

Romans Session 39
The Guilt of All Men 2
Romans 3:10-17

Romans 3:10-17 (NASB)

- ¹⁰ *as it is written, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;*
¹¹ *THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;*
¹² *ALL 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,*
¹⁶ *DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS,*
¹⁷ *AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN."*

In our last study, we talked of the Indictment of mankind and that Paul lays out three categories of charges concerning the accused.

1. Charges concerning the character of the accused (vv-10-12)
2. Charges concerning the conversation of the accused (vv-13-14)
3. Charges concerning the conduct of the accused.(vv-15-17)

We want to look at these tonight.

CHARGES CONCERNING THE CHARACTER OF THE ACCUSED

Romans 3:10-12 (NASB)

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Under the heading of what could be called character, Paul list the first six of the thirteen charges.

Because of their fallen nature,

Men are universally evil v-10b

NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE

They are spiritually ignorant v-11a

THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS

They are rebellious v-11b

THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD

They are wayward v-12a

ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE

They are spiritually useless v-12b

TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS

They are morally corrupt v-12c

THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE."

MANKIND IS UNIVERSALLY EVIL

First, mankind is universally evil. And there are no exceptions.

Paul is quoting from Psalms

Psalm 14:1 (NASB)

¹ *The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they have committed abominable deeds; There is no one who does good.*

Righteousness is a major theme of the book of Romans appearing in one form or another more than thirty times. Other terms from the same Greek root are usually translated "justified", "justification,"

Together they are used more than sixty times in the Book of Romans.

So it is not surprising that the first charge Paul makes in his indictment is that of mankind's unrighteousness.

Paul is using the term **righteous** in its most basic sense of being right before God, of being as God created man to be.

Obviously, people are able to do many things that are morally right. Even the most vile person may occasionally do something commendable.

But the Apostle is not speaking of specific acts or even general patterns of behavior, but of man's inner character.

His point is that **there is** not a single person who has ever lived, apart from the Lord, whose innermost being could be characterized as **righteous** by God's standard.

To prevent some people from thinking that they might be exceptions Paul adds **not even one**.

What is the standard?

Matthew 5:48 (NASB)

⁴⁸ *"Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

So if that is the standard then anyone who is not as good as God is not acceptable to God.

What then is the answer to this situation? It is that man can become perfectly righteous, when the righteousness of Christ is imputed to them.

The very truth that makes the gospel the, "the good news" is that "God has provided a way for men to become perfect. Divinely perfect.

But that perfection comes entirely by God's grace in response to faith in His son, Jesus Christ.

Paul is speaking here of men, all men, who are apart from Christ.

In God's sight there are no levels of righteousness as far as salvation is concerned.

There is either perfect righteousness in Christ or perfect sinfulness apart from Christ.

And Paul says a few verses later,

Romans 3:23 (NASB)

²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Our own natural characters on their own can never achieve the standard of Righteousness that is set by God for acceptance before Him.

MANKIND IS SPIRITUALLY IGNORANT

Romans 3:11a (NASB)

¹¹ THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS,

Paul is again quoting from the Psalms

Psalm 14:2 (NASB)

² The LORD has looked down from heaven upon the sons of men To see if there are any who understand, Who seek after God.

Psalm 53:3 (NASB)

³ Every one of them has turned aside; together they have become corrupt; There is no one who does good, not even one.

Even if men somehow had the ability to achieve God's perfect righteousness, they would not know what it is or how to go about attaining it.

Man has no innate ability to fully comprehend God's truth or His standard of righteousness.

From God's magnificent creation, man has sufficient evidence of His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature to make every person without excuse for not honoring and glorifying God.

But apart from the ability to see that general revelation of His power and majesty, man has no spiritual capacity to know or understand God, because;

1 Corinthians 2:14 (NASB)

¹⁴ But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

Why is this the case?

Ephesians 4:17-18 (NASB)

¹⁷ So this I say, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind,

¹⁸ being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;

It is that they have lack of ability due to hardness of heart, they have not understanding due to their hardness of heart, and they are excluded from the life of God because of their hardness of heart.

So men are not sinful and hardened against God because they are ignorant of Him, but, to the contrary, they are ignorant of Him because of their sinful and hardened disposition.

People have a certain sense about God through the testimony of creation, as already noted, and also through the witness of their consciences.

But their willful sinful nature blocks out that testimony and witness, so the natural man is hardened in his heart and darkened in his mind.

He not only does not understand God but has no inclination to do so.

Some years ago a fascinating but pathetic story of a duck in a Toronto park made headlines for several days (Toronto Star Nov 4-13, 1971). The duck, who came to be called Ringo, made her home at the park lake. One day she accidentally poked her bill through the ring of a pull tab from a pop can and was not able to extricate herself. She was, of course not able to eat and would soon starve to death. When her plight was noticed by some park visitors, she became something of a celebrity. Park personnel, and animal experts tried numerous ways to catch Ringo so she could be helped. They even called in a champion duck caller. People tried luring her with food but without success. Unfortunately, the frightened Ringo mistook all the efforts to help her as being threats. The rescuers lost sight of her and never did catch her. It is not known if Ringo eventually dislodged the pull tab before she died.

Fallen and condemned man, trapped in his sin, is similarly confused. Because he sees it as a threat to his life style rather than an eternal blessing, he makes every effort to escape the gospel, which the Lord has so graciously provided for his salvation.