

Romans: The Problem of Sin

(Romans 1:18-3:20)

Introduction:

1. Last week we began our study of Romas:
 1. We saw a church with internal tensions:
 1. Edict of Claudius
 2. Jew/Gentile relationships in a bustling city
 2. We saw Paul's love for the church
 1. Prays regularly for a church that he was not a part of
 3. The Mission statement of the epistle:
 1. (Romans 1:16-17)
2. This week, Paul will begin by talking about the most devastating problem facing humanity: Sin.
 1. Paul addresses the problem of Sin by directing his attention first to the Gentiles, then the Jews.

I. Definitions of Sin and Justice:

- A. What Makes a sin a sin?
 1. That which deprives one of Godliness
 - a) Actions in contrary to the good and just nature of God
 - b) Failure to act in a righteous manner.
- B. The Wrath of God
 1. Injustice demands justice.
 2. Different from Human wrath
 - a) Our anger is fickle, hurts the innocent, and is unclearly directed.
 - b) God's anger is targeted against sin with precision.
 3. The Severity of God's wrath is matched by the kindness of his grace:
 - a) (Romans 11:22)

II. The Sin of the Gentiles

- A. (Romans 1:18-32)
- B. The Gentiles are without excuse:
 1. Natural revelation
 - a) (Psalm 19:1-6)
 2. Without excuse:
 - a) The gentiles, having come to an understanding of knowledge of God, ought to have pursued God. But instead, have denied and turned away from God.
- C. "God Gave them up"
 1. Used 3x:
 - a) Idolatry (v. 24-25)
 - b) Sexual immorality (v 26-27)
 - c) Depraved minds (28-32)
 2. What does it mean to be "given up"

- a) Is this abandonment?
- b) This is an exchange of custody.
 - (1) Demonstrates the free will that God has given you. He allows you to choose in whose domain you reside. Choose your master.
 - (2) (Joshua 24:14-15)

III. God's Lenience will end.

- A. (Romans 2:1-11)
- B. God has been very lenient and gracious
 - 1. That is not a license to persist in Sin
 - 2. We must realize that his judgment will come, and all must give an account, so do what is right now.
 - 3. Ill. Merciful Doug — can also be “Vengeful Doug.”

IV. The Sin of the Jews

- A. (Romans 2:12-29)
- B. After giving some harsh truths to the gentiles, Paul now addresses the Jews.
 - 1. Paul wants to show equality between Jews and Gentiles. Neither group has and advantage or disadvantage in God's eyes.
- C. Not hearers, but Doers
 - 1. (Romans 2:13)
 - a) One may hear, but it is not simply enough.
 - b) Hebrew language and thought — to hear is to obey
 - 2. The works of the law are good for these under the law but they are insufficient.
 - a) Those who have sinned under the law are in the same boat as those who have sinned not under the law.
 - b) Those who have followed the law are in the same condition as those who have done righteously without the law.
- D. Circumcision?
 - 1. (Romans 2:25-29)
 - a) These judiazing Christians were boasting of their law keeping, thinking it to elevate them above the gentiles. The sign of this law keeping is circumcision.
 - b) Paul flips this thinking in V.27
 - (1) Although they've been circumcised, if they act unrighteously, the physically uncircumcised gentiles are superior to them!
 - 2. What matters is the circumcision of the heart
 - a) Not merely an outward physical keeping of the law but an inward keeping of the law.

V. What advantages to Judaism?

- A. (Romans 3:1-20)C
- B. Certainly, the Jews had some advantage in knowledge of God's will.
- C. But ultimately, the Jews are in just as great a need of a savior as the gentiles because they are under the bondage of sin.

Conclusion:

- 1. Next week, Paul will give us the answer to the sorry state of sin.
 - 1. There is Justification, only found through Christ.
- 2. Read the end of chapter 3, and chapter 4.