

Romans Part 6 (3:9 - 3:25a)

Tuesday Night Bible Study, December 12, 2006

--INTRO

--Paul started his detailed presentation of the gospel with the subject of sin and God's wrath against sin. In the section of Romans we'll cover tonight, Paul makes one final argument about the problem of sin and then transitions into the next section about how we are saved from sin

--Romans 3:19-20: "Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

--the law was not given for us to follow perfectly, but rather it was given to make us realize that we can't follow it perfectly, that we are sinful ("for by the law is the knowledge of sin" v.20), and therefore help us realize our need for salvation from our sins ("that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become guilty before God." v.19)

--Galatians 3:24: "Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. "

--as we read in chapter Romans ch. 2, in a limited sense, the law is written in everyone's heart and gives a general sense of right and wrong through the conscience (Romans 2:15)

--but the law written in everyone's heart is not perfectly reliable because it is subjective and people can "suppress the truth..." (Romans 1:18) of the law written in their hearts and become self-deceived into thinking that there is nothing wrong with their sinful ways...

--1 Timothy 4:2 speaks of this as "their conscience seared with a hot iron" (1 Timothy 4:2)

--Hebrews 3:13 speaks of this as the heart being "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."

--Proverbs 16:25: "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death."

--people may suppress the truth of the law written in their hearts, but the law written in God's Word makes it crystal clear that everybody is "guilty before God." (v.19)

--in Romans 7:7 Paul touches on his personal experience with the limitations of the law written on the heart by stating how the law in Scripture helped him to realize his sin... "I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, 'You shall not covet.'"

--most secular people think of themselves as relatively "good" people and think that their relative goodness is acceptable to God, but where they stand before God becomes clear when their life is measured against the standard of God's Word.

--people may gravitate towards the commandments in God's Word that they don't violate, such as "do not steal, do not murder, do not commit adultery..." while ignoring others, such as the first commandment: "you shall have no other gods before Me" (Deuteronomy 5:7)

--Romans 3:9-18: "What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. 10 As it is written: 'There is none righteous, no, not one; ...'"

--even the commandments most people think they follow with ease, such as "do not murder", "do not commit adultery", suddenly become a different picture in light of Jesus' interpretation...

--Matthew 5:27-29: "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28 But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

--Matthew 5:21-22: "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' 22 But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment."

--in Romans 3:10-18 Paul uses quotes from Psalms, Isaiah, and Ecclesiastes to give a sample report card of how everybody measures up against the exacting standard of God's Word that Jesus taught, which reaches beyond the seeming goodness of our flesh at the surface all the way into the deep, dark recesses of our flesh

--1 Samuel 16:7: "For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

--for the Christian, this grim assesment relates to our flesh only... when we were saved we became a "new creation in Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:17) and our primary identity switched from our flesh to our spirit (we'll explore this later in Romans)

--Paul includes himself as a Christian in his introduction to the assesment: "Are we better than they? Not at all...." (v.9)

--In spite of being a new creation in our spirit, we have to be on guard against our flesh until the day we die and are set free from our flesh.

--in Romans 7:21-25 Paul speaks about the struggle between his flesh and his spirit: "I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. 22 For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25 I thank God — through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin. "

--Matthew 26:41: "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

--Galatians 5:16-17: "I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17 For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another

--in reality, without a relationship with God through faith that results from salvation in Christ, everything in life is sin...

--Romans 14:23: "whatever is not from faith is sin."

--Hebrews 11:6: "without faith it is impossible to please God."

--the essence of doing things by faith is doing them for God because you love God... which relates to the first of the ten commandments: "you shall have no other gods before Me" (Deuteronomy 5:7), or to summarize all the commandments, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength." (Deuteronomy 6:5)

--even though the world tells us otherwise, it is natural to live for God because "All things were created through Him and for Him." (Colossians 1:16) To not live for God is to deny the purpose of your life.

--Romans 3:21-25a: "But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood..."

--"the righteousness of God" = 100% perfection

--when we place our faith in Christ our score of 0% (everything not of faith is sin) is replaced by Christ's score of 100%

--the righteousness of Christ is "credited" (Romans 4:11) to our account

--another word for saving faith is "trust" – "In Him you also trusted after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation..." (Ephesians 1:13)

--in 2 Timothy 1:5 Paul called saving faith "genuine faith" (2 Timothy 1:5)

--that is, faith in all that Christ is, including Lord who calls us to deny ourselves (the sinful desires of our flesh) and take up our cross and follow Him (Matthew 16:24), opposed to an intellectual faith, or dead faith, that has no impact on our lives... "faith without works is dead" (James 2:20)

--"being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets..." (v.21)

--we'll explore this further in chapter 4, but Paul is simply touching on the fact that salvation by faith is nothing new, it is the central theme of all Scripture, including the Old Testament ("the Law and the Prophets")

--Romans 4:1-8: "What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.' ... 6 David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works: 7 'Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; 8 Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin.'"

--"the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood..." (v. 24-25)

--"propitiation" literally means "satisfaction"... when the righteousness of Christ is credited to our account, the requirements of God's law are satisfied and we are "redeemed" (delivered) from the consequence of not meeting the requirements of God's law... like a person on death row being set free and delivered from execution!

--this isn't merely an accounting transaction on paper, but in order to make this possible Christ literally had to leave heaven and pay the penalty for our sins in our place. Christ had to die in our place! God left eternity and died in a moment of time to save us from death in eternity!

--the animal stench in the stable where Christ was born was symbolic of the stench of our sins that He would bear!