

Introduction (Rom 3:1-20)

Next weekend is Labor Day Weekend. Labor Day Weekend is a great memory for me, as I was saved during the Elk Labor Day Golf Tournament in Duncan, OK. For other, Labor Day is not a good weekend. It has one of the highest death rates from accidents of the year. “The National Safety Council (NSC) estimates 466 people may die on U.S. roads this Labor Day holiday period.”¹ The police are aware of this and many have already announced a high visibility engagement campaign called STOP-DWI, which will run from August 20 through September 6. The local police, state police, and sheriff offices will coordinate the awareness, education, and enforcement activities. Even though people will be made aware of the campaign, and laws about drinking and driving, there will be many that ignore this, and will be found guilty when they have to give account before the judge.

Paul has been talking about the wrath to come on judgment day when everyone must give account for their deeds. Romans 1-3 is part of the gospel message that Paul is writing to the church in Rome. In Romans 1, he addressed the most vile and depraved sinners, saying that they are without excuse because God has revealed His invisible attributes and also the wrath to come, and that they have rejected God. In Romans 2, Paul turned his attention to the morally upright and self-righteous people, and he said that they were also without excuse. They will not be judged on what they know or their family heritage; they will be judged according to their deeds by an impartial judge. Since they are violators of the law, their Jewish heritage, their Law, and their circumcision will not spare them of the wrath to come; they are also without excuse. In Romans 3, the self-righteous Jews would naturally ask what advantage is it to be a Jew if these three things are of no merit in the day of judgment. Paul told them that the greatest benefit of being a Jew was that they had been given the oracles of God.

In our text today, Paul tells us that even though some of the Jews had not believed, that this did not nullify God’s faithfulness. God’s wrath on the unrighteous demonstrates His righteousness. When considering the wrath at judgment, the Jews are no better off than the Greeks. God will judge both the Jew and the Gentile; everyone must give account to God.

(Rom 3:1-20) “Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? {2} Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God. {3} What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it? {4} May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man *be found* a liar, as it is written, *‘that you may be justified in your words, and prevail when you are judged.’* {5} But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is He? (I am speaking in human terms.) {6} May it never be! For otherwise, how will God judge the world? {7} But if through my lie the truth of God abounded to His glory, why am I also still being judged as a sinner? {8} And why not *say* (as we are slanderously reported and as some claim that we say), “Let us do evil that good may come”? Their condemnation is just. {9} What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; {10} as it is written, *‘There is none righteous, not even one; {11} there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; {12} all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one. {13} Their throat is an open grave, with their tongues they keep deceiving, the poison of asps is under their lips; {14} whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; {15} their feet are swift to shed blood,*

¹ <https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/motor-vehicle/holidays/labor-day/>

{16} *destruction and misery are in their paths, {17} and the path of peace they have not known. {18} There is no fear of God before their eyes.* ' {19} Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God; {20} because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin."

All Have Sinned

1. God's Righteousness
2. Man's Sinfulness
3. All Must Give Account to God

1. God's Righteousness (Rom 3:1-8)

Last week we looked at the first two verses of Romans 3. Paul addresses the natural questions about what advantage is it to be a Jew, or what benefit is it to be circumcised. He answered, "Great in every respect." There were advantages and benefits to being Jews. The greatest advantage was that they had been entrusted with the oracles of God. I gave you a sampling of the many features, advantages, and benefits of the Word of God. You and I have also been given God's word, and we need to appreciate and take advantage of the treasure God has given us.

(Rom 3:1-2) "Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? {2} Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God."

Paul's next question is, "What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it?" God is going to judge all men according to their deeds. If some Jews, who were given God's covenant and His law, did not believe, does that nullify or make void God's faithfulness to the Jews? We enter into God's covenant through faith. Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. Paul ended Romans 2 by stating that "he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter." God's covenant was with those who believed by faith. Those that did not believe did not nullify God's faithfulness.

(Rom 3:3) "What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it?"

(Rom 2:28-29) "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. {29} But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God."

Paul answers his question, "May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar..." Man's unbelief would never nullify God's faithfulness. So, when God judges and inflicts wrath on the unrighteous, which would include the Jews who did not believe, He was acting righteously.

(Rom 3:4-6) "May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man *be found* a liar, as it is written, "THAT YOU MAY BE JUSTIFIED IN YOUR WORDS, AND PREVAIL WHEN YOU ARE JUDGED." {5} But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is

He? (I am speaking in human terms.) {6} May it never be! For otherwise, how will God judge the world?"

When Kathleen was in the hospital being treated for leukemia, a pastor friend of mine, counseled me to take her out of the hospital. He said that Kathleen was healed, and that the doctors were liars. He used this verse to say that all men were liars, and that the medical staff who diagnosed my daughter with leukemia were liars." It so happened that her doctor happened to be a Christian and he was not lying about Kathleen's diagnosis. There is a segment of the body of Christ that believe that all sickness was taken care of at the cross, and any sickness experienced by believers is a lack of faith or applied faith. Healing for every physical sickness or ailment is part of the atonement package and needs to be applied in our lives. This is not what Paul is saying in this passage. Paul is saying that God gave His covenant to Abraham, and Abraham believed God. This covenant was for all his descendants, but they would have to believe God to enter that covenant. The fact that some did not believe does not nullify God's faithfulness. The fact that those who do not believe will face the wrath of God does not nullify God's faithfulness. Though men may lie, God is righteous and true, and when He judges the unrighteous, it demonstrates His righteousness.

Paul's next argument seems odd, but he wrote it because people had used some faulty logic and twisted Paul's teaching. There are some people who will twist things for their own benefit. If our lies cause the truth of God to abound to His glory, why should I be judged. If my sins and unrighteousness demonstrate the righteousness of God, then why not do evil so that good may come? Men are always looking for a loophole to get what they want or the freedom to do what they want. We twist things to justify our actions. If we had the freedom to sin, and this would result in God's righteousness being revealed, their condemnation would be just.

(Rom 3:7-8) "But if through my lie the truth of God abounded to His glory, why am I also still being judged as a sinner? {8} And why not *say* (as we are slanderously reported and as some claim that we say), "Let us do evil that good may come"? Their condemnation is just."

2. **Man's Sinfulness** (Rom 3:8-18)

Paul's next questions are, "What then? Are we better than they?" Paul has been talking about the immoral pagan in Romans 1. He has addressed the self-righteous Jews in Romans 2. Now he brings up "we." Who does the "we" refer to? Some think he is referring to the Jews, but that does not fit. In verse eight, he mentioned, "as we are slanderously reported and as some claim that we say." The "we" is obviously speaking about Paul and his team. I feel comfortable expanding the "we" to include all Christians. Are Christians better than the most vile pagan sinner, or the most hypocritical, self-righteous Jew? Paul answered, "not at all." Christians are not some elite group that is better than the rest of the world. Christians should not have an attitude of superiority. I think Jesus addressed this with His disciples. He told them to learn to be the servant of all. He taught them to be humble servants, not elite leaders who lord over people.

(Rom 3:9) "What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin;"

(Rom 3:8) "And why not *say* (as we are slanderously reported and as some claim that we say), "Let us do evil that good may come"? Their condemnation is just."

The next statement summarizes the whole section from Romans 1:18 through Romans 3:20, “for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin.” Everyone is under sin. The word under is an interesting word. In Greek it is hupo (Strong’s G5259), and means under. Often, it is used in regard to authority and submission. The word for submission is hupotasso, which means under proper order and arrangement. It is a military word. In this use, all men are under the control, authority, and power of sin, whether you are a Jew or a Greek. This is a black and white statement. Our culture likes to think that we are better than some and are basically good people. The Bible says that we are all sinners and “under” the power and control of sin. We are all desperately in need of a Savior who will set us free from our sins.

In verses ten through eighteen Paul gives a number of Scriptural references detailing the sinfulness of men. In verses ten through twelve, Paul quotes from Psalm 14:1-3 and Psalm 53:1-3. In verse thirteen, he quotes from Psalm 5:9 and Psalm 140:3. In verse fourteen, he quotes from Psalm 10:7. In Romans 3:15-17, he quotes from Isaiah 59:7-8. In Romans 3:18, he quotes from Psalm 36:1. All of these passages speak of the depravity of men.

Verse	Cross Reference
Romans 3:10-12	Psalm 14:1-3, Psalm 53:1-3
Romans 3:13	Psalm 5:9, Psalm 140:3
Romans 3:14	Psalm 10:7
Romans 3:15-17	Isaiah 59:7-8
Romans 3:18	Psalm 36:1

All of these passages speak of different aspects of our sinfulness. Paul begins with our overarching characteristic, that there is none righteous, not even one. The standard of righteousness is God’s righteousness. When we compare our righteousness with other unrighteous people, we may be better or worse, and may think we are doing okay. However, when we compare our righteousness with God, we are unrighteous. Consider Isaiah. In Isaiah 6 he has a vision and he is standing before the throne, and he said, Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips.” When Isaiah came before a holy God, all unrighteousness was exposed and he saw his true condition, and he stated, “I am ruined!” All of us are ruined before God. There is none that are righteous not even one.

(Rom 3:10) “as it is written, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;"

(Ps 143:2) “And do not enter into judgment with Your servant, For in Your sight no man living is righteous.”

(Is 6:1-5) “In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple.... {5} Then I said, "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.”

The apostle Paul, when writing to Timothy, said, “It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.” He understood that even though he was a Pharisee, well educated under Gamaliel, circumcised on the 8th day, that he was a sinner. It is only by the grace of God that we have been forgiven and made righteous. On our own, we are the foremost of all sinners.

(1 Tim 1:15) “It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost *of all*.”

Paul not only addressed our defining characteristic, as sinners, but he said that there is none who understands, none who seeks for God. Our understanding is with our mind and our seeking is with our will. Our soul is made up of our mind, emotion, and will, and our souls are also unrighteous.

(Rom 3:10-11) “as it is written, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; {11} THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;”

The soul is often referred to as our heart. Jeremiah spoke about our heart being deceitful and desperately sick. He also knew that the Lord would search the hearts and give to each man according to his ways and deeds, which is the same message that Paul has been sharing. All of us are going to be judged according to our deeds and God will search our hearts, which are desperately sick and sinful.

(Jer 17:9-10) “The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it? {10} "I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the results of his deeds.”

Jesus said that our actions all come from the heart. If our hearts are desperately sick, it would follow that our actions and words will also be evil.

(Matt 15:18-19) “But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. {19} For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders.”

Paul turns from our soul to our actions. He said that we have turned aside from God. We were created to have fellowship with God and to worship Him. If we have turned aside, we have thwarted the purposes of God and have become useless. One of my prayers everyday is to be useful to God. Karen and I submit our lives to Him every morning. We are His servants and try to align ourselves with His will for us each day. We want to be useful and bear fruit. Paul also said that there is none who does good, not even one. In the natural, people do good deeds all the time. Even unbelievers may help someone or give someone something. When we look at good, we have to look at the standard of good. In Mark 10, a man came and knelt before Jesus and said, “Good Teacher...” Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.” When God’s righteousness is the standard, there is none who does good, not even one.

(Rom 3:12) “ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE.”

(Mark 10:17-18) “As He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" {18} And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone.”

Paul turns from our deeds to our words. He said that our throats are an open grave and our tongues keep deceiving. The poison of asps is under our lips and our mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. These are general characteristics of a sinner. There may be someone who does not curse, but they have other sins in their lives. All of us have sinned with our tongues. James said, “For we all stumble in many ways. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect

man, able to bridle the whole body as well.” It is interesting that when Isaiah saw the Lord, he pinpointed his tongue, saying he was a man of unclean lips and lived among a people of unclean lips. The prophet understood that all of us sin with our tongues.

(Rom 3:13-18) “THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE, WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING," "THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS"; {14} "WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS;”

(James 3:2) “For we all stumble in many *ways*. If anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body as well.”

Finally, Paul addresses our feet, which speaks of our paths, direction, and lifestyle. He said our feet are swift to shed blood and that destruction and misery are in our paths. We have not known the path of peace and there is no fear of God before our eyes. Usually, we look in the direction that we are going to walk, so when there is no fear of God before our eyes, we are looking at walking the paths of evil. There are two paths in life, the path of the righteous and the paths of the wicked. Jesus exhorted us to enter through the narrow gate, for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction. The gate is small and the way (path) is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it. Which path are you on in your life?

(Rom 3:15-18) “THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD, {16} DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS, {17} AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN." {18} "THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES."

(Matt 7:13-14) “Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. {14} "For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.”

3. All Must Give Account to God (Rom 3:19-20)

Paul has told us that all of us are without excuse and all of us are under sin. There is none who is righteous, not even one. The depraved sinners are without excuse. The self-righteous religious people are without excuse. Both the Jews and Gentiles are under sin, and everyone will give account to God according to our deeds. There are advantages to being a Jew, but in the day of judgment, Jews and Gentiles alike will be judged according to our deeds. Paul brings the first portion of the gospel to a close by saying that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God. We are all sinners and will all have to give account to God. He also added that no man will be justified by the works of the Law, and that through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.

(Rom 3:19-20) “Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God; {20} because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin.”

Conclusion and Applications

Our text today made it clear that some Jews, even though they had been given God’s oracles, did not believe. This did not nullify God’s faithfulness; it actually demonstrated His righteousness. Paul summarized this first section of the gospel by saying that all have sinned and were under

sin. When we stand before God and give account, we will all be guilty because we have all sinned. We have sinned in our thoughts and will. We have sinned with our deeds. We have sinned with our tongues. We have sinned by walking on the paths of unrighteousness. Finally, we will all be accountable to God on that day of wrath.

I read a story about D.L. Moody in prison ministry, and it reminded me of my own prison experience. Reverend Moody preached in a prison, and was not able to see the men he was preaching to. Afterwards, he was able to go to the various cells of the men, and he asked them one by one why they were in prison. He said he never knew there were so many righteous men in prison. None of them were guilty in their minds; it was always the fault of someone else. He knew that the gospel was not for any so far. Finally, he came to a man who was weeping over his sins, and Reverend Moody praised God. The inmate was dumbfounded why Reverend Moody was rejoicing over the fact that he was a sinner. Reverend Moody explained that the gospel was given for sinners and that he was not far from the kingdom of God. I experienced the same thing. When I met with inmates, I usually asked them why they were there. When they responded that they had not done anything wrong, and were in the wrong place at the wrong time, I knew that I would not get very far with them. When someone understood that they had done wrong, and were willing to repent and turn to God, the kingdom of God was at their doorsteps.

Jesus addressed this in Luke 18:9-14. He told a parable about some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt. A Pharisee and a tax collector went to the temple to pray, and the Pharisee thanked God that he was not like the tax collector and other sinners, and told God the good things he did. The tax collector did not even lift his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast saying, "God, be merciful to me, the sinner!" Jesus said that the tax collector went to his house justified and the Pharisee did not. What DL Moody found in the prison, and what I found in the prison were tax collectors and Pharisees. Those that acknowledged their sinfulness and did not rely upon their self-righteousness were ready to receive God's mercy. Our text today let's all men know of their sinfulness so that they are positioned to receive His mercy.

(Luke 18:9-14) "And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: {10} "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. {11} "The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. {12} 'I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.' {13} "But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' {14} "I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

There may be someone here today that realizes for the first time that you a sinner. You have always thought of yourself as a good person, and that you would be okay in the day of wrath. You also recognize that you have never received God's payment for your sins. If you believe that Jesus came and died for sins, and was raised up on the third day, and want to confess Him as your Lord this morning, I invite you to pray with me.

"Jesus, I believe that You are the Son of God, that You came to die for our sins, and that You were raised on the third day. I confess that I have sinned before You and need to be forgiven. I ask You to come into my life and forgive me of my sins. I want to follow You, and I confess

You as my Lord and Savior today. Fill me with Your Spirit and lead me on Your paths of righteousness. I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.”

The second application this morning has to do with attitude. Isaiah confessed that he was a man of unclean lips. Paul said that he was the foremost of sinners. Paul wrote that we, Paul and his team, were no better than anyone, we were all under sin. God wants us to have a humble, contrite heart. I believe that when we develop a gentle and humble heart, we will be able to easily connect with others. Peter and James both exhorted us to humble ourselves before the Lord. If this is your desire, join with me in prayer.

“Father God, thank You for forgiving me for my sins. Though my sins were as scarlet, You have washed them white as snow. Even though I was the foremost of sinners, You had great mercy on me. Thank You for forgiving my sins and cleansing me of all unrighteousness. Help me not to forget the great benefits You have given me, particularly that You forgave my sins. Help me to humbly represent You to those around me. Help me to forgive others as You have forgiven me. Help me to have a fear of the Lord before my eyes, and to walk in humility. I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.”

A few weeks ago Tom asked me if I had any good news. I told him that I was still in the first three chapters of Romans, and that I would not have good news until the second part of the gospel. This first portion of the gospel is that all have sinned and are under the power and control of sin, and that God is going to render according to our deeds on the day of judgment and wrath. That is all bad news for all of us, since all of us have sinned. As we move forward, we will see that we are justified by faith, which is what we will cover next week in Romans 3:21-31.

Introduction (Rom 3:1-20)

1. **God's Righteousness** (Rom 3:1-8, 2:28-29)

2. **Man's Sinfulness** (Rom 3:8-18, Ps 14:1-3, 53:1-3, 5:9, 140:3, 10:7, 36:1, Is 59:7-8, 6:1-5, Ps 143:2, 1 Tim 1:15, Jer 17:9-10, Matt 15:18-19, Mark 10:17-18, James 3:2, Matt 7:13-14)

3. **All Must Give Account to God** (Rom 3:19-20)

Conclusion and Applications