

Introduction:

- Review the terms pertaining to righteousness from last week
- No set of words is more important to understanding Paul's letter to the Romans than these:
 - *dike* - Root meaning—justice.
 - *dikaioo* - justify
 - *dikaosyne* - righteousness.
 - *dikaos* - righteous
- My attempt is to do an overview of this section 1:18-3:20 tonight.
- We will see this as Paul's indictment. *A written accusation charging that an individual named therein has committed an act or omitted to do something that is punishable by law.*
- The Interruption. The Indictment. All Guilty.

I. The Interruption

- A. Paul acknowledges his interruption of his exposition of righteousness with 1:18-3:20
 1. Notice 1:17 and 3:21 similarities. These passages serve as parenthesis to his Gospel of righteousness by faith.
- B. Why the interruption? What purpose does this indictment of humanity serve?
 1. Some people would say that it is part of the Gospel and is being used by Paul to bring conviction of sin so that people would repent and desire his Gospel.
 - a) It is clear that Paul is considering warning about the judgment to come as part of the preaching of the Gospel. *"And this is the message I proclaim—that the day is coming when God, through Christ Jesus, will judge everyone's secret life."* (Romans 2:16, NLT)
 2. But Paul's positive language towards this Gospel of righteous makes the understanding of bringing conviction to the church because of sin 'not fit' in this passage.
- C. What if??? What if, we considered 1:18 - 3:20 as a part of the preparation of the exposition of Paul's Gospel of righteousness by faith? It is necessary, if Paul wants the Romans to receive his understanding of righteousness.
 1. Sin must be seen as the ruling and dominating force in this life if we are to see God's free gift of righteousness to be the only overcoming ruling dominating force that comes to man by faith alone!
 2. Only those who realize they are unworthy can put faith into the Giver of the Gift...or righteousness.
 3. Only by including Jews and Gentiles together in having such great need will everyone become convinced of the need we have for His righteousness. We are all under the power of sin... *"Well then, we should conclude that we ...all people, whether Jews or Gentiles, are under the power of sin."* (Romans 3:9, NLT)
 4. SO ABSOLUTE IS THE POWER OF SIN THAT ONLY GOD'S POWER AVAILABLE IN THE GOSPEL CAN RESCUE US! Cataracts - when lens was replaced the colors were so much richer.
- D. This is the point of this section 1:18-3:20 It reveals our utter dependance on God's mercy and our faith to receive this undeserved gift so powerfully. This is what Paul wants us to receive.

II. The Indictment Against Humanity 1:18-3:8

- A. The four circles
 1. All humanity 1:18 and inside of that...
 2. The Gentiles 1:19-32 and inside of that...
 3. The righteous/moral person, mainly the Jew 2:1-16 and inside of that...
 4. Specifically to the Jew 2:17-38 This has us all covered.
- B. Two sections of 1:18-3:8. Paul carefully lays out his case.
 1. The Gentiles 1:18-32
 - a) Could easily argue that they have no chance of knowing God to which Paul responds: all people have some knowledge of God and His will for them.
 2. The Jews 2:1-3:8
 - a) Could easily claim exemption by virtue of the covenant they have with God. Paul shows how they have broken that covenant.
 3. Most people would understand that the Gentile 'really' need saved. That is why Paul spends so much time targeting the Jews in this section. After all they were God's chosen. They had the promises. Therefore Paul stresses that the Jews are just as subject to sins power as the Gentiles and that the law was powerless to deliver them from sin. He even appears to allude to the golden calf incident.
- C. We still have to ask, "Why the preoccupation with Jews in a letter written mostly for Gentile Christians?"
 1. These are themes of Paul's other letters. So it is not new just more elaborate.
 2. But this letter is written mostly to Roman Gentile Christians.
 3. It is important to Paul that both Jewish and Gentile Christians are united in the problem of un-righteousness so they embrace together the righteousness that comes by faith. This is the Gospel he is looking to get support for in his desired journey of taking the message to Spain.
 4. Add to this his upcoming journey to Jerusalem and I am sure you have all this Jewish talk as part of the mix.
 5. Two dangers that Paul is aware of:
 - a) One, that there was tension between Jews and Gentiles. "Gods favorite vs. the unclean"
 - b) Two, those who were perverting his message. *"And some people even slander us by claiming that we say, 'The more we sin, the better it is!' Those who say such things deserve to be condemned."* (Romans 3:8, NLT)
 6. Paul's concern is to show that both Jews and Gentiles are bound up under sin and can receive the righteousness available in the gospel only by faith in Jesus!

III. All Humanity Found Guilty 1:18-32

There are three parts to this section

- A. The first part, Vss 18-20 announces the revelation of God's wrath and why it is justified. Three things happen here.
 1. People are suppressing the truth and committing ungodly acts.
 2. Because God has given people a knowledge of himself 19-20a
 3. Therefore when they sin they are without excuse.
- B. The next section gives more detail as to how people suppress the truth.

1. 21-24a People exchange the truth of God for idols...*He hands them over/abandons them*
 2. 24b-26 People exchange truth for a lie...*He hands them over/abandons them*
 3. 26b-31 People exchange natural sexual practices for unnatural...*He hands them over/abandons them.*
 - a) To hand over/abandon, Grk. *apodidomi* - (apo meaning from)-which means to give back for the fruit of what was done.
- C. Third section. *"They know God's justice requires that those who do these things deserve to die, yet they do them anyway. Worse yet, they encourage others to do them, too."* (Romans 1:32, NLT)
1. This is the concluding indictment and the transition to chapter 2.
 2. Traditionally people say this is against the Gentiles but it is against people, all of them. The object of God's wrath is 'people' vs 18 not Gentiles.
 3. So this section speaks to all who have knowledge of God's truth but who suppress it or turn away from it. The is repeated by every generation! By every person!

Next week we will see what Paul has to say to the Jewish and moral people!