

## 8. How bad can we be?

May 25, 2008

Last week I mentioned what I do at the SWAT training as a chaplain, this time I am going to talk a little about my ride-along with deputies around the county. I ride once a month for about 4 to 6 hours at a time in four districts.

When I ride, I wear my department polo shirt and the vest. My vest contains some first aid equipment even though I am not a certified EMT or paramedic.

One of the things I carry is this QuikClot. It is made out of shrimp protein. It is a temporary traumatic wound treatment. It stops moderate to severe bleeding. All I have to do is pour this powder into the bleeding area and make a direct pressure on it. This QuikClot will be available to save a person's life until he gets more medical care in a hospital.

But I cannot use this to help the injured person if he decides to cover up the wound and pretends that he is not bleeding or thinking that he is not wounded or refuse to admit that he needs immediate medical attention.

The majority of the human race pretends that they are not bleeding to death spiritually. There is a time limit in the short lives we are living on this earth. Nobody comes back in reincarnation to make one's life better next time. Once a person is dead, that is the end on this earth. That person will be either in heaven or hell.

*Hebrews 9:27 And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,*

If a person, while he is alive, does not make a simple and clear spiritual self-evaluation that he is a sinner and he needs the Savior Jesus Christ in his heart, he is self-condemning himself to eternal death.

This morning we are going to see how bad we are without Jesus. It is not easy to see ourselves as raw as we are going to see through the written Word of God. For some of you, this might be the first time to see who you really are without any disguise and pretense. Let's put down our pretense and see ourselves the way God sees us without Christ.

We need to quickly go back to the end of chapter 2 to connect the beginning of chapter 3.

*Romans 2:28-29 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; 29 but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.*

### A. OBJECTIONS FROM THE UNBELIEVERS

*Romans 3:1-8 What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? 2 Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God. 3 For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? 4 Certainly not! Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar. As it is written: "That You may be justified in Your words, And may overcome when You are judged." 5 But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust who*

*inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.) 6 Certainly not! For then how will God judge the world? 7 For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner? 8 And why not say, "Let us do evil that good may come"?"--as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just.*

V1-8 of chapter 3 are structured around four objections that Paul anticipates. These are the same types of objections some non-believers would throw at us.

### **Objection 1) Paul's teaching undermines God's covenant relationship with the Jews**

*Romans 3:1 What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision?*

Since being a true Jew is a matter of the heart and not nationality or circumcision, it would be easy to think this objection. Though being born Jewish did not give the Jews right standing before God, their being God's covenant people did indeed give them certain "advantages."

Not only that, but also they were given the "oracles of God" – the Old Testament Scriptures. They have every right to look back on their national history with a sense of pride and sentimentality. What other nation has been so blessed by God? But do these privileges make them somehow better than everyone else? Not at all.

### **Objection 2) Paul's teaching calls God's faithfulness into question**

*Romans 3:3 For what if some did not believe? Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect?*

This is no new argument. Because there have always been millions who have rejected the truth of God.

If all the people in the world agree that there is no God, does it mean that God is no longer existing? Absolutely not. The truth is not dependant on how people decide. People lie one time or another, but God is holy and righteous. He does not, can not and would not lie.

### **Objection 3) Paul's teaching presents a twisted view of God's justice**

*Romans 3:5 But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.)*

If you hear this objection without contexts and without knowing God, it sounds logical. That is what the devil wants us to think.

In theory, the most dramatic example of someone who might ask this question is Judas. Can you hear Judas make his case? "Lord, I know that I betrayed Jesus, but You used it for good. In fact, if I hadn't done what I did, Jesus wouldn't have gone to the cross at all. What I did even fulfilled the Scriptures. How can You judge me at all?"

Here is the answer to Judas: "Yes, God used your wickedness but it was still your own wickedness. It is no credit to you that God brought good out of your evil. You stand guilty before God."

I am sure that you all heard, "Two wrongs do not make one right."

#### **Objection 4) Paul's teaching promotes sinful living as the path to God's glory**

*Romans 3:7-8 For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner? 8 And why not say, "Let us do evil that good may come"?"--as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just.*

Like objection 3), it seems unfair for God to judge sinners' sins when they make Him look good. Twisting the glorious free gift of God in Jesus into a supposed license to sin is perhaps the summit of man's depravity. It takes the most beautiful gift of God and perverts it and mocks it.

There are a few things that we often forget:

- 1) God glorified Himself before the fall of man.
  - 2) God glorified Himself in spite of the fall of man by judging the sins of man justly.
  - 3) God glorified Himself by giving them His grace that we don't deserve.
- In other words, God doesn't need us to glorify Himself.

Some people go to the other side of camp when it comes to the grace of God. They think that teaching the grace of God would encourage people to sin and they get literally upset with the pastor who preaches it. A good example is one of the Calvary Chapels in Florida. A friend of mine is the pastor there and he taught about the grace of God that covers men's sins. In the next couple of weeks about half of his congregation decided that he was too liberal to teach the grace of God and giving a license to people to sin. That is ridiculous.

Anyone who really gets a grasp of God's grace would not go out and sin continuously. He or she would do everything in their power to honor the Lord with their words and lives.

#### **B. WHAT IS THE FINAL VERDICT?**

*Romans 3:9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin.*

No matter what status you are in, or how much you are educated, how rich you are or poor you are, as long as you are born as a human, all of us are born with sinful nature and we are very good at committing sins.

Whatever justifications or excuses we try to come up with, when we put ourselves against the OT Ten Commandments and the NT Jesus' Commandments, we are doomed.

#### **C. WANT TO SEE HOW BAD WE ARE**

*Romans 3:10-18 As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; 11 There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. 12 They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one." 13 "Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit"; "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 ways; 17 And the way of peace they have not known." 18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes."*

These quotations from Psalms 14:1-3; 5:9, 140:3, 10:7, 36:1 and Isaiah 59:7-8 – all support the opening statement: "There is none righteous, no, not one". Apostle Paul looks at the human condition from top to bottom with a spiritual X-ray. Some theologians call this the doctrine of 'total depravity'. I agree.

This is quite a graphic description of human depravity. The look at the human condition is depressing. What's the point? Apostle Paul wants us to understand our complete inability to save ourselves. The fall of Adam had touched every part of man's being.

When God finds none righteous, it is because there are none. There has never been a truly righteous man apart from Jesus Christ. Even Adam was not righteous. He was innocent – not knowing good and evil.

We deceive ourselves into thinking that man, on his own, really does seek after God. Don't all the religion and rituals and practices from the beginning of time demonstrate that man seeks after God? Not at all. If man initiates the search then he doesn't seek the true God, the God of the Bible. Instead he seeks an idol that he makes himself.

In my opinion, I believe that I am correct on this one, v18 summarizes what the world does now – *"There is no fear of God before their eyes."* If we truly fear God which is the beginning of our wisdom, we wouldn't sin against Him.

#### **D. ALL GUILTY BEFORE GOD**

*Romans 3:19-20 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

The law cannot save us. The law can't justify anyone. It is useful to show us how guilty we are. Since the time of Adam and Eve, people have tried to justify themselves by the deeds of the law.

Here is a a gallon jug of drinking water. Now I got this from the men's bathroom. I am going to put it in here and will shake the jug hard. Would you drink the water now? Why not? Even if the water still looks pure, even if it's not as dirty as it could be, it's still infected throughout with whatever that stuff is. There's no part of that water that hasn't been tainted. And there's no way this water can become pure again without undergoing some kind of purification process.

That's a picture of total depravity. We are born impure, permeated with sin. And we're as helpless to purify ourselves as that jug of water is to purify itself. Purification must come from the outside. We must be granted the righteousness of somebody who is holy and righteous without contamination. A righteousness from God Himself. The righteousness that comes through faith in Christ Jesus.

#### **E. APPLICATIONS**

- 1) The truth is not dependant on what people choose to believe, nor does it require a majority vote.
- 2) We deceive ourselves if we think we are spiritual to God in our own initiation. Because we wouldn't and couldn't go to Him, Jesus came to us.
- 3) When you want to sin next time, think Jesus first.