

## *Pk's Perspectives ... "For there is no distinction..."*

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Romans 3:23

I think many Christians struggle with the truth of this verse. We look around, see people engaging in sinful activity far worse than anything we've ever imagined doing, and wrongly deduce that some individuals are worse sinners than we ever were. Or to state the matter another way, we feel that some individuals have more need of being saved. Often we fail to notice the last part of Romans 3:22 — "For there is no distinction..." Maybe we ought to memorize the last part of verse 22 along with the entirety of verse 23: "For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." This is important because a person cannot comprehend the awesome magnitude of the cross unless they accept the stark reality of sin. We will struggle to unconditionally love those who are walking in darkness if we don't understand that our own lostness was just as dark. We will tend to be critical and judgmental if we accept the lie that our previous sinful state was somehow superior ("less bad") in comparison to the sin problems of other people.

So understand this: we'll never come to grips with the depth of our sin problem on our own - God's Holy Spirit is the One who convicts us and reveals to us the extent of our sinfulness. It is the work of God's Holy Spirit that brings a man like the Apostle Paul to the place of proclaiming, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." In his book Blue Like Jazz, author Donald Miller describes his earliest impressions and budding convictions about the sin condition:

"Still, I knew, because of my own feelings, there was something wrong with me, and I knew it wasn't only me. I knew it was everybody. It was like a bacteria or a cancer or a trance. It wasn't on the skin; it was in the soul. It showed itself in loneliness, lust, anger, jealousy, and depression. It had people screwed up bad everywhere you went: at the store, at home, at church...it was ugly and deep. Lots of singers on the radio were singing about it, and cops had jobs because of it. It was as if we were broken, I thought, as if we were never supposed to feel these sticky emotions. It was as if we were cracked, couldn't love right, couldn't feel good things for very long without screwing it all up. We were like gasoline engines running on diesel. I was just a kid so I couldn't put words to it, but every kid feels it. (I'm talking about the broken quality of life.) A kid will think there are monsters under his bed, or he will close himself in his room when his parents fight. From a very early age our souls are taught there is a comfort and a discomfort in the world, a good and bad if you will, a lovely and a frightening. There seemed to me to be too much frightening, and I didn't know why it existed."

As Tim Keller has stated, "The Christian Gospel is that I am so flawed that Jesus had to die for me, yet I am so loved and valued that Jesus was glad to die for me. This leads to deep humility and deep confidence at the same time. It undermines both swaggering and sniveling. I cannot feel superior to anyone, and yet I have nothing to prove to anyone. I do not think more of myself or less of myself. Instead, I think of myself less." Grace & peace, love you. PK