

October 22, 2023

Romans: Rooted in Jesus
Truth: The Path to Repentance

Romans 3:1-20



For Discussion and Reflection

1. The root of Paul's argument begins in 2:17, saying, "But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God..." One of the advantages to being Jewish that Paul acknowledges, 3:2, is that Jews are entrusted with the "oracles" of God. But it's not the possessors, the hearers, or the teachers of the law that are justified before God, but the doers of the law. The believers were using their possession and knowledge as a cover for their unfaithfulness. What common matters of piety do we use to ignore our own unfaithfulness? Consider Paul's personal testimony as an example: Philippians 3:2-10.
2. How do you think they felt when Paul accused them of breaking the very law they were teaching, 2:21-24? Why is it so hard for the believers to recognize and identify with their own unfaithfulness?
3. In addressing their unfaithfulness, Paul turns to David's prayer of repentance, saying, "That you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment," Ps. 51:4. David is saying, "I know that I've sinned and done wrong before you, so when you judge me, you're justified, and I can't accuse you of wrongdoing." Paul is certainly affirming God's assessment and judgment in the presence of these believers' accusations against God. What subtle encouragement is he giving these believers?
4. The Jewish believers were trying to find a way out of their guilt, actually arguing that their unfaithfulness makes God's righteousness stand out, 3:5-8. It's another attempt at self-justification. Their legal argument excuse actually becomes an accusation against God. What excuses do believers make for their sin today? Maybe you've made some? How are those excuses accusations against God? (Ex. God made me this way; I don't have enough to give.) How do excuses form the basis of condemnation?
5. Paul takes the quotes in vv10-18 from the Psalms and Isaiah. This is important because he uses the "law" as a broad term referring to the entire Old Testament. How does Paul affirm the authority of the Old Testament here?
6. In verse 18, he says "There is no fear of God before their eyes." Consider again, Isaiah 11:1-5. Isaiah is communicating the character of Jesus, and says, "his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD," v3. Take a moment to contemplate the perfections of Christ and worship him for his glory.
7. Paul ends this section saying that the Law (the entire OT and certainly the literal 10 commandments) has a job, to bring a knowledge of sin. Some view the law as a hard task master, but knowing sin gives us the opportunity to respond. How does Paul want his readers to respond to the law's "loud thunder"? 2:4
8. What did you learn today about God and yourself? What steps can you take to grow in grace?