

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

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

## THREE OBJECTIONS (ROMANS 3:1-8)

All of humanity is under the wrath of God and is therefore in need of salvation from something outside of ourselves.

- The Gentiles, pagans, and rebellious people are guilty (chapter 1), but so are the Jews, moral, and religious people (chapter 2).
- Now Paul will answer 3 objections/questions someone might raise in following his argument.

**Objection 1:** "What advantage is it to be a Jew?" (vs. 1-2)

- If the Jews are the chosen people of God, but simply being Jewish (circumcision) doesn't save them, what good is it to be Jewish?
- Many people wonder the same thing about church attendance, bible reading, small group, etc.
- Paul answers that it has many advantages, but particularly the fact that they possess and have proximity to God's Word and written revelation.

**Objection 2:** "Will Jewish unbelievers cancel God's faithfulness?" (vs. 3-4)

- If many who grew up in a religious environment surrounded by spiritual symbols that point them to Jesus don't put faith in Him, does that mean that God isn't faithful?
- Not at all - those who don't believe in no way diminish the value of the promise God makes to those who do believe.

**Objection 3:** "If our sin commends His righteousness, how then can God judge us?" (vs. 5-8)

- This is the logic of a person who might ask, "When God forgives a sinner, his grace and goodness are shown - so should I just keep sinning to give Him opportunity to manifest His grace?"
- "How can God judge me if my sin demonstrates His righteousness? Doesn't that just mean my sin brings about something good?"

Yes, God does use our sin to display His glory in forgiving us and showing us grace (Gen. 50:20), BUT human beings are still responsible for our sin and we will still be held accountable for it.

- We're guilty - there is nothing good or pure in the motives of our hearts before we are saved.
- So, it's no credit to us when God is able to still bring good out of our evil.
- We still stand guilty before God.

## NO - ONE IS RIGHTEOUS (ROMANS 3:9-20)

ALL UNDER SIN (VS. 9)

Jews, Greeks, pagans, moralists, rebels, rule - followers, church people, and bar-hoppers are the same in that we are all, "under sin".

- None of us are, "any better off" - we are all, "under sin" - literally, "slaves" to sin.
- We are slaves in that we are owned by the guilt and condemnation of it, and in that we are controlled by its power and dominion.

"NONE IS RIGHTEOUS, NO, NOT ONE" (VS. 10)

Paul quotes from Isaiah & Psalms as proof from God's written revelation of the universal depravity and guilt of mankind.

- Human history is not good people versus bad people - it is the story of bad people being saved, rescued, restored, and redeemed by a good God that came in the form of the only perfect man - and we're so bad we killed Him!

"...NO ONE UNDERSTANDS OR SEEKS GOD" (VS. 11)

We don't understand both the holiness and perfection of God AND our own levels of depravity and sin.

- We're not even able to seek God on our own strength - we sometimes may seek things we think God might give us (peace, comfort, prosperity, blessings), but not God for God.
- God finds and seeks us (Luke 19:10).

"...THEY HAVE TURNED ASIDE...BECOME WORTHLESS" (VS. 12)

Because we've turned aside from God and His commands, together as human beings we've become "unprofitable".

- The word has the idea of rotten fruit - it speaks of something that has become corrupted, decaying, and is therefore unable to be used.
- We were created sinless, but because of sin humanity has become corrupted.

WICKEDNESS IN SPEECH (VS. 13-14)

The corruption of humanity is evidenced by how we have used our speech.

- God used words to create life (Gen. 1), but we've used our mouths to deceive, slander, gossip, curse, and spread bitterness and pain.
- Jesus connected our words with our character in Matt. 12:34 - spiritually dead people can only produce death from their mouths.

WICKEDNESS IN ACTION (VS. 15-16)

The paradox of humanity is that we can create hospitals, schools, and beautiful art, but at the same time we're capable of senseless, cruel, and even unusual violence and bloodshed.

- The same darkness that brings about, "ruin and misery" exists in the heart of every human being through things like hatred, racism, cruelty, and contempt.

WICKEDNESS IN OUR HEARTS & MINDS (VS. 17-18)

It's not just that we commit acts of sin in our words and deeds, our minds and hearts aren't set on honoring God and His will.

- Every sin and rebellion against God occurs because we don't have a proper respect for Him in our

hearts and minds.

- Our central sin is that we want to be in charge and we want our own way and not God's.

These quotations lead us to one resounding and obvious conclusion - no-one on earth is able to keep God's perfect law.

- Therefore, no-one can be saved by keeping the law - "...by the works of the law no human being will be justified." (vs. 20)
- The law gives us the diagnosis, but it's not the cure- because of the law we know that we're sinners in need of salvation!

## GOOD NEWS (ROMANS 3:21-31)

Verse 21 provides a glorious transition from the judgment of God to the good news of Christ's saving work.

- For 2 ½ chapters Paul has been laboring to get us to see our absolute hopelessness apart from Jesus, the depth of our depravity and sin, and our inability to save ourselves from law - keeping.
- "But now..." - because of what Jesus has done, we can be declared righteous by God.

The theological term for this salvation is justification by faith.

- Justification is the act of God where He declares the believing sinner righteous in Jesus on the basis of the finished work of Christ on the cross.
- When we trust Christ, God declares us righteous immediately and permanently.
- The heart of the "good news" (gospel) is that God puts the righteousness of Christ on our record in the place of our own sinfulness!

## APART FROM THE LAW (VS. 21)

The law reveals to us our sinfulness and need for a savior, but it can't make us righteous because we can't keep it.

- The salvation offered to us is, "apart from the law" - apart from our own earning & deserving, and apart from our own merits.
- "The law & prophets bear witness to it" - God's plan was predicted long ago and Jesus was prophesied as the one who would save us.

## THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST (VS. 22A)

We've been told how righteousness doesn't come - it's not through keeping the law, it comes apart from the law.

- How does it come? "Through faith in Jesus Christ"
- It's not ours by faith; it's ours through faith.
- We don't earn righteousness by our faith - we receive righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ.

## FOR ALL WHO BELIEVE (VS. 22B-23)

We're all sinned and, "fallen short of the glory of God" - we're not only active transgressors against God's law, we've also failed to live up to God's standards.

- But anyone who believes (pisteos - "trusts in", "gives allegiance to") can receive this righteousness gained through faith in Jesus.
- There is no other way to obtain this righteousness.

## BY GRACE (VS. 24)

We are "declared righteous" (justified) by His grace as a gift.

- God in His mercy does not give us what we do deserve (judgment), and God in His grace gives us what we don't deserve (salvation).
- This was done by the redemption that is in Christ.
- Redemption is the buying back of something, and involves cost, but it's a cost that God paid.

## AT GREAT COST TO GOD (VS. 24B-25)

Salvation is free, but it's not cheap.

- God paid the ultimate price in sending His son, Jesus, for our salvation.
- "Propitiation" means to satisfy the demands of justice, and Jesus did this by His blood.
- Your sin called for blood to be shed (Lev. 17:11), but Jesus' blood was shed in your place so that God the Father would "pass over" your sin.

## IN PERFECT JUSTICE (VS. 25-26)

God must be perfectly consistent with His own nature, for to be righteous, He cannot violate His own justice or His own love.

- A God of holiness must punish sin and uphold His righteous law, but a God of love must make a way for humanity to be saved and forgiven.
- God showed His righteousness in that He is the just (required a sacrifice for sin), and the justifier (the one who paid the price with His own life).

Once we truly understand what God has done for us in Jesus, it absolutely obliterates any ridiculous delusion we might hold onto that we "earned it" (vs. 27-28).

- The gospel destroys any possibility of us ever boasting because grace refuses to acknowledge our own merits and gives no place for our pride.
- If we boast in anything, it should be in the one who did the saving - and that wasn't us!

The same faith that's the instrument of salvation for the "Gentiles" (the rebellious, rule-breaking, heathens) is the instrument of salvation for the "Jews" (the religious, rule-following, moralists) - and vice versa (vs. 29-30).

- When we finally understand the gospel, any delusions that we're better than anyone else disappear.
- The gospel doesn't void the law either (vs. 31), but more on that later (chapters 5-6).

## "GIVE US BARABBAS!" (MATT. 27)