

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MARCH 21ST, 2021 // BOOK OF ROMANS

## RIGHT AND WRONG (ROMANS 3:1-8)

### ENTRUSTED WITH

The Jewish people are the promised people of God in whom all people are brought back to God. They were entrusted to carry something very valuable: the message of God!

- **When we carry something of importance, it's not just for the person carrying it, but the whole community. God's message is never just for us!**

### GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

So, Paul asks then, did God break his promise to the Jewish people? No. God's work is always conditional to our obedience. God didn't break His covenant, His people did! He always fulfills His end of the deal.

- **God is restoring His creation, and will fully restore it! God will use whoever is willing and obedient!**

### PSALM 51

St. Paul shows God is faithful by referring to Ps 51. There, King David laments his sin. And he begs God to purify him and remove the stain of his guilt. Help me, I can't do this!

- **Then the Psalm says: "The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit. You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God. Look with favor on Zion..."**

### THE REQUIREMENT

Our end of the bargain is a broken spirit and repentant heart. The Psalm St. Paul quotes goes on: "You are not pleased with a burnt offering." Faith and works has always been there.

- **It's not our religious practice that God desires. It's humble openness to His will. Brokenness and repentance is the work needed because our will gets clouded.**

### IS GOD UNRIGHTEOUS TO INFLICT WRATH?

God is righteous (perfect being outside of space and time) and can make proper judgments. God is pure, unclouded, and full of "unfailing love."

- **We are not! We are often clouded and make bad (moral) judgment calls. We need a Creator who sets direction and holds us accountable. Wrath is God's natural consequences to created order.**

## JUSTICE (ROMANS 3:9-20)

### IN THE SAME BOAT

The Jewish people were supposed to be the messengers. But St. Paul makes clear we all would be bad messengers, because we are under the influence of the darkness. We call this sin.

- **Even if you don't believe in God, we cannot deny that we, as humans, are incredibly petty, selfish, and duplicitous. There is something "off" with humans.**

### PSALMS IN CONTEXT

Paul starts quoting several Psalms to prove this point. These 5 Psalms (and Isaiah) talk about the corruption and hatred of humanity, of which some are the people of God! They talk about the ulterior motives of humans. It captures well our human plight.

- **And King David cries out: "who will rescue and restore God's people?"**

### THE BROKENNESS OF OUR WORLD

Yet, there is a lot of hurt and brokenness in our world (lies, brutality, etc.). We can all recognize that, right? Some of us have inflicted that pain ourselves (if we're honest). It's all around. We want justice for innocent children and senseless death. (Dachau)

- **Isaiah says the same thing: "There is no justice among us!" (Isaiah 59:9)**

### THE NEED FOR JUSTICE

If we recognize that something is "off" and the world needs justice, then there must be an ultimate lawgiver, and we aren't it! God's law, both in general and Jewish, merely makes us painfully aware of that fact. We are a part of the problem too.

- **We need a judge who can properly administer justice for all. We can know it's wrong, but we now need help!**

## THE CURE (ROMANS 3:21-26)

### HELP THROUGH JESUS

We can all recognize the world is broken. But Paul offers hope with this great declaration: "But now!" Now God's justice has come through the obedience of Jesus.

- **Jesus' life, death, and resurrection shifted humanity's course forever (international law, hospitals). Change only happens with those who believe.**

## REDEMPTION

Paul reminds us again, that we are all sinners, everyone falls short of God's image. We all contribute to humanity's demise. We have not been who we were supposed to be! But God bought back His creation.

- **Jesus is the picture of what it means to be human: humble submission and obedience. We only have hope in Him.**

### "GOD PASSED OVER THE SINS..."

Justice means there are consequences for sinful behavior. God dealt with sin on the cross. There is a great amount of pain, beauty, hope, and mystery in the cross. It's the pinnacle of the Gospel message, and it's the only hope for our brokenness.

- **It's only in obedient faith and humble submission to the way of the cross that we have hope for this world and the next.**

## LAW OF FAITH (ROMANS 3:27-31)

### NO ONE CAN BOAST

The cross is the great equalizer. If we all deserve justice, to make things right, but we all can't get there, what then? Jesus' work on the cross makes a way to justice for all of us.

- **When we believe in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and submit to our Creator, he starts to make us "right" as well as the world that we touch!**

### HOPE FOR THE WORLD

The Jewish nation used obedience to the Torah (Jewish Law) as the marker for the people of God, those who were "redeemed." But Paul is saying that didn't get the job done. So, God made a way for all creation: Jesus.

- **As Saint Peter said: "Only [Jesus] has the words of eternal life." If we have "obedient faith," we have hope today!**

### "... THROUGH FAITH..."

Faith in Jesus should never be a throwaway statement. The claims of Jesus demand our utmost attention. Either we believe in Jesus, or we don't. Do we have faith?

- **Faith in Jesus is not and never will be of cognitive ascent. Jesus has made the way of the cross, and faith is about submitting and obeying His way!**

### WHAT ABOUT THE LAW?

St. Paul asks, does the law of faith mean God's law given through the Jewish people is worthless? Paul covers this again and again: it doesn't. But we cannot even think to fulfill God's law without faith in God, through Jesus, empowered by the Holy Spirit.

- **We are not God and cannot live well without submission to God and His will!**

## INJUSTICE

- **Do we recognize the injustices in the world? Does the brokenness pain us?**
- **Do we recognize the injustices in ourselves?**
- **We subtly gossip about others. We betray trust. We want power. We're prideful. We're unfaithful with lust. We lie to ourselves and others. Does this trouble us too?**

## THE SOLUTION

- **Do we realize that God came to earth to redeem all creation? That includes us!**
- **Does it make sense that God had to bring justice to the world?**
- **His justice is tangibly seen in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Because of that, we have hope! The world is being redeemed, and one day will be fully.**

## LAW OF FAITH

- **By faith, we can be a part of that solution too! There is no greater purpose.**
- **Through obedient faith we can have peace, hope, and love. And we can bring that to the world around us.**
- **Are we allowing God to make things right within us through submission to the way of the cross?**