

New Community Bible Study & Teaching

“God’s Law & Brokenness- What’s The Story?”

Romans 3:1-20

Session 5

Thesis of Romans (Main Point): Romans 1:16

Read Romans 3:1-20

Lectio Divina – the process of reading the Bible, and in doing so receiving divine insight from God

Step 1: Read the passage.

Step 2: Meditate on the passage.

Step 3: Pray

Step 4: Contemplate and discuss what stuck out to us from the passage.

Last session we talked about God’s judgment and the Law, and in chapter three Paul transitions to talking about the righteousness of God. The main point that Paul is making is that everyone has sinned.

I. God’s Righteousness Upheld (3:1-8)

Verse 1: After arguing that the Spirit’s work in Gentiles renders them true Jews and the true circumcision, Paul raises the logical question of whether there is any advantage or value in being an ethnic Jew and physically circumcised.

Discussion Question: What is the point of all the rules of Christianity?

Verses 2: Paul answers his question with the strong statement, “Much in every way.” The main reason Paul gives is that the Jews possessed the oracles of God, or the Old Testament. They got to carry the word of God. (Paul completes this list in Romans 9:4-5)

Verse 3: Even though some of the Jews were unfaithful and refused to trust and obey God, he remains faithful to them and therefore will fulfill His covenant promises, particularly in His promise to save them (faithfulness).

Verse 4: Paul rejects any suggestion that God could fail in terms of His faithfulness. This is the first of ten occurrences in Romans of the expression “may it never be!” Paul uses this language to make a vehement denial of a conclusion that must be resisted. God’s faithfulness is a fixed point in Paul’s universe, as He believes that that faithfulness of God is unchangeable.

One of the best men in Israel's history, declared to be the man after God's own heart, proved a disappointment. After being chastened for his sin and refusal to confess it for a long period, David was ready to admit that God was in the right and he was in the wrong. Psalm 51:4 states, "Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what it evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment (Create In Me A Clean Heart, O God)."

Verse 5: Paul considers a false implication that could be drawn from his argument. If the Jews could repent only by God's grace, then it would be unrighteous, according to Paul's Jewish opponents, for God to pour out his wrath on those who did not repent, since as sinners they were unable to respond to him.

Verse 6: Paul does not provide a full answer to the objection here. He shows that the Jewish objector's position is untenable, for then God could not judge the world either, and then no evil behavior would be punished.

Verses 7-8: Indeed, some of Paul's Jewish opponents insisted that he taught the doctrine of cheap grace. Paul rejects such a view but waits until chapter six to examine this charge in more detail.

Discussion Question: What is our response when someone tells us that they are just going to keep sinning, and then later on in life repent so that they can go to heaven? What is the benefit of a long term relationship with Jesus here on earth?

II. No One Is Righteous (3:9-20)

Paul's argument about the human problem of sin reaches its climax in these verses. He seals his argument in the most powerful way, with the quotation of a montage of Scripture passages that indict humanity before the bar of God's righteousness. Paul's argument about sin thus finds its basis and final authority in Scripture.

Discussion Question: What is your response to the statement, "No one is righteous." Do you agree? Disagree? What thoughts/feelings are you thinking about?

Verse 9: Even though God has promised to fulfill his saving promises to the Jewish people, they do not possess any inherent advantages, for they too are under the power of sin.

Verses 10-18: A final and clinching argument seals the verdict: the testimony of Scripture. Writing to those who are for the most part Gentiles. Paul does not set down Scripture first and then work from that as a base for exposition; rather he comes to the Old Testament only at the conclusion of his argument to substantiate what he has already established.

Verse 19-20: These verses represent the culmination and conclusion of verses 9-18 and all of 1:18-3:20, showing at all, without exception, are sinners.

Next week: Pastor Ben will be speaking on Romans 3:21-31 which speak about justification by faith.