

Romans 3:9-20 No One is Righteous

Text

⁹What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; ¹⁰as it is written,

“There is none righteous, not even one;
¹¹There is none who understands,
There is none who seeks for God;
¹²All 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,
¹⁶Destruction and misery are in their paths,
¹⁷And the path of peace they have not known.”
¹⁸“There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

¹⁹Now 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; ²⁰because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.

Key Points in the text

- The effects of sin start in the heart, move to the tongue, and result in destruction.
- Works of the Law do not save us.

Text Study

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

We are all under the power of sin.

- We are slaves to sin
- We are slaves to unrighteousness
- We are slaves to our own will (desires), which are, like everything else, corrupted by the fall.

¹⁰as it is written

Paul begins his summary of the last two chapters by showing that all people are under sin and deserve its due punishment.

- Paul will do this by going through several Psalms and other OT texts.
- In doing so he will show that not only are we slaves to sin, but also that we have turned away from God.

Paul breaks these verses into three sections.

**“There is none righteous, not even one;
11There is none who understands,
There is none who seeks for God;
12All have turned aside, together they have become useless;
There is none who does good,
There is not even one.”**

Section 1: Slavery to Sin means every heart by nature turns away from God.

- From Psalm 14:1-3 and Psalm 53:1-3
- Our hearts have turned away from God.
- None seek for God, all have become useless, and none do good.
 - Seeker sensitive church?
- Notice the double emphasis on our lack of righteousness.

**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”;**

Section 2: Rotten Hearts Speak with Bitter Tongues, or Out of the Abundance of the Heart, the Mouth Speaks.

- 13a is from Psalm 5:9, 13b is from Psalm 140:3, 14 is from Psalm 10:7
- Section one was about the heart and section two is about the tongue.
- The corruption of our heart mortifies our tongue.
- Kind words will not come from our mouths unless our heart is changed by the kindness of God.

**15“Their feet are swift to shed blood,
16Destruction and misery are in their paths,
17And the path of peace they have not known.”
18“There is no fear of God before their eyes.”**

Section 3: Bitter Tongues Destroy Community, and Relationships.

- 15-17 is shortened from Isaiah 59:7,8, 18 is from Psalm 36:1
- Section one was about the heart, section two was about the tongue, and section three is about community/relationships.
- A corrupt heart, causes bitter words, which causes destruction of the community.
 - The religious non-believer within the church causes that most harm to the church.
 - No government or nation stands forever, eventually the corrupt heart turns to bitter tongues typically seeking what will benefit them or their group at the cost of others.

¹⁹Now 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; ²⁰because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.

Conclusion: The Bible Exposes All of this, but Just Knowing Does Nothing.

- Apart from God there are only self-seeking hearts, bitter tongues, and broken communities.
- 19b “so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God”, is Paul’s summation of his response to those who think God’s judgement is not just.
- Works of the Law will not save you, but what are they, and why not?
 - ‘Works of the Law’, are works done by human initiative to fulfill the commands given to Moses.
 - ‘Works of the Law’, are done with the mindset of faith alone, but not by faith in God, but by faith in man alone.
 - No one will be justified in His sight by these works because our works are incomplete and in every way corrupt.
- Paul starts with the bad news (law) so that when he presents the good news (gospel), the hearer understands why the gospel is what they need, and that it is so, so, good.

Application

- Start with yourself: Remember that your salvation is not dependent on your works, as they are all corrupt. Therefore Glorify God!
- Go to others: Don’t be afraid to start with the judgement (bad news) when evangelizing. Remember that all unconverted men and women believe they are not all that bad and don’t need a lot to be saved, just a little bit and they will be fine. With this mindset the need to be made new is not accepted.

Next Week’s Lesson Prep/Preview

Text: Romans 1:18 - 3:20

Focus: Review

Devotional: Matthew 3:1-2,7-10,16-17

Preparation: Review lessons 3-7