

Romans Session 42
The Guilt of All Men & The Motive, & The Verdict.
Romans 3:15-20

Romans 3:15-17 (NASB77)

¹⁵ " **THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD,**

¹⁶ **DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS,**

¹⁷ **AND THE PATH OF PEACE HAVE THEY NOT KNOWN."**

In the way of a reminder, Paul has chosen to speak of the non-believer in terms of charges that apply to the accused before God

They were as follows;

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)

As we have studied these we have covered the 1st two and tonight we will study the third

CHARGES CONCERNING THE CONDUCT OF THE ACCUSED; (VV-15-17)

As we look at our scripture to start with we see that Paul's eleventh charge is that ***their feet are swift to shed blood***. What Paul is saying is that the conduct of the natural man is innately murderous.

The cannibalism that still exists in a few primitive tribes and the mass executions of innocent civilians that have taken place in numerous developed countries in modern times are but extreme manifestations of the basically destructive disposition of fallen mankind.

The nineteenth century Scottish evangelist Robert Haldane wrote,

"The most savage animals do not destroy so many of their own species to appease their hunger, as man destroys of his fellows to satiate his ambition, his revenge, or his cupidity (greed)"

Even in the United States, with its Christian heritage, since the turn of the twentieth century twice as many of its citizens have been slain in private acts of murder than have been killed in all the wars of its entire history.

According to researcher Arnold Barnett of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a child born today in any one of the fifty largest cities in the United States has the chance of one in fifty of being murdered.

Dr. Barnett estimated, that a baby born in the 1980s is more likely to be murdered than an American soldier in World War II was of being killed in combat.

Whether in peace or in war, man kills man.

The mass extermination by Nazis and Marxists in our own century have their counterparts in past history.

The notorious terrorist Chang Hsien-chung in seventeenth century China killed practically all the people in the Szechwan province.

During that same century in Hungary, a certain countess systematically tortured and murdered more than six hundred young girls.

Obviously most people are far from possessing such extreme brutality, but Scripture makes it clear that the seed of murder is one of a multitude of evil seeds that are universally found in the human heart and that to some degree inevitably grows and bears fruit.

The twelfth charge in the overall indictment and the second one that is manifested in man's conduct, is that of general destructiveness.

Destruction and misery are in their paths

Suntrimma (destruction) is a compound word that denotes breaking in pieces and completely shattering, causing total devastation.

The manifestation of wanton **destruction** is becoming more and more evident in much of modern society. Victims are often mobbed, or raped and the beaten or murdered for no reason other than sheer brutality.

The term, "abused children", and "abused wives," have become common in contemporary vocabularies. Special divisions of many police departments and social service agencies are devoted specifically to dealing with the crimes and victims that those terms relate to.

Misery is a general term that denotes the resulting harm that is always in the wake of man's acts of destruction against his fellow men. His destructiveness inevitably leaves a trail of pain and despair.

The thirteenth and the last of the charges in Paul's Indictment of condemned man is that of his peacelessness. **And the path of peace have they not known.**

The Apostle Paul is not speaking of the lack of inner peace, although that is certainly a characteristic of the ungodly person, but of man's essential inclination away from peace. This charge then is something of a counterpart to the previous one.

Peace has never been more highly extolled than in our own day but few would argue that peace, whether personal or international, actually characterizes our times.

Nevertheless, as in Jeremiah's day, many modern leaders are trying to heal the brokenness of their people superficially crying, Peace, Peace, when obviously there is no peace (see Jer. 6:14)

God's Word gives much counsel as to what makes for peace, and those individuals and societies who have chosen to follow His guidance have experienced relative times of peacefulness.

Scripture however, makes clear that peace will never dominate human society until the Prince of Peace returns to establish His kingdom on earth.

Man's conduct is the betrayer of the heart, it reveals the heart's condition, its emptiness and its hatred of all good.

Paul now speaks of;

THE MOTIVE

Romans 3:18 (NASB77)

¹⁸ " **THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES.** "

The motive for man's sinfulness is his built-in godlessness.

The basic sinful condition of men and of their spiritual deadness is evidenced by the fact that for the unsaved, **there is no fear of God before their eyes.**

Paul is quoting Psalms 36

Psalms 36:1 (NASB77)

¹ *Transgression speaks to the ungodly within his heart; There is no fear of God before his eyes.*

Because men's ears are attuned to the lies of sin rather than to the truth of righteousness, they have an inadequate concern about and **no fear of God.**

Fearing God has both positive and negative elements.

In a positive way, every true believe has reverential fear of God, an awesome awareness of His power, His Holiness, and His Glory.

Proper worship always includes that kind of fear of the Lord.

Proverbs 9:10 (NASB77)

¹⁰ *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.*

That kind of fear is a necessary element in one's being led to salvation,

Acts 10:1-2 (NASB77)

¹ *Now there was a certain man at Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian cohort,*
² *a devout man, and one who feared God with all his household, and gave many alms to the Jewish people, and prayed to God continually.*

This fear that leads men to salvation and then motivates them to growth is necessary. The natural man does not have it and so is not moved to consider God.

The negative aspect of the **fear of God** has to do with dread and terror.

Even the believer should have a measure of that kind of fear, which acts as a protection from sinning.

Proverbs 16:6 (NASB77)

⁶ *By lovingkindness and truth iniquity is atoned for, And by the fear of the LORD one keeps away from evil.*

Ideally, Christians should live holy lives out of love for God and gratitude for His grace and blessings. But it often takes God given hardship and pain to pry believers from a sin, or it takes the prospect of punishment to keep them from getting into it in the first place.

Unbelievers, however, should have a **fear of God** in its most intense and terrifying sense.

The Old Testament is replete with stories of the Lord wreaking destruction and death as punishment for sins of all kinds. He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah because of their indescribable immorality and turned Lot's wife into a pillar of salt for simply looking back disobediently on that horrifying scene.

Because of their unrelenting wickedness, God destroyed the whole human race through the Flood, saving only eight people.

He drowned the entire Egyptian army when it tried to capture the children of Israel and bring them back to slavery in Egypt.

The Lord ordered Moss to have the Levites slay some three thousand Israelite men who had erected and worshiped a golden calf while Moses was on the mountain receiving the tablets of the law from God.

And we could go on and on. But we see that the man without God will fear a worm of the dust like themselves, but disregard the Most High God. They are more afraid of men than they are of God.

So what is the Verdict?

THE VERDICT

Romans 3:19-20 (NASB77)

¹⁹ *Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God;*

²⁰ *because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.*

In these verses Paul declares God's verdict on fallen, unrepentant mankind.

Oida (know) refers to knowledge that is certain and complete.

We know with absolute certainty, Paul was saying, that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God.

There are no exceptions here.

Paul says the Jew is under God's written Law delivered through Moses, and the Gentile is under the equally God given law written in his heart.

Romans 2:11-15 (NASB77)

¹¹ *For there is no partiality with God.*

¹² *For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law; and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law;*

¹³ *for not the hearers of the Law are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified.*

¹⁴ *For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves,*

¹⁵ *in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them,*

God is the creator, the sustainer, and Lord of the entire universe, and all created things. And so it is impossible for anyone to be outside His control or authority

The final verdict, then, is that unredeemed mankind has no defense whatever and is guilty of all charges. The defense must rest, as it were, before it has opportunity to say anything, because the omniscient and all wise God has infallibly demonstrated the impossibility of any grounds for acquittal.

Absolute silence is the only possible response, just as there will be utter silence in heaven when the Lord Jesus Christ will one day break the seventh seal and release the seventh trumpet judgments upon the condemned earth.

Revelation 8:1-6 (NASB77)

¹ *And when He broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.*

² *And I saw the seven angels who stand before God; and seven trumpets were given to them.*

³ *And another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.*

⁴ *And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand.*

⁵ *And the angel took the censer; and he filled it with the fire of the altar and threw it to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake.*

⁶ *And the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound them.*

There will be no arguments, based on works, or that they have lived up to the law.

²⁰ *because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight;*

Here is the answer;

Romans 3:21-22 (NASB77)

²¹ *But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,*

²² *even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;*

Here Paul is saying, apart from the law, through the grace of God acting through the sacrifice of His Son, salvation and eternal life are made possible.

But under the law, nothing but one sentence, death, there can be no other sentence.