

ROMANS

THE GRACE OF GOD: A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY IN THE BOOK OF ROMANS

No one is Righteous

• Romans 3 : 9 - 31 •

Week 6

DEVOTION

Do you think of yourself as an utterly depraved sinner, someone who truly deserved the death penalty? Or do you think that I am actually not so bad. I may have committed some small sin but overall I am not that bad. I am pretty sure that none of us will see ourselves in the same light as a serial killer.

The bad news that Paul has been building up in the previous chapters is that we are all sinners. First Paul reasoned that Gentiles are sinners and cannot plead ignorance because men do know God in their hearts. Then Paul argued that Jews likewise cannot plead ignorance and they cannot hide behind the false security of their lineage nor the law nor circumcision. In this week's passage, Paul concluded that all are guilty, both Jews and Greeks and that "none is righteous" and "no one seeks for God".

Using quotes from the Old Testament, Paul described the depraved condition of men from head to toe: "Their throat is an open grave"; "The venom of asps is under their lips"; "Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness"; "Their feet are swift to shed blood"; "Their paths are ruin and misery"; "The way of peace they have not known"; "There is no fear of God before their eyes". That is definitely not a pretty picture. In fact it is a grim and dark picture. The Apostle Paul wanted us to fully appreciate the condition of sinful men and our inability to save ourselves.

So what now? Is there no hope for mankind? It is in the midst of such hopelessness that Paul introduces the good news in verse 21 with the words "But now the righteousness of God". Through these simple words, we see a glorious transition from judgment to justification. God has provided His own righteousness for people who possess no true righteousness of their own. His divine righteousness is given freely by His grace and received by those who believe through faith alone. Through his death, Jesus has redeemed us and set us free from the bondage of sins.

Monday

No One is Righteous; All are Guilty

Read: Romans 3:9 - 20; Jeremiah 17:9

1. Focusing on Romans 3:9 - 12; 19 - 20, highlight the words "all", "every", "whole", "no one" and "none".
2. Summarize Paul's indictment against humanity. Do you agree with him? Or do you feel that it is not fair and that you have been unjustly condemned?
3. It is not easy facing the reality of ourselves. It is like looking into the mirror and seeing an extremely unflattering image of ourselves. But God has justly condemned humanity and we cannot work our way out of it. Pray and ask for help from the Holy Spirit if you are struggling with this.

Tuesday

The Condition of Humanity

Read: Romans 3:9 - 20; Psalm 14:1 - 3, 5:9, 140:3, 10:7, 36:1; Isaiah 59:7 - 8

1. Paul emphasizes the complete sinfulness of man by referring to several different parts of the body (see verses 13 - 18). Why do you think Paul describes the human condition in this manner? What does it tell you about the effect of sin on a man?
2. According to this passage, what does the law do? What is it unable to do? (see verses 19 - 20)
3. Re-read Romans 3:9 - 20 meditatively. Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to show you the condition of your own heart. To fully appreciate the glorious good news of salvation, we need to be convicted about our own hopeless state.

Wednesday

The Provision of God's Righteousness

Read: Romans 3:21 - 31; Romans 1:17; Genesis 15:6

1. Why do all men need the righteousness of God?
2. How do we receive the righteousness of God?
3. Do people fully deserve the righteousness of God?

Thursday

Justification

Read: Romans 3:21 - 31; Titus 3:7; Galatians 2:16

To be justified is to be declared righteous, not guilty. The guilty person's sins have been paid in full. He is now declared innocent.

1. Where does justification come from and how are we justified?
2. Who can receive justification?
3. How can God declare men "not guilty" and yet remain a just God?

Friday

Redemption

Read: Romans 3:21 - 31; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:13 - 14; Hebrews 9:12

To be redeemed is to be set free by payment of a ransom. The Greek word translated redemption describes the freeing of slaves by the payment of a price.

1. How does Jesus' death in our place prove God to be both just and merciful?
2. Why couldn't (or didn't) God simply declare people righteous without the need for Christ to be put to death?