

Romans 3:1-20

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[0 : 0 0] Take your Bibles and turn with me to the book of Romans, Romans chapter 3. Romans chapter 3. This morning we're going to be in verses 1 through 20 of Romans chapter 3.

We have been making our way through this great and glorious and at times difficult book, the book of Romans. We have shared each time we come to it that the book of Romans, more than any other book throughout Scripture, has been that book which has laid the foundations for the doctrines of the faith.

There are many things that we can learn from reading the Gospels as the life of Christ and the way He moved and the miraculous deeds He did. The way He touched the untouchable, the way He loved the unlovable and the price He paid for us.

We can learn a tremendous amount from the letters of Paul and John and Peter and the letters they wrote to the churches. Namely, how to deal with issues within the church from problems to glorious times.

How to raise up elders and leaders and pastors and deacons within the body. We can also learn from the book of Revelations to the letter to the seven churches what to expect in end times.

[1 : 0 7] Many things which we see coming about in our own day. But the book of Romans, more than any other book in Scripture, has been that which has laid the foundation for the doctrines we claim to believe.

That is namely, since we know all of these things from the rest of Scripture, how are we going to behave because we know them? It moves it beyond just a mental assent of facts.

Because there are many, many that will shake their head yes and agree with the facts of the Bible as they are presented, but it does not change the way in which they live.

But Paul brings us to the book of Romans to this matter of heart change and life change. What it means to be a follower of Christ and a believer in Jesus Christ.

But before he can get us to that good stuff, as we say, we have to endure the bad picture that we see in the mirror of humanity. We find in the first three chapters, Romans 1, 2, and 3, the condition of man.

[2 : 0 6] And we will wrap that up this morning as we read the first 20 verses of Romans chapter 3. He tells us the bad before we can get to a good, much like a great doctor or a physician who's going to operate on us.

They will tell us exactly what's wrong before they can tell us how good it will be when they get done. And Paul makes no bones about it. He doesn't hold any punches. He lays it out there.

And the temptation is to read chapter 1 and to go, okay, I can deal with this, to get into chapter 2 and say, you know what, this is getting a little close to home. And then finally to get to these first 20 verses in chapter 3 and go, you know what, I've had enough of this, and to close the book.

The problem would be is we would close it before the good news. We would close it before the great news. And we would close it before the news we so desperately need to hear. So if you are physically able and desire to do so, I'm going to ask if you'll join with me as we stand together and we read the word of God in Romans chapter 3, verses 1 through 20.

Paul writes to the church at Rome, meeting in multiple locations, not just in one building, but the church throughout the city of Rome, the most influential city in all of the world.

[3 : 18] A church filled with a multitude of people from a multitude of backgrounds, not only racial, but also economically and social. He says, Then what advantage has the Jew, or what is the benefit of circumcision?

Great in every respect, first of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God. What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it?

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. 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. May it never be, for otherwise, how will God judge the world? But if through my lie the truth of God abounded to his glory, why am I also still being judged as a sinner?

And why not say, as we are slanderously reported, as some claim that we say, Let us do evil that good may come. Their condemnation is just.

[4 : 21] What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin. As it is written, there is none righteous, not even one.

There is none who understands, for there is none who seeks for God. All have turned aside. Together they have become useless. There is none who does good. There is not even one. Their throat is an open grave.

With their tongue they keep deceiving. The poison of ass is under their lips, whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their paths.

And the path of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes. Verse 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.

Because by the works of the law, no flesh will be justified in his sight. For through the law comes the knowledge of sin. Let's pray. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for the opportunities you've given us this morning already to sing your praise, to worship and to adore you.

[5 : 29] Lord, we pray as we come to your word that you would speak to us. Lord, we have proclaimed praise to you, but Lord, we pray that you would speak truth to us. And God, in seeing this truth, that it would not bring us down.

Lord, it would not cast a dark spirit upon us. But Lord, it would help us to see the glory of Christ that we worship. Lord, we pray that the truth would come to us accurately. But Lord, it would also come to us pointing us to one greater than us.

Lord, give us understanding. And Lord, help us to live it out in application. We ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. We have come to the point where Paul is wrapping up his argument on the condition of man.

I have titled this portion of these 20 verses found in Romans 3, The Final Assessment of Man's Condition. He opened up the passage speaking about the truth in Romans 1, that all of man throughout all time, throughout all generations, through across all races and through across all continents, have this one great theme, is that they tried desperately to suppress the truth.

That God has testified to himself, that he has shown the reality of a presence that is greater than us. You do not have to take very long to step into the world, especially in the place in which we reside.

[6 : 47] This place is not obstructed by man-made objects, but you walk out into nature and you begin to see that truly all of creation testifies to a creator. When you can look up into the heavens and you can see the stars in the sky and you can see the infinite unknowable out there and you know there's something greater than us.

It tells us in the book of Ecclesiastes that God has set eternity in the heart of all men. And all men throughout all time know there is something more than just what we see right now. But man, knowing these things and seeing the reality of God's faithfulness, it says in the book of Romans, he has testified to himself, man attempts to suppress that, to push it down and to replace it with something else.

And then he begins to speak of the fact that man, in doing that, God gave them over. What a scary thought. God let them do what they wanted to do and doing what they wanted to do, they began to fulfill their own pleasures, not in a God-given way, not in a God-given manner, but in a man-centered, in a selfish way, and began to serve the creature rather than the creator.

The Jewish person would have looked at this and said, that's absolutely right. I see these pagans around me that are doing this all the time. In today's time, if we want to move that forward several thousand years, a couple thousand years, we would say that the church member would say, yes, that's exactly right.

I know people right now that are not in church and they're living this way and that way. But then Paul moves the accusation from the world to inside the church building or inside the Jewish synagogue.

[8 : 20] And he says, even you, who claim to be a knower of the truth, who claim to be one who points people to the truth, he said, do you keep the truth? This is what we find in Romans 2.

You who claim to be a guide to the blind, are you not blind? You who say, don't steal, do you steal? You who say, don't commit adultery, are you committing adultery? And he begins to lay it all out there and to really let man's conscience testify about himself.

And he brings us to the point in chapter 3 where we get the final assessment of man. Really the death knell in trusting in your own self and your own good works.

It is the one thing that hammers down the truth that we cannot trust in ourselves to be good enough, to be right enough, and to be perfect enough that we may inherit eternity with God.

And Paul is not saying this to cast us down. Paul is not saying this to point a finger. Because Paul, in proclaiming these truths, is very much talking about himself as he is talking about his audience.

[9 : 24] He is always inclusive. He is always saying we, us, ourselves. He always includes himself in this. And it is one thing for a man to think that others are bad.

It is something totally different for a man to see himself as bad, and yet to live with his head high in confidence of who Jesus Christ has made him. It is not that we may leave here thinking less of ourselves.

Rather, the truth of the gospel is there to make us think more of Christ. And really to help us to understand that there is not one individual in this world that is worse than us, or is less than us.

That we are all on an equal playing field, and we all stand in the desperate need of a Savior. And the truth of the gospel is that Savior is available to all as much as he is available to any. So we see here this final assessment of all mankind.

Now, Paul in chapter 3 really is having an argument with an imaginary person because he is writing this letter to a church filled with Jews, a church filled with Greeks or Gentiles, and a church filled with all kinds of people from different backgrounds.

[10 : 29] Rome would have been the melting pot of the world. It would have been the place all roads lead to Rome, literally. Every road would have got there, so anybody that ever wanted to travel there could. We don't know who started the church. We don't know who planted the church, which is amazing.

The most instrumental church throughout history. No one knows who started it. It wasn't Paul. It wasn't Peter. It wasn't John. It was just some ordinary person who happened to be in Jerusalem who heard Peter preach a message and went back and told somebody about it.

That's good, right? God uses the ordinary. I'm proof positive of that. God uses the normal who hears some good news and thinks that he has the right to tell somebody else that good news, which means in your normal everyday life, you have the right, the privilege, and even the opportunity to tell other people about the great news you've heard.

And God wants to use the normal to do the extraordinary in a God-sized manner. And Paul is writing here, and he's being moved by the Spirit as he knows. He knows the arguments that are going to come because Paul has just written that the Jewish man, though he claims to know the truth, really has not lived according to the truth, and he is as lost as the non-Jew.

And the Jewish man would have said, well, then what advantage is there? So the first thing I want you to see as we look at the final assessment of man is I want you to see his advantage.

[11 : 45] He says, number one, what advantage has the Jew? And Paul says, or what benefit of the circumcision? The argument would be this. Since I am just as lost now after having a surgery when I was eight days old and becoming a part of God's covenant community, which is the Jewish people, since I am just as lost now, what benefit?

Should I have even been circumcised? Should my family have even kept the covenant? Should I be proud of my heritage? It would be equivalent today to saying, well, if I am just as lost even though I've been raised in a church, even if my mama and daddy and my grandpapa and my grandmammy were great believers, if they were deacons and pastors and preachers, and if the heritage of faith runs throughout my family, if I need Jesus just as much as any other individual, then what advantage is there?

Does it really matter? Am I any better off because my family raised me in church? Or I've been in church the whole breadth of my life.

I've heard testimonies. And this tie is about to go. I have to wear it later. That's the only reason I have it on now. I've heard testimonies, great testimonies, of men and women who have never been around church their whole life.

And the same God that interrupted my life was the same God who interrupted their life. And the question is, well, what advantage has the Jew? Or what advantage has the member?

[13 : 18] Because this is where we would be tempted, because the Jewish community would have said if there's no advantage to it, then let's forget the Old Testament. Let's forget the covenant. The believer today who is raising his family up would have the temptation to say, well, if there's no advantage to my children always being in church, if they're just as lost as anyone else, then you know what?

Forget the church. There's other things we can do on Sunday. We live in a busy world. It is a hectic pace in today's time. And if my kids aren't going to be any better off because I make them sit in a pew that nobody wants to sit in, if my kids aren't any better off because I take them to a place where the preacher talks way too long, and if my kids aren't going to be better off, then why not forget church and go do what we want to do?

But Paul says, wait a minute. Great in every way. He said the advantage is beyond comparison. We speak here of the advantage.

The man, he says, what advantage is great in every respect? First of all, why? That they were entrusted with the oracles of God. Here's the advantage the Jew has. You know, even today, the Jewish nation, the Jewish people have an advantage which we do not have.

That is, they were the very people that God spoke to for the first time when he began to reveal the will of God to the people of man. It was the Jewish people that were called from a land.

[14 : 44] It was the Jewish people that met the God in the burning bush. It was the whole foundation of biblical faith, which we claim to believe, rests upon a nation of people who are very advantageous. They have a great advantage.

They knew what God was thinking when no one else was. They knew what it was that God had to say to man when nobody else did. They knew a God of love and acceptance when nobody else could even think of that.

They knew a God of mercy and forgiveness when nobody else could believe that. He says they were entrusted. But here's the danger. They weren't given the oracles of God.

They were entrusted with the oracles of God. Because when God spoke to them, they then had a responsibility to respond to what God had said. What advantage has the church member?

Great in every way. There's an innumerable advantage to being raised in a Bible-believing, Bible-preaching church. There's innumerable advantage in the fact that you get to hear the Word of God.

[15 : 42] That your heart is softened to the Word of God. You may wander away from the Word of God, but you have the advantage that God can take what was implanted in your hearts and speak to the reality of your mind.

What an advantage. Excuse me, if you will. I don't know why. I know it's not hot in here. But I'm getting hot. So if you'll excuse me, I'm going to take my coat off. So we see here the advantage of the Jew.

Is he had the opportunity to hear the things of God when no one else did. Even the sign of the circumcision. This was a sign that God accepts you. That God loves you. That God welcomes you.

Listen, to the reality of man, that is something that would be the farthest thing from their minds. A holy God accepting sinful man. These truths were implanted. These truths were shown. These truths were shown.

I am going to get through this message because it is a good message and I'd like to hear it. Because it is not a message of me. So I don't mind just telling you I am weak in the flesh, but that's okay.

[16 : 42] My dear brother told me earlier this morning, it's a great day because the Spirit is moving. But where the Spirit moves, the enemy attacks. And right now he's choosing to attack your pastor's voice.

And I'm not going to let that happen, okay? You'll just have to listen to me. I'll let somebody else come. Maybe Brother Danny Bell could come read my sermon. That'd be great. That'd be just awesome, wouldn't it? I'd just let him talk about these things and he'd just read the points.

That'd be awesome, I mean. But we'll get through this, right? What advantage has the man or the woman that has been raised around the things of God? Great in every way.

The material that God needs to work on the life of the individual have been implanted and have been put there. What advantage is there to having your children, your grandchildren, your family, your loved ones, the people you care about? What advantage is there to asking someone that you know is a nonbeliever to join you in church?

Great in every way. Because God now has material that he can work with in the individual's life. Can God interrupt a life that has never heard of him? Absolutely. Absolutely. Absolutely. I heard the testimony this week of a man who went to church one time, a pastor nonetheless, who went to church one time to impress a girl.

[17 : 50] I was talking to a youth pastor. We were having this conversation. I said, I've never been opposed. When I was working in youth ministry, I said, I always saw as my greatest outreach, these girls who had boyfriends and these boys who had girlfriends.

Those are the greatest outreach and tools a youth ministry can ever have. Because if God could use a girl to break a boy's heart and to show him the need for a savior, what a wonderful thing. Or if God could use a boy to call a girl into fellowship, what a wonderful thing.

God used a girl in my life. Okay, he did. He used my wife when we first got married. I was a nonbeliever, but he used her. God could use a donkey. God could use a rooster. And God can use a bush. Then God could use a boy or a girl, right?

So I always saw that. And he said, I heard this pastor was talking. He said he went to church one time to impress a girl. The very first time, he never opened a Bible. He never heard anything about Jesus, never heard anything about God. The very first time he ever heard the name of Jesus, he gave his life to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, surrendered his life, and now he's been called into the ministry.

That's an amazing testimony, isn't it? That's an amazing testimony. But you know what is just as amazing? The person that has sat in the pew all their life, and somewhere along the lines, they realize they've never accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

[18 : 58] They have a great advantage over that individual. That individual probably had to go somewhere off to college before he could become a pastor, had to go somewhere off to learn the things that were never put in by anyone else.

The individual that has sat in the pew, the individual that has been around the fellowship, the individual that has seen the lives of believers being lived out in front of him in fellowship and community and communion, and they have seen these things, now all of a sudden God has taken them to the school of church.

That when he calls them to himself, they are so much further alone, because they have the tools in which God could use. We see here the advantage of man. Secondly, not only do we see his advantage, we see his argument.

Because Paul here is talking about man not being too good. And every time you tell man he is not good, man has an argument for his lack of goodness. It is just like man to always find an argument for his sin.

It is just like me to always find an argument for sin. One of the greatest arguments and weaknesses I have is I like food. I don't know if anybody else in here likes food, but I like food.

[20 : 06] But the problem is the food I like is not the food that likes me. I like the food that tastes good. I like the sugary stuff and the chocolate stuff and all that stuff that I really like. And I've had to shy away from some of that.

I had to change some of my eating habits. But I used to use the scripture. When Paul wrote 1 Timothy, he said bodily exercise is profitable for little, but godliness is profitable for much.

And I used to use that. See, Paul himself even said that exercise is only a little profit. So if I can be godly, at least I'm on the upside of things, right? I mean, if I can live in godliness, then at least I have the profitable in much.

And if I ever get time, I'll come to the profitable in little thing. He said, you know, don't spend your whole days taking care of your body. Just worry about your godliness. And then I began to be convicted about how the two are connected.

How what I do to my body affects my godliness. Because if I can't discipline myself in food, then I won't be able to discipline myself in the big things. But I had an argument for my sin.

[21 : 09] Now you're saying, now pastor, you're telling me I need to change the way? No, only God can tell you that. I'm telling you, he was telling me that, and I was arguing with him about that. And I had all the scripture to back it up.

But you know what we need to understand? Even Satan quoted scripture when he tried to tempt Jesus. And God began to show me the reality of these things. And I was like, oh, wow. And then my wife's like, you know, we got four kids.

I ain't gonna let you die on me yet. She said, I had this problem sometimes. I would kind of quit breathing in my sleep. I didn't know it. But I'd always wake up wondering why my chest was hurting. She said, because I punch you when you quit breathing.

Because I said, you ain't dying on me yet. We got too many kids. And she said, I'll hit you and hit you and hit you. Y'all just think the pastor's wife's sweet. She said, I'd punch you in the chest until you go. And I'd be like, okay, I can go back to sleep. Now this is the woman that when the alarm goes off, I can't make her get out of bed.

But if I quit breathing for five seconds, I mean, I may have had a hiccup. I don't know. She decided she's gonna punch me and tell me I can't die. We got too many kids. God began to show me things and began to tell me that all man has an argument for the sin he likes.

[22 : 15] And look at this argument. The argument that Paul brings up and says, you're gonna argue with me because this is what you're gonna say. Well, if my sin makes God look good, then why is God judging me from my sin?

And if the fact that I lie proves the fact that God is true, then why is God mad at my lying? And if my ungodliness proves his holiness, then isn't God unfair to judge me?

Well, wait a minute. God doesn't need us to prove the fact that he is good. God doesn't need a lie to prove the fact that he is true. And God doesn't need wickedness to prove the fact that he is holy because he is good, he is true, and he is holy.

He was good, he was true, and he was holy before he created us, okay? He was good, he was true, and he was holy before he spoke the world into existence. He was good, he was true, and he was holy before anything ever existed because he is.

I am that I am, which means there is nothing outside of me that will ever prove an attribute of me. I don't need a case study, I don't need a testimony, I don't need someone outside of me to talk about how good I am, I don't need someone to talk about how true I am, and I don't need someone to talk about how holy I am.

[23 : 27] He says, I am God, so I just am, and you'll have to take me at my word. But man's argument is, the fact that I do wrong shows how good he is. Friend, that is just a crutch from Satan to keep doing wrong, to keep showing how good God is.

Look, God is good all the time, and we know the rest of it, and all the time, God is good, because he is good regardless if we are good, he is good regardless if we are bad. He is always good, but man has an argument for his sin.

We say, well, I keep doing this because it just shows how merciful God is. And Satan wants you to believe that because there may come a time where God says, I don't need you to show how merciful I am, you do it one more time and I'll take you out.

You do it one more time, and you may just stop breathing. And that's called conviction. Man has an argument for his sin. All man, of all time.

I dare say right now, something's going on in your mind, and it's not because the pastor talked about his eating habits, it's not because the pastor told you something funny, it's because the Holy Spirit is moving in your presence, and I dare say right now, that the Spirit is bringing to your mind something you are trying to defend.

[24 : 37] Here's the reality, why don't you join me and quit defending it? And start denying it. Because Paul says, God doesn't need you to keep doing that so that he can keep forgiving you.

He's already forgiving you, and it's already true. Quit arguing with God about what you're saying. All man has an argument.

We see his advantage. We see his argument. Number three, we see his acknowledgement. Now, Paul's going to lay it all out here, right? He's not holding any punches, so he says, you're going to tell me that because you're bad, it shows how good God is?

He says, your condemnation is just. That's a harsh word, right? The fact, the condemnation is a judgment, and a pain, and a penalty. He says, God is just in giving you what you deserve.

Wow. And then he goes on. Here's the acknowledgement in verse nine. What then? Are we better than they? Here's another argument. People say, well, Paul, you're just pointing a finger. You're pointing people out, and you're saying, well, see, I'm better than you.

[25 : 37] You do good, or you better than me. You're trying to say, now, wait a minute. Paul is a man that every letter he wrote, he thought less of himself. I don't know if you've studied the writings of Paul much, but when you come to, like, some of the earliest writings of Paul, Paul calls himself an apostle born out of due season.

Now, the office of an apostle was a pretty important position, even in the early church. So, Paul refers to himself in the first letter he writes, an apostle born out of due season. And then he goes on, and in the next letter, or a little bit later, it's kind of like, an apostle, I'm the least of all the apostles.

So, now he's an apostle born out of due season. Now, he's the least of all apostles. One of the last letters Paul writes, the letter he writes right before he dies, he writes, he says, I am the chief of all sinners.

I am the most wicked of all men. Paul? Sitting in a jail cell, getting ready to have his head cut off because he's been preaching about Jesus Christ.

The longer he walked with Christ, the less he saw of himself. So, he's saying here, they're saying, Paul, you're telling me you're better than me? Paul, you're saying you're better than me because you got this whole eating thing down, or you're not doing that anymore, and you're saying you're just better than me.

[26 : 50] Paul says, in verse 9, what then? Are we better than they? Not at all. Not at all. For we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin.

And then starting in verse 10, he says, as it is written, he gives numerous quotations, verses 10 through 18. I'm not going to read them again, but these are all quotations from the Old Testament, and they are from various pages in the Old Testament.

They are from passages in the book of Psalms. They are from passages in the book of Isaiah. They are all over the Old Testament. But they all say one thing. There is no one who does good. No, not one.

Paul goes on a rant. I remember when I first started preaching, I would always give my passage in advance, and people began to ask me to give all my passages in advance because I would run us throughout the whole Bible, and I would have bookmarks all throughout my scripture.

So I'd always say, okay, you need to mark this page, this page, this page, and this page, and I was always coming to a passage and then letting the Bible prove it, and I had this habit of wanting God to prove what God had said, and God broke me of that and came to the point that if he says it once, that's enough.

[27 : 52] We don't have to prove it. But Paul here kind of goes to old school Billy Joe and starts quoting all kinds of Old Testament scriptures and says, as it is written, and he just goes on this rant, and he has not given them in their correct Hebrew writing, okay?

He's given them in the everyday language. So he's paraphrasing here, but what he says is, he says no one's good. They're not doing right. Their mouth is messed up because they keep saying things wrong. They're cursing all the time.

They can't even walk in the right path. Their lives are whole mess up. Their head's messed up. Everything about all men is messed up is what he's saying. From the head to the toe, everybody's messed up.

And what he says is, this is what the Old Testament tells us, and he points to the truthfulness of the scripture. The entirety of the Old Testament shows us the greatness of God and the wickedness of man.

Not just the bad man, but all men. The wickedness of all men. I'm going through the book of 2 Kings and my morning readings, and you know, you get to those scriptures where you get all these kings running together, but then you get into this king and it says, this guy became king, and he did right in the sight of God.

[29 : 08] You're like, alright, I finally got a good guy. And it says, but, that he left the, you know, the idols stay there. And I'm like, there's always a but. Right?

He did right in the sight of God except this. Or except that. And it shows us all throughout the Old Testament. There's none who does good.

No, not, one. Here's the acknowledgement of man. Nobody's better off than anyone else. There's not a single human being who's ever lived other than God become flesh who is Jesus Christ.

There's not a single person who has ever been better than the most wicked of persons. Not in God's economy. Maybe by man's economy, but not in God's economy.

I'm going through a new study with the young adults this morning called Why I Believe with Chip Ingram. And it's been a long time since I went through it. But Chip Ingram quoted in there that Joseph Stalin, I remember Joseph Stalin, real good guy throughout history, right?

[30 : 17] Real proponent of communism and all this good stuff that he did. Was a little bit short fellow by the way. Joseph Stalin, little guy with a big ego, had all four gospels memorized.

Memorized. Memorized. He just lived it out a little differently than we did. So are we any better than him? He had more of it memorized than I do.

No man has done good. No, not one. That's our acknowledgement. Fourth and finally, his accountability. His accountability. And this is going to be Paul's transitioning into the grace of God.

He goes, okay, Paul, so we're all messed up. Well, good news is I've got great company. If we all are messed up, then nobody can point a finger at me, right?

If we all have problems, then ain't nobody my judge. Because if I'm as messed up as the next person is messed up, then the first person that comes up to me and tells me I'm messed up, I'm going to say, so are you. And we're just going to go on about it, right?

[31 : 17] We're just going to live it and we have to live this out. I'm accountable to no man and no man's accountable to me because according to the scripture, everybody's got a problem. And according to the scripture, we all have issues and if we all have issues, just leave me alone.

Let me live my life and I'm going to do what I want to do. I'm accountable to no one. I answer to no one. I only answer to myself. And Paul says, wait a minute. Stop right there.

He says here in verse 19, Now we know that whatever the law says, now the law being Old Testament, all the Old Testament, namely the first five books of the Bible and also the law that is written on the heart, the fact that we know what good is and we know what bad is.

We have these things called morals and standards and this thing like, we know if this happens then that's bad, right? I mean, it's just bad if that happens. I don't care where you're at in the economy. I don't care where, I mean, in society, I don't care where you're at, in theology, what you believe about God.

But if I say, this is what's going on, you're like, oh, that's bad. So that's that law written on our hearts, right? The fact that children are starving around the world and we're throwing dumpster full of it away. Something's wrong with that.

[32 : 20] I mean, you don't have to be a believer to think that there are kids digging through trash piles just south of us trying to survive on scraps and yet we're throwing food away because it's a day old, you know, in our school system.

I mean, something's just not right about that. You don't have to be a big devout follower of Christ to get kind of those things and that's just surface level. I mean, we could go much deeper and talk about the dark world in which we live.

He says, now we know that whatever the law says, that morality, that code, it speaks to those who are under the law which means that now all of a sudden it's speaking to us so that every mouth, now look at this and I want you to note it and I want you to write it down and I want you to point it.

Paul's not speaking of every church member. He's not speaking of every individual. He says, every mouth, that's everybody who's ever lived, every mouth may be closed. Every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God.

I believe it was Warren Wiersbe who wrote at this passage, he said, if you've never come to the point where all you could do was close your mouth in the presence of God because you knew how bad you were, he said, then I doubt you've ever been saved.

[33 : 31] If you can ever stand before a holy God and rationalize with Him and stand before a holy God and tell Him all the good stuff about yourself and you can stand before a holy God and keep saying this, this, this, and this, he said, if you've never come to the point where you saw yourself so bad that when you stood before a holy God you just had to close your mouth then the Holy Spirit hasn't worked on you enough because it says here every mouth shall be closed.

That when God shows up, you notice this in Scripture that wherever God shows up man quits talking and falls on his face. I've noticed that all throughout Scripture. God comes on and says, boom, done. done.

I mean, God spoke to Isaiah and Isaiah, all Isaiah can say is I'm a man of unclean lips. I can't say anything. And I live among a people of unclean lips. Moses was eloquent in speech and highly educated in the realm of Egypt until he stood before a burning bush and all of a sudden he became a stuttering fool.

Ever thought about it? What made him stutter? I know what makes me stutter. Being in the presence of a holy God. I can't talk. He says, every mouth shall be closed.

Why? And all the world may become accountable to God. Here it is. Here's man's accountability. He's accountable to God.

[34 : 54] Is he accountable to others? No. Every mouth is closed and every man is accountable. Who's accountable to God? Not just the people who hear me. Not just the people who go to church. Not just the people who are... Every person is accountable to God.

Look, as he closed. Because, this is why, because by the works of the law, no flesh will be justified in his sight.

Let's put it in today's term. Just because somebody does good or just because somebody's a pretty good person. He goes on, just because somebody's an exceptionally good person that works of the law.

Nobody's going to be justified in God's sight. There are a lot of people who do so much good they are justified in the world's sight. Oh, the world lifts them up and the world thinks they're great and the world thinks they're awesome and that's great.

We ought to applaud acts of goodness and acts of charity and we ought to applaud these things and lift them up among mankind. But we also ought to realize that just because someone is justified in the sight of man does not mean they're justified in the sight of God.

[36 : 02] He says no one will do the works of the law and be justified in the sight of God. No one. No one. No one's an all-inclusive statement, isn't it?

Then why the law? Why is this an impossibility? Look, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin. All the law can do is tell you about sin.

When you read the Old Testament, all you find is the reality of sin. It tells you about sin all over the place. That moral code within your being, that thing within you that knows right from wrong, that law written on the flesh of your heart, all it can do is tell you you mess up.

Just because you know good, it doesn't mean you have the power to do good. Maybe we may for a time, but what I found about myself, I thought because I knew what was right and what was wrong, I had the power to do right.

But the problem with that is there would be days where I was weak. And I may be powerful for five days, but I may mess up one day, or I may be powerful for a month, but then I mess up on a single day and I regain my strength.

[37 : 12] The thing is, in God's sight, that day matters. That moment of weakness counts. All the law can do is tell us what sin is.

But it cannot make us sinless. Every one of us drive past the speed limit, posted signs, that's the law. All that sign can do is tell you what the limit is, but it cannot affect your car.

Some of us say, praise be to God, they ain't figured that out yet, right? If I go by this sign that says 45, all of a sudden my car slows down to 45, some of us would be late all the time, including me, right? That, man, thankfully, they haven't figured out a way yet that the law that is posted can affect the way I drive.

All it can do is tell me what I'm supposed to do. All the moral standards and the goodness that God has written on our heart and written in His Word, all it can do is make us knowledgeable of sin.

It cannot take sin away from us. And Paul's transitioning because he's now going to say, but let me tell you the one who can take sin away.

[38 : 26] Let me tell you about grace. Let me tell you about forgiveness. Let me tell you about mercy. Friend, listen, I'm closing. I'm not wanting you to leave here today down.

I don't want you to leave cast down and say, man, that was a doom and gloom message. No, it's not. It's a hope-filled message because you may have something within you that is telling you you can't do good.

And that is something to be thankful for. Thank God He's given us a standard that shows us we don't reach it. Thank God He's given us a standard. Thank God He gives us the knowledge now so that when the time comes, we don't come before Him in His presence and say, God, I'm here because I did good enough.

No, rather we come and say, God, I'm only here because Your Son paid enough. Because the price that was paid on Calvary was enough for me.

His life for mine. I don't know where you're at today, but all I know is what I have seen in the mirror of my reflection is I'm not good enough, I'm not right enough.

[39 : 37] Praise be to God, I walked away from the mirror and I walked to the cross. And on the cross, I saw one who wanted me and welcomed me with open arms. And He gave His life for mine and He gave His life for you too.

What I'm asking is that You allow Him to live through you for His glory and honor. Let's pray. Lord, we thank You so much for the day. God, we thank You for the opportunity and Lord, we pray now that You'd move by the power and presence of Your Spirit that You would show us the way this message grips our hearts and changes us and conforms us to Your image.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

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