

None Righteous, No Not One
Spilman Memorial Baptist Church, Kinston NC
Dr. Powell Dew, Jr.
January 29, 2023

Text: Romans 3:9-18, 23

Purpose: Paul continues to emphasize the fact that we ALL are sinners before a righteous God. We are all under condemnation because of our disobedience but are made to be righteous by the gracious provision of God, the shed blood of Jesus Christ.

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS¹

2019: I will get my weight down below 180 pounds.



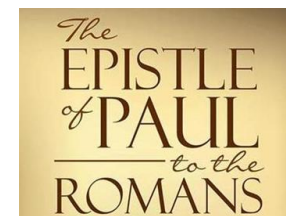
2020: I will follow my new diet religiously until I get below 200 pounds.

2021: I will develop a realistic attitude about my weight.

2022: I will work out 3 days a week.

2023: I will try to drive past a gym at least once a week.

Over the past few weeks, we have been examining the powerful epistle to the Romans which was written by Paul to the gathered Christians in Rome. It is true that God gave Paul this message to



the church in Rome, but it was also God's intention for us to hear this message. Whether you are in Rome during the 1st century or in America in the 21st Century, religious people are some of the most self-righteous individuals you will ever meet.

Paul understood this and wanted to bring the believers back to the truth that they were all sinners in need of a Savior. In chapter one, Paul addressed the unbelieving gentile world and said they had no excuse for not believing in God. God had manifested Himself through nature and the inner conscience planted in them by God.

In chapter two Paul begins to address the religious man of the day, the Jews. The Jews were so very proud of their traditions and their standing in the community.



In Jerusalem, they were even allowed to administer the judicial system among themselves without the interference of the Roman occupiers. But Paul understood the intricacies of the law and said the Jews were condemned by the law and held to a higher standard. Some Jews would boast of their keeping of the law through their obedience to be circumcised. But Paul pulls that hiding place down and illuminates the fact that the law will not save, only God can do that.

What was special about the Jews is that God entrusted the stories of God and chose them to be the special vehicle to carry the law to a world in need of a standard. The Jews thought they were the only ones that God cared about, but Jesus came that all might come unto the knowledge of the

One True Savior. Paul came to the realization that this gospel story is for all the world - Jews and gentiles.

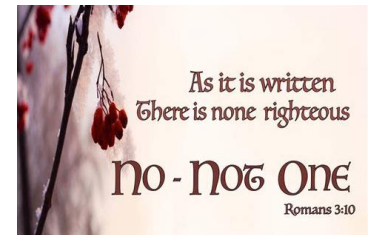
The Christless World



The passage we read this morning is actually a collection of quotes from the Old Testament. Some of the quotes are not exactly as they are recorded in the Old Testament probably because Paul is quoting from memory. It was a very common practice among the Rabbi's to string texts together like this. It was called a *charaz*, which literally means a string of pearls.

This description of Paul about human nature is actually the description of the world without the saving presence of Christ. This is what the Christless life looks like.

**“There is none righteous,
no, not one;
There is none who understands;
There is none who seeks after
God.
They have all turned aside;
They have together become unprofitable;
There is none who does good, no not one.”
(Romans 3:10-11)**

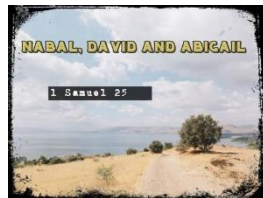


We find in verse 10-12 Paul quoting from a passage found in Psalm 14:1-3. Apparently, God wants us to understand this because this Psalm is recorded word for word twice as Psalm 14 and Psalm 53. Those verses say,

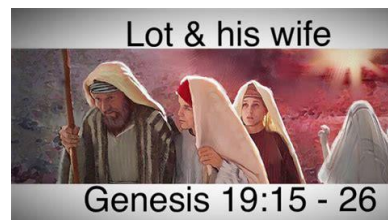
“The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none who does good. The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there are any who understand, who seek God. They have all turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is none who does good, No not one.” – Psalm 14:1-3 and Psalm 53:1-3

“For there is not a just man on earth who does good and does not sin.” – Ecc. 7:20

This Psalm was probably written as a commentary about a man named Nabal. In 1 Samuel 25, we see David send some of his men to request some aid (food) from a wealthy shepherd. David and his men had provided protection for Nabal from other raiders of sheep and cattle. Nabal refused to give aid (food) to David and his men. Nabal’s wife, Abigail quickly met David and offered him a peace offering of food and drink. That evening Nabal’s life was taken because he was a fool in God’s sight.



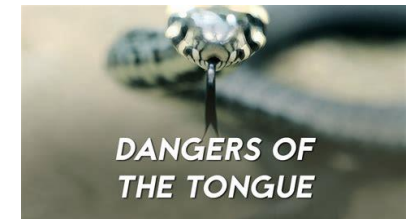
When the Lord determined to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham attempted to intercede on his nephew Lot’s behalf. After an extended negotiation between Abraham and the Lord, the Lord said he would spare the city if there were 10 righteous people found. Just as the judgment was to fall on the city, the two angels brought out Lot, his wife, and two daughters. His wife longed for the city and looked back and was turned into a



pillar of salt. As Lot hid in the mountains, He became drunk and his two daughters had incestuous relations with him. God was seeking a few righteous in that city and apparently none were found.

The Lord sees our hearts and knows our frame. We cannot do good in our own strength. We will fail time and time again. All people will and do sin.

“Their throat is an open tomb; with their tongues they have practiced deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips.” (Romans 3:13)



This passage is a quote from Psalm 5:9 which says, *“For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is destruction; their throat is an open tomb; they flatter with their tongue.”*

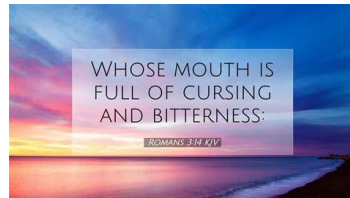
It is also a combination of a verse found in Psalm 140:3. *“They sharpen their tongues like a serpent; the poison of asps is under their tongues.”*

It seems as if evil men are everywhere seeking to destroy the witness of God and God’s people. Apart from the power of Christ dwelling within us, we are bound by the power of sin over our life. The tongue is the most powerful force on the earth. It has power to heal and it has power to destroy. We need to be careful in our words and their effects.

Even in a fellowship of believers as small as ours, we need to be careful in what we say. Innocently picking on another person can cause great hurt among us. We may not mean to hurt another by our words, but we can do that. In our zeal to be righteous, we can inadvertently harm the fellowship.

In our zeal to share “prayer” requests, we may actually be carriers of gossip.

“Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.” (Romans 3:14)



This sentence is quoted from Psalm 10:7 which says,
“His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and oppression; under his tongue is trouble and iniquity.”

The mouth is actually a barometer of what our heart is thinking about. If you are angry about something, you will share it with the next person you see. If you are happy, you will tell that person about what great event is happening in your life. If you are bitter about an event that has happened, you will unload on the next unsuspecting person. There are some people that curse from sun up to sundown. It simply boils within them all the time.

“Their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace they have not known.” (Romans 3:15-17)



Again, this is a quote from a passage found in Isaiah 59:7-8 which says,

“Their feet run to evil and they make haste to shed innocent blood; their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths. The way of peace they have not known, and there is no justice in their ways; they have made themselves crooked paths; whoever takes that way shall not know peace.”

Those that have rejected God will constantly be plagued by this hopeless life. The list we have read in Romans is almost a progression down a path of degradation and shame. What simply began as a lack of understanding (v. 11) gradually transitioned to a lack of seeking God (v. 12). Once a person has turned from God, all their works are in vain and the good they seek to do is actually worthless. (v. 12) Out of a corrupt heart comes vile thoughts and vile words. (v. 13-14) That poison within us turns into murder and destruction. (v. 15-16) These individuals have no peace in their lives. They restlessly seek their own way and the result in destruction.

What starts out in the mind, moves to the heart, then to the feet, hands, and comes out of the mouth. Once evil dominates, it results in the shedding of blood and feet swiftly seeking evil.



The cause of all this is born out in Romans 3:18.

“There is no fear of God before their eyes.” – Romans 3:18

This quote is from the King of Israel, David. In Psalm 36:1 it says, *“An oracle within my heart concerning the transgression of the wicked; There is no fear of God before his eyes.”*

Proverbs 1:7 says, *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.”*



The path of sinners begins with the first step of failure to fear God and attempt to learn and obey his commands and precepts. The path of destruction is upon all that fail to acknowledge God.

An Illustration

Several years ago, I had the opportunity to stop by and visit a friend Dr. Carolyn McClendon, (died July 1, 2022) in Raleigh that was the director of a ministry called, *“Under one Roof.”*



This is a ministry to individuals from all walks of life. Many of the social service organizations in Raleigh came together to minister to many social needs. Some clients may have special needs due to experiencing HIV and AIDS, while others may have a difficulty in finding employment, medical care, or food. They also assist those who may have just been released from prison and need help finding housing due to homelessness. Since this was my

first visit there, I read all the bulletin boards and visited the break room. My friend was delayed with a crisis situation so I continued to sit there and wait. As I did, I saw dozens of people coming in and out. Some had scheduled a counseling session with one of the eight counselors that works there.

I watched as individuals were coming in to get some groceries from the food pantry they had there. Only individuals that were current with their doctors' visits, had met with their counselors on a regular basis, could shop in their grocery store. While I was there, another truck load of food was delivered from the North Carolina food bank.

My friend continued to be tied up so I opened a magazine there specifically targeted to individuals dealing with many of the needs this organization was helping with.

I continued to wait for my friend. At one moment I thought how odd that I was sitting here in the midst of these people. A part of me felt that I didn't belong here. I am almost ashamed to admit it or even say it out loud. I wasn't like them.

For a slight moment there I had a swell of pride come up within me. That pride was quickly chastised by the Lord through the Bible verse found in Romans 3:23. *“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”*

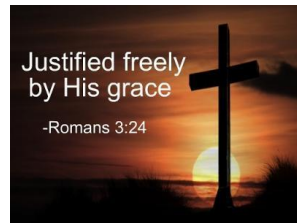


I learned *'those'* people are just like me. But for the grace of God, I could be facing some of the same problems these people were facing. This verse from Romans convicted me that I am a sinner. This "ALL" includes me. I needed this visual lesson from God that I do not need to judge others.

Oddly enough, I didn't go eat lunch with my friend that day because the crisis kept her away. Instead of renewing a friendship that day, I had a lesson from God about my sin.

The Christ Filled Life

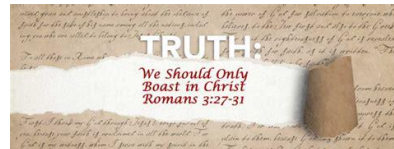
If there is one thing I think Paul would want us to grasp from this lesson, is that apart from Christ, we are dead and hell bound. With Christ, we are forgiven and adopted into the family of God. We are justified freely by His grace. – Romans 3:24



This adoption is not a license to continue in sin. We need to repent if and when we sin. We need to continually recognize that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge. When we put God first, we continue down a path of safety and protection. When we reject God, no matter how good we may be, we are just as guilty as the blatant sinner.

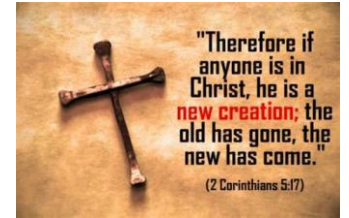
Towards the end of chapter 3 of Romans, Paul tells us that we should not boast about the law.

We don't need to boast of our righteousness. We can only praise God for providing a way of escape from the power of sin in our life. We can only boast about what Jesus has done for us at Calvary. It is



through faith in Jesus Christ that we are made righteous in God's eyes. It is Christ living in us that gives us the power to live a life free from the power of sin that wants to reign in our life.

Sin does not need to have a hold on you. If you turn your heart, mind, and life over to God, He will come in and make you a new creature in Christ. If you surrender your will to His will, He will turn your sorrow into joy. If you believe in the only begotten of the Father, then you will begin to have life eternal. Our life is terminal without Christ; we only have eternal life with Christ. All other ground is sinking sand.



This is the day of salvation for you if you have never confessed Jesus as your Savior. Do not let this day pass without claiming the only way of escape!

LET US PRAY

Notes:

¹ A Resolution Funny, Mikey's Funnies – Jan 3, 2023