

LESSON 5: ROMANS 3:1-20
OCTOBER 16, 2019

OVERVIEW

- . Three questions – Romans 3:1-8
- . None righteous, not even one – Romans 3:9-20

THREE QUESTIONS – ROMANS 3:1-8

- . What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew? – Romans 3:1-2
 - . Many Jews felt Paul had gone too far
 - . If God treats Jew and Gentile alike, then what is the Old Testament all about
 - . Why did God bother to choose Abraham and establish a covenant with he and his people
 - . why did God institute circumcision as a sign of His covenant
 - . If Paul is right then these things are worthless
 - . The Jews advantages – Romans 3:2
 - . They have been entrusted with the very words of God
 - . God has chosen to reveal Himself to the Jews and spend time showing them how it is He wants them to live
 - . God has showed the Jews how He wants them to worship Him
 - . God has demonstrated His love for them through His actions
 - . The Jews have been blessed to be able to have a relationship with God unlike any other people, prior to Christ
 - . These advantages were intended to lead Jews to faith
 - . Christians today share these same advantages
 - . The greatest advantage we have been given is the gift of the Holy Spirit, along with Holy Scripture, that the Holy Spirit will help us better understand
 - . These gifts which have been given to us freely will allow us to experience the fullness of life that God had intended
- . Will the lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness? – Romans 3:3-4
 - . Paul's response is an emphatic "Not at all!"
 - . Unbelief is never God's fault
 - . Unbelief is our responsibility
 - . Because we are sinners we try to manipulate God to save us, regardless of what we do
 - . God is faithful and true – He will save those He has promised to save – but not apart from faith
 - . God has revealed His ways to us and will deem us righteous based on our belief in Him and our heartfelt desire to live by faith

- . Why not do evil that good may result? – Romans 3:5-8
 - . Paul serves this up as a debating trick
 - . The only way God's holiness can be revealed is by exposing us to that which He isn't – evil
 - . Evil can only manifest itself through us and our bad behavior
 - . So the argument is that evil must exist in order for there to be good
 - . So, can we be giving ourselves over to evil with the real heartfelt desire being to reveal God's goodness
 - . Christ is very clear on this point when He says He came to save us from our sin, not in it
 - . "If anyone would come after me, he must deny Himself and take up His cross daily and follow me" – Luke 9:23
 - . Those who are part of the body of Christ, will learn to love what He loves and hate what He hates
 - . As we grow in our faith we will learn to hate sin and thirst for righteousness

NONE RIGHTEOUS. NOT EVEN ONE – ROMANS 3:9-20

- . The depravity of all people
 - . One of the reasons it is hard for many people to accept human depravity is our own sinful nature
 - . We tend to treat sin lightly
 - . Most people are willing to admit they are not perfect
 - . However it's a real stretch for someone to think of themselves as spiritually depraved
 - . We may be willing to admit that we wander off the right path occasionally but not that we might be on the wrong path
 - . Instead of admitting that we might be running away from God, we may think of ourselves as seeking Him – when convenient
 - . Without an accurate knowledge of our sin we will never come to know the meaning of God's grace
 - . Without fully recognizing our unregenerate condition we will not embrace the need for salvation
 - . As long as we go on believing we are in control of our destiny, we will not embrace the truth that only God, through Christ can give us our salvation
- . Are human beings well, sick or dead
 - . In the long history of the human race there have only been only these three basic views of human nature
 - . Our culture today portrays humans as well, with a few issues
 - . Secularism teaches that people are generally well, with a few warts

- . Spiritually speaking, people are generally well, yet always in need of spiritual exercise to stay well
- . People are basically good and getting better
- . The second view, that mankind is sick, is the view of the pessimist
 - . In spite of the progress and development we achieve, we realize that the human race is in trouble
 - . Despite this reality all is not hopeless
- . The third view is that mankind is actually dead so far as our being able to do anything to please, understand or find God is concerned
 - . This view recognizes that mankind is what God said we would be when He warned Adam and Eve of disobedience
 - . Unless God intervenes, we are helpless and hopeless to do anything about our terminal human condition
- . What are we unable to do as unregenerate sinners – Romans 3:10-12
 - . We are unable to be righteous
 - . Human beings cannot create their own standards of righteousness and expect to please God, while at the same time choosing to omit God from the process
 - . We cannot simply make ourselves acceptable to God by what we do
 - . Void of God, our definition of righteousness will be based on comparing one's person's actions against another
 - . Human righteousness will never rise to the level of divine righteousness because we will always be comparing ourselves to something less than perfect and Holy
 - . "Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness" – Romans 10:3
 - . In verse 12 Paul sums up this condition by saying all have turned away, together they have become worthless
 - . We are unable to fully understand spiritual things, as God desires
 - . In I Corinthians Paul explains that human wisdom is bankrupt so far as coming to know God is concerned (I Corinthians 1:18-21)
 - . God has created us with a spiritual vacuum that only He can fill
- . In our natural condition, unaided by the supernatural work of God in our hearts, we cannot seek God
 - . In theology this is known as "the bondage of the will" after a classic study with that title by Martin Luther
 - . Concept has been hotly debated over the centuries in theological circles
 - . Augustine saw sin as more than mere isolated acts
 - . It is simply not possible for humans to stop sinning, short of God's intervention
 - . "Non posse non peccare" – not able to not sin

- . Luther vs. Erasmus of Rotterdam
 - . Erasmus argued that the will must be free if a human being was to be truly free
 - . In other words the human will is not a slave to anything, sin or God
 - . Luther argued that we are in bondage to a sinful condition and can not simply will ourselves to rise above it
 - . Only through God's mercy and grace can we be free of this condition
 - . We need to humbly acknowledge our sin, confess our blindness and surrender ourselves to a higher authority
- . The race in ruin – Romans 3:13-18
 - . Wicked words from wicked people – Romans 3:13-14
 - . God gave the human race the gift of speech for honor and blessing
 - . We have turned it into shame
 - . Paul pinpoints an anatomical order, from the inward to the outward
 - . Violent acts by violent people – Romans 3:15-17
 - . Here Paul moves from evil words to violent acts
 - . No fear of God – Romans 3:18
 - . "There is no fear of God before their eyes" – Psalm 36:1
 - . None justified by good works – Romans 3:19-20
 - . Every human being is accountable to God for what we have done, guilty of having done countless wrong things and will never be justified by God simply on the basis of any supposed good works
- . Paul sums all this up by saying the entire human race is guilty before God
 - . The only way to be free from either the conscious or unconscious guilt is to be justified before God by faith in the person of Jesus Christ and His redemptive work of grace
 - . No one will ever be saved simply by what they do
 - . The only way anyone will ever be saved from this bondage to sin is by faith in Jesus Christ, who paid the penalty for our sin and in its place offers us the free gift of His own great righteousness

NEXT LESSON – WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2019: ROMANS 3:21-26