

THE MYTH OF GOODNESS

Tuesday, May 16

Reading: Romans 3:9-20

Romans 3:10 *As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; **11** there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. **12** All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."*

Paul has stated that both pagan and religious people stand condemned before God. He now puts the final nail in his argument by quoting six different Old Testament passages that show all humanity stands condemned before God.

Romans 3:10-12	quotes	Psalm 14:1-3
Romans 3:13-14	quotes	Psalm 5:9; 140:3; 10:7
Romans 3:15-17	quotes	Isaiah 59:6-8
Romans 3:18	quotes	Psalm 36:1

These verses show humanity's CHARACTER (3:10-12) as evil, spiritually ignorant, rebellious, wayward, and spiritually sour ("worthless"- the Hebrew word from this quotation is used for sour milk and fruit that has gone bad).

Humanity's CONDUCT (3:13-18) is completely sinful from head to toe. It is filled with cursing, violence, pain, and misery. Their eyes are focused on themselves with no concern for God.

Thus humanity's CONDEMNATION (3:19-20) is sure. The Law cannot save us! It shows that we are accountable to God. It makes us aware of just how sinful we really are! There are no excuses that will work when we stand before the holy God. The verdict: Guilty as Charged!

POINTS TO PONDER:

1. "No One Righteous." We often hear unbelievers reject the gospel with the excuse that 'I'm a good person. God will have to let me into heaven.' These verses destroy that argument. There is no one who measures up to God's standards. In fact, without the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts no one would ever even seek God! Apart from Christ's work in our lives even "good people" fall into the poison and misery of sin. Don't buy-in to the lie that "being good" will get you into heaven. As Paul will conclude in the rest of chapter three, righteousness only comes through faith in Christ. How have you failed when you tried to "be good" on your own? How has the Holy Spirit helped you to live for Christ?
2. "Every Mouth May Be Silenced." There will be no arguments or excuses when people stand before God. The Jews and religious people have no excuse because they had the Scriptures (3:1). They knew the promises and the path of God. Often we hear the question: 'What about those who have never heard about Jesus?' They too are without excuse. Creation declares the existence and power of God (1:19-21). We also have a God-given conscience that tells us right from wrong (2:14-15). But sin-stained humanity does not seek God. They seek their own pleasure and desires. But the good news comes in Romans 3:21-31. God seeks us out. Christ paid the debt we could never pay and gave us His righteousness that we could never earn. When we stand before God we will not need excuses. As the old hymn says,

"Not the labors of my hands can fulfill thy law's demands / Could my zeal no respite know, could my tears forever flow,
All for sin could not atone; Thou must save, and Thou alone / Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling."
(lyrics from 'Rock of Ages' by Augustus M. Toplady)