

I. All Humanity and the Jews Found Guilty 2:17-29 and 3:1-8

- A. The limitations of covenant - Paul is directly speaking to Jews.
 - 1. The point of this section is that in spite of having the law and circumcision sin still has ruling power of you.
 - 2. Three special gifts: Given in ascending order. Two
 - a) You belong to the chosen people. What a blessing!
 - b) You rely on the law. God's Word given to you! That is also the problem they 'rely' on the law.
 - c) You have a special relationship with God.
 - d) You know Gods will
 - e) And you have approved.
 - 3. Four prerogatives of Paul regard the Jews and their mission to the world.
 - a) You are a guide for the blind
 - b) You are a light for those in darkness
 - c) You instruct the ignorant.
 - d) You teach children the ways of God.
 - 4. vs 21-25 show the failing of the Jews in their mission
 - 5. vs. 24-27, Speaks of the relationship between the three above 'gifts' mixed with disobedience makes the gentiles not believe. And the ones who do are better off than the Jew with his three 'gifts.' They are failing their mission given by God. And they to need the righteousness that Paul brings. One cannot trust in his works but by faith alone trust God for His righteousness.
- B. It is all about the heart! *"No, a true Jew is one whose heart is right with God. And true circumcision is not merely obeying the letter of the law; rather, it is a change of heart produced by the Spirit. And a person with a changed heart seeks praise from God, not from people."* (Romans 2:29, NLT) Gods verdict is based on works but they are motivated from a heart of faith. Faith produces good works.
- C. Paul's conviction is that Christ came first and all men are sinners who stand in need of him. This is where he starts, and this is where he finishes. We all need Jesus because we all stand on equal ground...lost!

II. God's Faithfulness

- A. God is faithful even though Israel is not. This emphatically supports Paul's understanding of God's commitment to carry out the terms of covenant even when His people are unfaithful.
- B. The Jews faithlessness emphasizes their inability to keep covenant.
- C. This is not to leave us with the understanding that it is o.k. for us to remain in our unfaithfulness. It can very well, with clarity, communicate that God is faithful to carry out His words of warnings and judgement on unfaithful people. (See Ps 51:4)

D. In summary:

1. Paul begins by warning his readers not to draw the wrong conclusion from his discourse against Jewish presumption of salvation through circumcision and the law (chap. 2).
2. God is faithful to his promises to Israel; his "righteousness" is steady and dependable.
3. But Paul quickly turns from defense of Israel to further attack, reminding the Roman Christians that God's faithfulness is ultimately not to Israel but to his own person and promises. God is therefore "righteous" when he punishes his people for their sin as well as when he rewards them for obedience.
4. "But this does not mean, Paul concludes, that we should excuse sin simply because it always magnifies God's righteousness. Such an attitude brings God's own name into disrepute." Moo, D. J. (1996). NICNT Romans (p. 196). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
5. The problem Paul attacks in these verses is not confined to the people of God of his day. All too often we Christians have presumed that God's grace to us exempts us from any concern about our sin.

III. The Guilt of All Humanity!

- A. vs. 9-20 as it opens with a question serves to be a summary of what Paul began in 1:18. In fact 10-18 are a series of different OT scriptures that speak of the sinfulness of mankind. vs 18 sums up our sinfulness...NO FEAR OF GOD.
1. Ps. 14 There is none that are righteous! vs 10-18
 2. All whether Jew or Gentile are under the power of sin. vs. 9
 3. Vss 19-20 Show how powerfully under sin we all are. There is no escape! This set up what Paul now longs to declare. The Good News! The Gospel! The proclamation of God's righteousness in Christ!
- B. "What then?" "By no means!" Both are typical expressions of Paul introducing teaching moments.
1. vs.19 we have no excuses
 2. and the whole world is guilty...WHY?
 3. vs 20 for no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands.
- C. The heart of his contention in this section of Romans is that *no one* is capable of doing *anything* to gain acceptance with God; this is why for *everyone* faith in Christ is the only possible way to God. Moo, D. J. (1996). NICNT Romans (pp. 209-210). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.