



No One is Righteous

Romans 3:9-20

A man by the name of Sophocles once wrote in his famous play *Antigone*, “No one loves the messenger who brings bad news.” But what if I told you that the best news of all was hidden within the bad. Would you still listen? After all, can there really be good news if the bad did not exist? This morning I am the barer of bad news. I have been commissioned to bring you to this text of Romans 3:9-20, but my hope is that you, in hearing this bad news, would turn your heart to God and receive the most wonderful gift imaginable – Jesus Christ and His saving blood.

James Boyce puts it this way. “The situation is a bit like being sick and needing a doctor. As long as we are convinced we are well (or at least almost well), we will not seek medical care. But if we know we are spiritually sick, we will turn to the Great Physician, Jesus Christ, who alone is able to heal us.”¹ Boyce is using that picture that Jesus gave in Matthew 9:12-13 which says, “Those who are well have no need for a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice.’ For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” I like how George Whitefield words it, “You must not only be made sick of your . . . sin, but you must be sick of your righteousness, of all your duties and performances. There must be a deep conviction before you can be brought out of your self-righteousness.”²

In a nutshell, if you came here this morning confident in your good works and feeling that you have earned favor with God because you are more-or-less a good person, you are condemned. But if you have come here this morning weighed down by your sin and constantly pleading with Jesus to help you, you are healed. That’s it. That is *the* summary of this morning’s message.

No One Is Righteous

9 What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, 10 as it is written:

- “None is righteous, no, not one;
- 11 no one understands;
no one seeks for God.
- 12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless;
no one does good, not even one.”
- 13 “Their throat is an open grave;
they use their tongues to deceive.”
- “The venom of asps is under their lips.”
- 14 “Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.”
- 15 “Their feet are swift to shed blood;
- 16 in their paths are ruin and misery,
- 17 and the way of peace they have not known.”
- 18 “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

¹ Boice, James Montgomery. *Romans (Volume 1): Justification by Faith (Romans 1-4)*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books. 1991, Pg. 290

² Ryle, J. C., *The Select Sermons of George Whitefield* (Sermon 58)

19 Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. 20 For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

What is taking place here in Paul's argument. Last week, we heard from Timothy as he addressed the earlier section of this chapter – "Do the Jews have any advantage over the Gentiles?" Just to clarify here. When the text speaks of the "Gentiles" or the "Greeks," it is referencing everyone who is a non-Jew. So we are speaking of the Jews and the rest of the world.

So Paul asks the question, "Does the Jew have any advantage over the rest of the world?" As we heard last week, the answer is "yes." The Jews "were entrusted with the oracles of God" which was specifically and uniquely given to them. Let's talk about that a little further. The Jew had the written law of God. They had the Scriptures. They had the stories. They had the traditions. They had the heritage. They had the promises. Much in every way, the Jew has an advantage over the rest of the world because they had been given so much. What did the rest of the world have in comparison? Well according to Romans 1:19-20 it says, "For what can be known about God is plain to them [the Gentile], because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they [the Gentiles] are without excuse." So what does the rest of the world have? They have creation. God has clearly revealed Himself in what He has made. You cannot look at creation and say "there is no God." The evidence of His existence and power is made known to all. So does the Jew have an advantage? I would say so! They have been given so much more so that they would turn to God.

Now here comes Paul's next question. Are the Jews, then, any better off than the rest of the world? And the answer is "No, not at all." Why? Because everyone, both Jew and Greek alike, are under sin.

Swimmer Analogy – Timothy Keller uses a really good swimming analogy in his commentary that I think will help us understand this point. I am paraphrasing here. There are three swimmers in Hawaii who endeavor to swim to Japan. The first swimmer is not experienced in any way and drowns as soon as he gets into water beyond his own height. The second swimmer swims for about 60 feet into the water before he sinks and drowns. Now the third swimmer is a championship swimmer. This swimmer has strength and stamina to go a great distance in the water. He actually swims close to 50 miles out into the ocean before sinking and drowning. Timothy Keller says, "Is one more drowned than the others?"³ And the answer is no. They all drowned and fell miserably short of their goal in reaching Japan. Here is the picture. Did the championship swimmer have an advantage over the other two? Oh yes, of course! Was he any better off? Absolutely not. Dead is dead. If you are dead, you can't be any less dead than someone else who is dead.

Here in this text, Paul is arguing against the common Jewish belief, that the Jew was somehow better off than the rest of the world because they were entrusted with the oracles of God.⁴ Paul says, "No way!" Both the Jew and the rest of the world are sinners and are under the condemnation of the law. In modern vernacular – "We are ALL at the foot of the cross." No one is higher up than someone else. No one is closer to Jesus than anyone else. We are ALL equally in need of His saving grace.

Oh this message must have angered the Jews. It was completely contrary to their made-up religion. It's no wonder Paul was stoned by some of the Jews he witnessed too. The Jew truly thought that because of their ethnicity, God was with them in some special way. Is that what God said? No, in fact Moses understood that it was because God was with them that they were a special people. Moses spoke in Exodus 33:15-16, "And he [Moses] said to him, 'If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here. For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your

³ Keller, Timothy. Romans 1-7 For You. India: The Good Book Company, 2014. Pg. 67

⁴ Schreiner, Thomas R. Romans. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1998. Pg. 171 "'Works of the law' focuses especially on circumcision, food laws, and the observance of special days, such as the Sabbath. These distinctive practices erected a sociological barrier between Jewish and Gentile communities. Those Jews who said that people must practice the works of the law in order to be justified were virtually sealing Gentiles out of the people of God. They were in effect saying that one had to be a Jew to gain salvation."

people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?"

What makes a Jew a Jew is not his ethnicity but the very presence of God. The question that is being raised by Paul is, "If God is not with you, then you are no better off than the rest of the world." Sure, you may have had some advantages, but in the end it is God's presence with you that saves you. The Jews flipped God's words around and worshiped their ethnicity more than they worship God Himself. And they will be held accountable for their sin. As a matter of fact, Scripture seems to imply that there will be an even greater condemnation for the Jew who had been entrusted with so much, yet reject God. Let's go back to the swimming analogy. If the champion swimmer really understood swimming and understood his limits and the distance he could go (because after all, he trained every day), then shouldn't he have known perhaps more than the others what an impossibility it would be to swim from Hawaii to Japan? His knowledge of swimming condemns him, because he should have known better. In the same way, the Jew should have understood the impossibility of keeping God's law. Their knowledge of it condemns them.⁵

More of the talk of Jewish ethnicity will come later in chapters 9-11, but right now the text clearly states that a Jew is no better off than the rest of the world if they do not possess Christ.

Just in case any of the Jews try to counter Paul's bold statement, he brings in a number of Old Testament passages in verses 10 through 18 that back his point. These verses are a conglomeration of texts that you will find in Ps. 14, Ps. 53, Ps. 5, Ps. 140, Ps. 10, Prov. 1, Prov. 3, Isa. 53, Isa. 59, and Ps. 36. In studying this, I believe Paul is giving us three different stages of our sinfulness. There are three stages that progressively get worse at each stage but are all traced back to the same root.

1.) We are sinners in our hearts. (vv. 10-12)

10 as it is written:

"None is righteous, no, not one;

11 no one understands;
no one seeks for God.

12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless;
no one does good, not even one."

The very root of all of our sin is imbedded deep in the heart. This why we can't save ourselves. Because we are not only sinners on the outside, but are sinners in the heart. All of us have been conceived in sin, born in sin and are living in sin under the curse of sin. There is no way out of it on your own. Paul quotes King David, "No one is righteous." He is not addressing only the Jew, or only the Gentile. He is not referencing some people or even most people. This verse describes *everyone*.

Ventura, this is why I strongly insist that the believer be the first to confess our sins and our weaknesses. Ask for help from your brothers and sisters to put those sins to death. What do we have to hide? If you would but read Romans 3 you would see that I am a sinner and by no means do I have it all together. I have sinned in the thoughts and desires of my flesh. I have treated my wife and my children wrongly. I have thought and spoken evil of brothers and sisters in Christ. I have by no means given God all the glory due His name, but have complained and been frustrated with God when things do not go my way. I don't need to hide these things from you. It is written right here. **And I have often fallen into the cancerous and terminal act of hiding lies behind this smiling face.**

⁵ Barnes, Albert. Notes on the New Testament *Explanatory and Practical*: Romans. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1971. Pg. 90 "The meaning of the apostle clearly is, that the application of a law to try our conduct, instead of being a ground of justification, will be merely to show us our own sinfulness and departures from duty. A man may esteem himself to be very right and correct, until he compares himself with a rule, or law; so whether the Gentiles compared their conduct with *their* laws of reason and conscience, or the Jew his with his *written* law, the effect would be to show them how far they had departed. The more closely and faithfully it should be applied, the more they would see it. So far from being justified by it, they would be more and more condemned."

Do not hide the lies, but expose them to the light and grow in godliness. A church that exposes sins and repents from them through the blood of Christ is a growing church – whether there are 200 people in the pews or just 20.

No one is righteous before God. **No one understands.** How can you come to know the unknowable? How can you begin to even imagine the unimaginable? God is so utterly glorious that on our own we would be completely and infinitely unable to understand Him and His ways. If God did not transcend through time and space in the person of Jesus, we would not understand Him. This is why we praise the name of Jesus Who makes a way to the Father. Without Jesus, we could never know or understand God.

Here is a line that many have struggled with in the history of the church. **“No one seeks for God.”**⁶ What does Paul mean?⁷ Some might question this because they may have had an experience in the past where they put their trust in Jesus and made the commitment to follow Him. While there is an element that you may have prayed or made a decision verbally or in silence to accept Jesus into your heart, I think a broader view of God and His saving grace may cause us to see that Paul’s words here are entirely correct. I think that most of us here would widely acknowledge that we are sinners, but the hard part is admitting that we had absolutely no part in our salvation.⁸

I know, because I was there. I recall a conversation I had years ago on the subject of man’s ability (or inability) to choose God. I was adamant in my understanding that God gives everyone a choice to come to Him and it was up to that person to make that choice or not. But I could not argue the Word of God when it challenged my thinking. Passages like John 6:44 where Jesus says, “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.” He later says in John 14:6, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” It’s reciprocal. The Father brings them to Jesus and Jesus makes a way for them to come to the Father.⁹ Paul says the same thing in writing to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:25, “God may perhaps grant them [unbelievers] repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth [Jesus Christ].” The more I looked into this, the more I saw that Paul’s statement that no one seeks for God is spelled out across the Scriptures. In Ezekiel 37, God commands Ezekiel to speak to the dry bones that were dead. When Ezekiel spoke to the dry bones, they soon were covered with ligaments and flesh and were made alive. What was once dead, lifeless, and breathless soon had a pulse because the Word of God has power. In writing to the Ephesians, Paul says in Ephesians 2:1-5,

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved

⁶ Barnes, Albert. Notes on the New Testament *Explanatory and Practical*: Romans. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1971. Pg. 86 “A disposition *not* to seek after God – that is, to neglect and forget him – is one of the most decided proofs of depravity.”

⁷ Boice, James Montgomery. Romans (Volume 1): *Justification by Faith (Romans 1-4)*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books. 1991, Pg. 289 “This is a serious charge, indeed a devastating picture of the race, because it portrays human beings as unable to do even a single thing either to please, understand, or seek after God. It is an expression of what theologians rightly call man’s ‘total depravity.’”

⁸ Boice, James Montgomery. Romans (Volume 1): *Justification by Faith (Romans 1-4)*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books. 1991, Pg. 290 “We are willing to admit that we are not perfect, but not that we are not righteous. We are willing to admit that there are things not known to us, but not that we are devoid of all spiritual understanding. We are willing to admit that we wander off the true path at times, but not that we are not even on the right path. Instead of admitting that we are running away from God, we pretend that we are seeking him.”

⁹ Keller, Timothy. Romans 1-7 For You. India: The Good Book Company, 2014. Pgs. 70-71. “This means that anyone who is truly seeking God has been sought by God... When we consider our own path to finding God, we need to realize that we did not seek him out; he drew us to him. We decided to put our faith in him only because he had decided to give us faith... Praise God with greater gratitude, because you know that everything about your salvation comes from him, from first to last. Salvation did not begin with you deciding to seek God, but with him choosing to seek you.”

Paul truly believes that we contribute nothing to our salvation. If I have contributed anything to my own salvation, then I am not truly saved. As he will mention a little later on in Romans 5, “But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” This is precisely the message that he is trying to get the Jews to see here in Romans 3. **You have not contributed to your salvation in any way. No one has.** It does not matter where you were born. It does not matter who your family was. It does not matter what good things you think you have done. It doesn’t matter how many times you have gone to church, how many times you have prayed, or how many times you have read the Bible.¹⁰ None of this matters for salvation! The only ONE WHO gets all the glory for saving me is GOD! How dare I steal glory from the triune God in believing that I have somehow contributed to my own salvation! How dare I believe that I was the one to first seek God and accept Him into my heart! It was God’s doing! God’s work! God’s glory!

Paul continues his quote, “**All have turned aside.**” This is where we see the sinfulness of the heart motive. Sin is the cancer of the heart. It is a tumor of false worship within each one of us. This reference of “turning aside from God” holds with it a resounding stench of false worship throughout the entirety of Scriptures.

- Exodus 32:8 - They have **turned aside** quickly out of the way that I commanded them. They have made for themselves a golden calf and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it and said, ‘These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!’”
- Judges 2:17 - Yet they did not listen to their judges, for they whored after other gods and bowed down to them. They soon **turned aside** from the way in which their fathers had walked, who had obeyed the commandments of the Lord, and they did not do so.
- Daniel 9:11 - All Israel has transgressed your law and **turned aside**, refusing to obey your voice. And the curse and oath that are written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out upon us, because we have sinned against him.
- Isaiah 53:6 - All we like sheep have gone astray; we **have turned**—everyone—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

We are bent on turning aside from God and worshiping lesser things in life. We worship our finances, we worship our success, we worship our children and our families, we worship our comfort and security, and we even worship our religion itself. All the while we have turned away from God and rejected Him because we do not need Him. Some of you may be thinking right now, “That’s not me. I might spend a lot of energy and focus on some of these things, but I worship God too!” Let me tell you this. God *is not present* in our hearts if we have made them to be shrines of many gods. He does not share His glory with another. He will not be placed next to an image of false worship. God wants ALL of your heart. Colossians 3:5-6 says, “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On the account of these the wrath of God is coming.”

It’s because we have turned aside from God and worship lesser things that we have **become worthless**.¹¹ What were we created for? We were created for the glory of God to worship God. That is the reason for our existence,

¹⁰ The MacArthur Study Bible (Revised & Updated Edition), New King James Version. Study Note (Romans 3:11) “Man is unable to comprehend the truth of God or grasp His standard of righteousness (see Pss. 14:2; 53:3; cf. 1 Cor. 2:14). Sadly, his spiritual ignorance does not result from a lack of opportunity (1:19,20; 2:15), but is an expression of his depravity and rebellion (Eph. 4:18) ... Man’s natural tendency is to seek his own interests (cf. Phil. 2:21), but his only hope is for God to seek him (John 6:37,44). It is only as a result of God’s work in the heart that anyone seeks Him (Ps. 16:8; Matt. 6:33).”

¹¹ Barnes, Albert. Notes on the New Testament *Explanatory and Practical*: Romans. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1971. Pg. 86 “This word in Hebrew means to become *putrid* and *offensive*, like fruit that is spoiled. In Arabic, it is applied to *milk* that becomes sour. Applied to moral subjects, it means to become corrupt and useless. They are of *no value* in regard to works of righteousness.”

the very purpose for our being. If we have turned aside from worshiping God then what we have done is annulled the very reason for our existence. In other words, we have become worthless.¹²

At the end of verse 12, Paul then reiterates what he had already stated in verse 10 – no one is good, not even one. The false worship of our hearts reveals the depravity of our sinful state. No one is even close to making it to Japan.

2.) We are sinners in our words. (vv. 13-14)

13 “Their throat is an open grave;
they use their tongues to deceive.”
“The venom of asps is under their lips.”
14 “Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.”

If the heart is dying of a spiritual cancer, then you can expect the residual effects to come flowing out. Jesus says in Mark 7:20-23, “What comes out of a person is what defiles him. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.” Jesus also says in Luke 6:45, “The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.” The sinful and deceitful desires of the heart will overflow and come out of the mouth. It’s as simple as an overflow drain. We see them all the time on sinks, and in water boxes, and pools. When the water keeps filling up to the point of overflowing, it escapes through the overflow drain so that you don’t flood your home or back yard. What Jesus is saying is that your mouth is an overflow drain from the tank in your heart. It’s going to drain whatever is in there. If your heart is good, then your mouth is going to drain out wonderful pure water that can bless others and build others up. But the problem is, no one has a pure heart. So for every one of us, the overflow from our hearts is putrid and disgusting. It tears others down instead of building them up.

Paul describes our mouths as **open graves** filled with worms and rotting flesh.¹³ They are disgusting and nothing pure or good could possibly come out of them. Our words can kill and destroy. This word picture gives us a graphic view of our throats swallowing up people like graves to maliciously kill and destroy. We use our **tongues to deceive**. We follow in the path of the Father of lies. Jesus says this to the Pharisees in John 8:44, “You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” Not only do we deceive like the devil, but the deceitfulness of our words leads to murder.

Paul then inserts a quote from Psalm 140 stating that we have “**venom of asps**” under our lips. How many of you have ever seen a snake bite? It’s fast and vicious. The snake is clever and uses its agility to its advantage. Especially if the snake is smaller or slower than its prey. It quickly bites and unleashes its poison in order to cripple and kill its prey. Once the poison is injected, the prey is as good as dead.

Oh there have been countless times, when I lashed out at someone like a snake. I said hurtful things to a brother or a sister in Christ, to my wife or to my children. In the heat of my anger and rage, I bit them with malicious words and injected venom to hurt them.¹⁴ Oh Father, must you bring us so low that my sin would be as vile as a snake bite? The serpent attacks quick like lightning. Its aim is precise and its goal is to kill. Once the venom enters the victim, there is no undoing

¹² Matthew Henry’s Commentary *Acts to Revelation*, Volume VI, (MacDonald Publishing Company, Mclean, VA). P. 384 – “Those that have forsaken God soon grow good for nothing, useless burdens of the earth. Those that are in a state of sin are the most unprofitable creatures under the sun.”

¹³ New ESV Study Bible (ESV Text Edition:2011), Crossway. Study Note (Romans 3:13-14) “Paul zeros in on sins of the tongue, quoting from Ps. 5:9 and 10:7. The reference to the **grave** highlights either the corruption of the heart or the deadly effects of sin.

¹⁴ Matthew Henry’s Commentary *Acts to Revelation*, Volume VI, (MacDonald Publishing Company, Mclean, VA). P. 384 – “The most venomous and incurable poison, with which they blast the good name of their neighbor by reproaches, and aim at his life by false witness... Herein they show themselves the devil’s children, for he is a liar, and the father of lies.”

the harm. Forgive me for being so quick to speak hateful words of my brothers and sisters. To slander and gossip behind their backs and release a poison to kill.¹⁵ Father forgive us! Let us leave our sacrifices at the altar and go make amends with those whom we have poisoned. Let the blood of Jesus heal those wounds which we have made and make us clean. Build one another up in love! Don't let **curse and bitterness** consume you. Refrain from unleashing the poison that kills.

3.) We are sinners in our actions. (vv. 15-17)

15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood;
16 in their paths are ruin and misery,
17 and the way of peace they have not known."

The final stage that Paul leads us to in quoting these passages is the sin of our actions.¹⁶ Because we have a heart problem which overflows into a word problem, it is only a matter of time before it progresses to a blood problem. War is inevitable in a fallen world. Our actions are vile and heinous. We desire to murder and to kill. We do not wish for peace, but instead we wish for power and control. Sure, on the onset we might think we desire peace, but what we really want is peace on our terms. If someone does not agree with our terms, then we have no problem fighting to get our way.¹⁷ We do this at home with our spouses. We fight because we want something and our spouse wants something different. We fight with our coworkers or bosses because we aren't getting our way. We fight with our siblings, our friends and even our brothers and sisters at church because someone wounded us, because someone did something, because someone said something. This is where our sin leads us – to war, to fight, to avenge and to kill! It does not lead us to peace. James 4:1-2 says it this way, "What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?" This is the problem the world faces with trying to initiate an era of peace. If everyone wants peace on their terms, then there will never be peace. Why? Because we are all sinful and have made ourselves our own gods. If others do not worship us the way we worship ourselves, then there will always be war. We will shed blood to get what we want.

No one is righteous. Our sinfulness has come to this – absolute and total chaos. A complete disregard of God and morality. The weak are mocked and killed. Women and children are preyed upon and abused. And there is **no fear of God** in man.¹⁸

Paul brings in the analogy of a courtroom in verses 19 and 20. He is going to do this often in his letter. The point he is making is that all are under the law and justly condemned for their sin – both Jew and Gentile alike. And when God judges the world according to His law, no one will be able to speak or defend themselves because all will know that they have utterly failed in keeping the law of God.¹⁹ It will be so obvious and so public that not even one person will object to God's punishment. All will be as Job was before the Lord when Job says, "Behold, I am of

¹⁵ Barnes, Albert. Notes on the New Testament *Explanatory and Practical*: Romans. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1971. Pg. 87 "The sentiment is, that as the poison of the asp is rapid, certain, spreading quickly through the system, and producing death; so the words of the slanderer are deadly, pestiferous, quickly destroying the reputation and happiness of man."

¹⁶ New ESV Study Bible (ESV Text Edition:2011), Crossway. Study Note (Romans 3:15-17) "Next Paul considers the impact of evil in terms of actions and in society, modifying and abridging Isa. 59:7-8. Human history is littered with murder and warfare. Sinners leave in their wake devastation, **ruin**, and **misery**. Instead of knowing peace () they have sown disorder and confusion into the world."

¹⁷ Keller, Timothy. Romans 1-7 For You. India: The Good Book Company, 2014. Pg. 68. "When we do not live enjoying God's approval in the gospel, we do not know peace ourselves, nor can we live in peace with others."

¹⁸ New ESV Study Bible (ESV Text Edition:2011), Crossway. Study Note (Romans 3:18) "This citation from Ps. 36:1 identifies the root cause of sin as the failure to fear and honor God. Any society that commonly assumes that God will not discipline sin in this life or judge it in the next will have **no fear of God** and will therefore give itself increasingly to evil."

¹⁹ Barnes, Albert. Notes on the New Testament *Explanatory and Practical*: Romans. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1971. Pg. 89 "This may be regarded as the *conclusion* of his whole argument, and the expressions may refer not to the Jews only, but to all the world. Its meaning may, perhaps, be thus expressed, 'The Gentiles are proved guilty by their own deeds, and by a violation of the laws of nature. *They* sin against their own conscience; and have thus been shown to be guilty before God (chap i). The Jews have also been shown to be guilty; all their objections have been silenced by an independent train of remark; by appeals to *their own law*; by arguments drawn from the authority which *they* admit. Thus the mouths of both are stopped."

small account; what shall I answer you? I lay my hand on my mouth” (Job 40:4). In beholding the glory of God, all will be speechless as He judges righteously.

No one will be justified by their efforts in trying to keep the law. This is why we do not believe in a works-based salvation. I don't care how good of a person you think you are, or how well you have done in keeping God's law. Paul doesn't care either. You're going to be judged by God and He will not pardon you for the works you have done. Nothing you do can save you from hell! On your own you have absolutely no hope. Beloved, that's the bad news. But here is the good news found within. There is a way.

*There's nothing that my hands can do to save my guilty soul
I cannot cleanse my filthy stains or make my spirit whole
For nothing but the blood of Christ can all my sins erase
I dare not claim my righteousness but hide within His grace
'Tis Christ who saved me from the depths
God's pardon I've received
I'm washed within His precious blood
My heart is sprinkled clean²⁰*

Jesus Christ did not come to save the righteous, but sinners. He never sinned once, but fully kept the law. He went up on the cross and He died in my place. The wrath of God that I deserved for my sinful heart, my sinful words and my sinful actions Jesus drank. Do you believe? Are you a sinner today? Are you in need of His grace? Are you longing for His salvation? Then run to JESUS TODAY! His salvation comes when we simply believe that He rescued us. Simply believe! No added works. No additional fees. No impressive resume necessary. Simply believe! And you will be counted as righteous.²¹

²⁰ Original words by Horatius Bonar (1861). Music and alt. words by Matt Richley. © 2012 Sovereign Grace Worship (ASCAP). Sovereign Grace Music, a division of Sovereign Grace Churches. All rights reserved. Administrated worldwide at www.CapitolCMGPublishing.com, excluding the UK which is adm. by Integrity Music, part of the David C Cook family. www.SovereignGraceMusic.org

²¹ Keller, Timothy. Romans 1-7 For You. India: The Good Book Company, 2014. Pg. 76. “All we need do is come to Christ with empty hands and receive his righteousness. What keeps people from salvation is not so much their sins, but their good works.”

Works Cited

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