

Romans – The Heart of the Gospel

When Advantage is Disadvantage

Romans 3.1-20

Advantage (3.1-2)

- Jews grew up with the Word of God
 - They knew it, followed it, and benefitted from it
- Jews grew up with a biblical worldview – they understand what God is doing and what He requires (like what they should do when they fail)
 - People who grew up in a religious household do have an advantage – which is why it's important to bring up your kids this way
 - The danger of familiarity is that it can breed contempt – doesn't have to, but can

Disadvantage

- Focus on the Law instead of on the LORD (2.28-29)
- Issue is one of the heart

Disadvantage

- Hypocrisy calls into question God's character (v.3-4)

Disadvantage

- God is faithful to the promises and to the punishments (v.4-8)
- They know both, but only focus on the former – just like we do

What then? We're all under sin (v.9)

- Temple – Gentile court and Jewish court, but both there for *shalom* with God
- Why are the Gentiles included in this condemnation? Romans 1.18-32

Our problem (v.10-18)

- Problem of value – none righteous (v.10)
- Problem of knowledge – no one understands (v.11)
- Problem of purpose – no one seeks God (His benefits, yes – Him, no) (v.11)
- Problem of allegiance – turned aside (v.12)
- Problem of morality – no one does good (v.12)
- Problem of language – throat / tongues / lips / mouth (v.13-14)
- Problem of action – feet / paths / way (habits) (v.15-17)
- Problem of heart – no fear of God (v.18)

We cannot give an answer and we cannot make it right (v.19-20)

The only thing we can do: believe the Gospel

- Mental Assent – Emotional Response – Willful Surrender

Questions for Discussion:

1. What is your personal background and relationship with the church? Did you grow up in church? If so, what do you remember? Do you consider it a good or bad experience? If not, what can you discern that you might have missed? In what ways have you had to play “catch up” in terms of the Bible and a biblical worldview?
2. Who do you know that walked away from the church (forever or for a while – and NO NAMES are necessary)? Why did they walk away? What happened as a result? If they have come back, why did they do so?
3. Out of the three markers that the advantage has become a disadvantage, which one have you seen the most often (focus on the law, hypocrisy, or believing God is only faithful to His promises)? Which do you most often lean toward or are tempted by? How do you overcome that typically?
4. Regarding hypocrisy in particular, Jesus was uniquely sharp and critical. Read the “woe” passages in Matthew 23.13-28. Why is Jesus so pointed regarding hypocrisy? Where does His teaching here land with you?
5. Paul uses multiple OT quotations to prove his point that we’re all under sin (Rom. 3.9). The list is pretty devastating. Which one do you think is most prevalent in our culture? Which is most prevalent among your peer group? How do they typically try to atone for their own sins or quell the soul-ache within?
6. In the conclusion, Trent stated that belief in the Gospel is a triad of human response: the mental assent to facts, saying “yes” to those facts at the emotional / soul-level, and then willfully surrendering to them. Which do you find easiest for you personally? Most difficult?