

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAR 20TH - 21ST, 2021 // BOOK OF ROMANS

PUSHBACK (ROMANS 3:1-8)

KEEPING THINGS IN BALANCE

In ch. 2 Paul criticizes the Roman Jews for thinking they're better than non-Jews because of their knowledge of God. Paul tells them that their knowledge and religious practice is pointless if there is no relationship with God.

- In ch. 3 Paul will balance that criticism with objections the Jews may have had with his earlier points. **"SO WHAT IS THE ADVANTAGE OF BEING A JEW?"**

The 1st advantage Paul mentions is that they have been taught the Word of God. Though all people are welcomed into the kingdom of God, the Jews still hold a special place in that kingdom.

- We have to be careful with this. Though the Jewish people have been honored by being the first to receive truth, **they must still act on that truth and accept Christ.**

JUDGING GOD BY HIS WORD

The 2nd advantage the Jews had was that even in their unfaithfulness throughout history, God was still faithful to the promise He made to Abraham.

- **When God makes a promise He keeps it. This doesn't give us license to be unfaithful, but in His grace we receive more than we were ever faithful for.**

WE CAN'T THINK OF GOD IN PURELY HUMAN TERMS

In v5-8 Paul is making the argument that just because God is faithful and gracious doesn't mean that we abuse that grace by doing whatever we want.

- **In our selfish human nature we often think of Jesus as an emasculated Santa Claus in the sky that blesses us but never holds us accountable. This is cheap grace.**

WE ARE HERE (I HOPE) TO BE CHANGED

The point Paul is trying to make is that we cannot go on living in sin expecting to gain the things of God. God is righteous, and in that he deals with evil in us when we convert and all the evil in the world at the end of time.

- **Maybe the reason many people never experience true transformation is because they never truly submit?**

GUILTY (ROMANS 3:9-20)

"ARE WE BETTER OFF?"

Paul makes it clear that some people have more advantages than others, but that doesn't mean that they are better. Essentially, God doesn't love the privileged any more than the underprivileged.

- **"Better off" is relative because we now understand that more access to truth means more responsibility for it (ch. 2).**

"ALL UNDER SIN"

Though some have more advantages, "both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin." All people have fallen short, therefore all people need a Savior.

- Paul makes it clear that this isn't a new idea, but that **the OT says that we all lack understanding and are all prone to seeking our desires over God.**

THIS IS NOT FROM A POSTURE OF CONDEMNATION

Paul doesn't point out the sin and shortcomings of humanity to make the Jews or us today feel condemned. The Bible does rebuke and correct (2 Tim. 3:16), but the discipline is from a God that loves and wants the best for us.

- **It is from a posture of love that people are set free. We must remember this when we discipline others.**

WE (SUPPOSEDLY) CLAIM ALLEGIANCE

All the Bible does is ask us to uphold the standard that we claim to already follow.

- To be a Christian means that we are modeling our lives and actions off the example of Jesus Christ. **It is audacious for the follower/creation to challenge the decision of the Leader/Creator.**

THE LAW DOESN'T SET US FREE (V.19-20)

Jesus made it clear in Mt. 5 that we're incapable of completely following the 10 C's, hence why we need Him as an advocate. Paul echoes this by telling us that the Law only defines what is right and wrong, but cannot save us.

- **It is only by God's Spirit and His grace that we can live a life that is free from sin's claims.**

FAITH (ROMANS 3:21-26)

"BUT NOW..."

Paul presented the bad news first: we are broken, selfish sinners that deserve death and wrath with no hope of living good enough to earn salvation.

- **The good news is that the answer to our depravity, sin, and hopelessness has been revealed by the prophesied Savior of the OT, Jesus Christ.**

"FOR ALL HAVE SINNED AND FALL SHORT"

We don't have to feel isolated because of our mistakes, because everyone has sinned. All of us have access to salvation through faith because there's no "distinction" among us.

- **The great news is that we "are justified (made right before God) freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."**

THE LOST BEING REDEEMED!

Jesus came as an "atoning sacrifice" to "demonstrate His righteousness" and give us the ability to escape the ramifications of living in opposition to God.

- **We are unable to be made right by the Law or by our good works, so the author of the Law came to be an advocate for us when we fall short.**

IS GOD FAIR?

One may ask how a righteous God can allow such unrighteous people the opportunity to be saved. We often say "God is fair," but maybe we should change that verbiage.

- **Because Jesus became the "mercy seat," God gave to us the opportunity to obtain something we could never earn: salvation.**

THIS IS ALL CONTINGENT ON FAITH

Faith is more than just believing. True saving faith is belief in, trust in, obedience to, and reliance on Jesus Christ. Without this kind of faith in Jesus, there is no hope of salvation.

- **If we have true faith, our just Judge becomes the Justifier as well.** In His goodness, God relieves us of our guilt and shame that are by-products of sin.

WE SHOULD TRY TO STAY IN THE LANE

Since we are "saved by grace through faith" (Eph. 2:8-9), we should not only strive to uphold the commands of God, but also live repentant lives when we fail. Though we know we will make mistakes, we cannot stop pursuing holiness.

- **God doesn't require perfection but persistence! He wants us to want Him.**

BOASTING (ROMANS 3:27-31)

THE CHRISTIAN HAS NO ROOM FOR ARROGANCE

There is no reason to brag when what we possess was a gift from someone else. Faith is simply saying yes to the plan of God and the redemption and direction that comes from it. Our salvation is not from our works.

- **True Christians are humble.** Jesus gives us so many examples of choosing to be servants and putting others first.

THE ONE THAT BRAGS LOOKS LIKE A FOOL

Jesus tells us to choose the seat of humility or we will be embarrassed when we are humbled by taking the high seat (Luke 14).

- The Gospel teaches us that we have nothing to be arrogant about and Jesus can prove it. **Again, we are incapable of honoring the Law without God's help and grace.**

THE LAW SHOULD HUMBLE AND ALIGN US

Paul says, "Do we then nullify the law through faith? Absolutely not! On the contrary, we uphold the law." This means just because we are saved by grace doesn't mean we can be arrogant and live however we choose.

- **Though we know we will fail at times, we must submit to Christ and aim to keep the commands of God.**

HAVE WE MADE EXCUSES?

- Do we use the excuse that "all have sinned" as a means to continue sinning?
- Do we welcome all of the instruction of the Word of God?
- Do we understand that we need God's help and grace in order to live out the commands of God? We cannot be good before God without God's help!

HAVE WE EXPERIENCED FREEDOM?

- Is it possible that we have not experienced complete freedom because we have not completely surrendered?
- Do we realize that no matter how evil we have been we have an Advocate and that He loves us very much? Do you believe that He can deliver us from evil?

IT IS NOT BY OUR WORKS.

- This is not something we have earned. We have the opportunity to receive something we can never acquire on our own: salvation, peace, and a true and pure love.
- The gift of salvation should humble us, because we are incapable of saving ourselves.

EVERYTHING IS ON THE LINE.

- If we will repent, believe in, trust in, obey, and rely on Jesus, we will be saved.
- After salvation we will fall, but if we return to the Father in humility, He will always welcome us back.
- Do we understand the magnitude of what we have just discussed?