of something that Tevye says in the Movie Fiddler on the Roof

After experiencing his own hardships as a Jew -

He looks up to God and says, "I know, I know we are your chosen people, but once in a while can't You choose someone else"

The truth is – they are God's people

They knew it

Paul knew it

Scripture affirmed it

**[Deu 14:2 NKJV] 2 "For you [are] a holy people to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples who [are] on the face of the earth.**

What advantage has the Jew?

Paul is going to answer those questions by saying that there were many advantages to being a Jew.

And the main advantage that the Jew had was they had been given God's Word.

**2 Much in every way! **Chiefly** because to them were committed the oracles of God.**

Notice the word chiefly – Paul says that there are other reasons why the Jews enjoyed advantage – but the main advantage the Jew had was that they had been given the scriptures.

They had a blueprint, not only for their religion but for ALL of life.

It informed their civil, social, & domestic lives.

It even provided guidelines to ensure their physical health.

Long before mankind knew about germs, The Law of Moses contained rules for diet & sanitation that ensured the diseases common to others would remain unknown to them.

During the Middle Ages, when the Plague was wiping out entire towns, Jewish neighborhoods were mostly untouched because they kept the sanitation laws and because they adhered to their kosher laws.

So there were practical advantages for them for having the word of God.

The word of God also included covenants of blessing to the Jews

They were given the advantage of bringing forth the Messiah

They also had the additional promises of God

They had previews of the future



And yet, while having this great honor and privilege, it also brought with them an enormous responsibility.

**“to whom much is given, much will be required”** (Luke 12:48)

Paul has already argued that simply having God’s word is not the same thing as believing God’s word or trusting God’s word

So, the person who grows up in a Christian home, where the bible is read, where the bible is loved and the bible is honored and the bible is obeyed – eventually becomes without excuse if they fail to live for the Lord.

**3 For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect?**

Here is objection #2 that Paul anticipates his reader asking –

Will Jewish unbelief cancel God’s faithfulness?

God considered the Jews trustworthy enough to give His Word to.

Just because some of the Jews were not “trust-worthy”, does their lack of “trust” make God’s “trust” of them to be pointless?

In other words - Because there were some Jews who did not believe God and His Word,

does that mean that God’s faith in them was worthless?

Does that mean that God was wasting His time when He gave them His Word?

Question?

Do God's plans change because of our unfaithfulness?

Imagine the persons who says they have a bible and read the bible but truly don't believe that Jesus is really coming back.

Is their unfaithfulness going to cause Jesus to say – “wow, all these people don't believe I am coming back – maybe I won't come back”

Are the laws of life and eternity established by God or are they established by you and me and our thoughts and our opinions and our ideas?

This is exactly what Paul is saying here - **Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect?**

We live in a society and a culture that is full of unbelief – does that negate truth? No

Will unbelief make something ineffective and not valid? No

If there is one thing in the universe that will remain constant and unchanging and unmoving it's God's faithfulness to what He has promised.

What He has said – He will do

What He has promised – He will fulfill

And Paul answers the question in verse 4

**4 Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written:**

**"That You may be justified in Your words, And may overcome when You are judged."**

If God says one thing, and every man in the world says another, God is true, and all men are false.

God speaks the truth, and cannot lie.

I had you make a note of the phrase "as it is written"

Paul uses this phrase 12 times in the book of Romans – he already used it in chapter 1 when he quotes Habakuk.

And the reason that I had you make a note of it is because of the meaning.

You see, when Paul writes, it is written – he is not inviting the reader to simply turn their bibles to Psalm 51:4 – which he is quoting.

David, in his Psalm, as he is confessing his sin, he is hoping to confirm God's justice and holy character, proving that God's commands were good and just even when David broke them.

It goes beyond that –

He is saying, God has already revealed Himself on this matter and it shall stand.

When God says something about a particular issue – it is settled. end of discussion right?

**[Eze 12:25 NKJV] 25 "For I [am] the LORD. I speak, and the word which I speak will come to pass; it will no more be postponed; for in your days, O rebellious house, I will say the word and perform it," says the Lord GOD.' "**

You see loved ones –

God's truth doesn't depend on you and me believing it to be true.

Believing in God is vital for salvation.

We are saved from the penalty of our sins when we start trusting in God.

But the truth of man being judged one day by God,

the truth of my sins carrying a penalty,

the truth that Jesus died for my sins,

the truth that God loves me so much that He gave His Son to die for me –

these truths are real whether or not I believe them.

My believing in them only affects how these truths affect me, not whether or not they are real.

**5 But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? [Is] God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.) 6 Certainly not! For then how will God judge the world?**

Here is the next question that Paul anticipates from his reader.

“If our own wickedness simply shows that God is really, really good, then why should God be judging and punishing us sinners if we are only making it plain just how much greater He is.

In other words -

Why does God punish us for making Him look good?”

And Paul makes it very clear that he is using human logic as he asks the question.

He knows that the religious Jews are going to want to question God’s judgment.

And so Paul responds with – that a bunch of nonsense.

Paul argues that following this logic (vs 5) God would be barred from judging the world – including Gentiles.

If the unrighteousness of man enhances the righteousness of God, then God could never judge sin justly.

And Paul says that the opposite is true –

God will judge all unbelieving Jews, just like He will all unbelieving Gentiles.

Let there be no mistake, there is no special exemption for anyone who is outside of the Lord Jesus Christ to escape the judgment of God.

God is righteous in His judgment of sinners, and this includes Jews.

**7 For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner? 8 And [why] not [say], "Let us do evil that good may come"?'--as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just.**

I have used the illustration over the last few weeks of the black velvet cloth that Paul is setting up before he reveals the gospel to his readers.

And so as Paul is writing this letter – he knows that there are people in Rome who have been slandering Paul by telling people that Paul is giving a license to sin.

Some people are claiming that Paul has been teaching people that they should go out and do bad things in order to make God look that much better by forgiving them.

In other words – they were making the claim that more glory was brought to the Gospel by making the background darker.

If God's forgiveness appears greater when there's more to be forgiven, then it's good to sin more!

If God's glory is made clearer by contrast with man's sin – then heap more glory to Him by sinning like crazy.

And Paul says at the end of verse 8 is that these individuals are going to face God's judgment.

By the way –

One of the areas where I see similarities with this is when some people give their testimony.

Sometimes we think that the focus of our testimony is on how bad we were before having a relationship with Jesus –

When the focus should be on Him and what He did on the cross for us.

You see, Paul knew while people would only reach out to a Savior if they realized their need, he also knew God's glory isn't made brighter by being compared to man's spiritual darkness.

Here is what Paul is arguing –

We can't celebrate goodness by celebrating wickedness.

What we sow – eventually we are going to reap.

There are preachers today who even make the claim that if we are really saved by grace through faith alone, why not just go ahead and live the way we want and sin as

much as we want because God's grace abounds over man's sin and the more we sin the more grace abounds –

BTW

Paul actually addresses this in Romans 6

**[Rom 6:1-2 NKJV] 1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?**

As a believer in Jesus Christ – we must by faith, reckon it to be true what the bible says about us and our lives is true.

That when Jesus died on the cross – we died on the cross

When Jesus dies on the cross – our wickedness died on the cross as well

But in order for us to reckon it to be true – a fundamental change has to occur inside of us.

It is a work that only God can do in our lives and not religion

Where we begin to understand what it means to have hope

What it means to have love

What it means to have grace

What it means to experience His mercy



You see church, there is no refuge in religion

There is no refuge in morality

The only refuge

The only safe refuge is Jesus Himself.

May God help us to be in that place where we experience the grace of God

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,



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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.

[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.!



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