**The Book of Romans**

Part One: God’s righteousness is revealed in His just wrath against mankind’s sin. (1:18–3:20)

***The Great Accusation - Romans 3:1-20***

The Gospel is the good news that God has sent His Son to die for sinners, and in His resurrection, receive forgiveness. But the very term “good news” is relative to the “bad news” of mankind’s deep and settled rebellion against Him. Perhaps you notice that when you talk about Jesus, and His offer of grace, often the response is less than enthusiastic. But why? Why would anyone turn down God’s offer of heaven and eternal life? The answer is, there is no felt need of it.

The neutral or negative response to the Gospel grows out of the assumption either that one is good enough to earn God’s approval or that he/she never lost it. Such is the inner deception of the fallen mind that by comparing himself to others, or his own standards, he misses the only comparison that matters, that of himself to God’s righteous standards. In today’s passage, the Apostle Paul relieves us of any possibility of hope of salvation in ourselves as he concludes this first section of Romans. There is none righteous, no, not even one. We know because our fallen nature reveals itself in three distinct ways.

***Mankind’s fallenness (both in unrighteousness AND self-righteousness) brings these results:***

 ***Grace Abused.*** vv. 1-8

Here are imagined objections to what Paul said in chapter two, namely that the Jews were made even more guilty by their having the Law of Moses. If the Law only condemned Israel, then was God gracious to send it? Even deceptive in sending it? What of God’s covenant promises to Abraham? And if our sin makes God’s goodness even greater, is He right to judge us? Worse, won’t grace promote sin rather than curb it? These and many other implied questions are attempts to make God seem less gracious. But they serve only to show how much more sinful we are even to suggest it! Ezekiel 18:21-23

***God Abandoned.*** vv. 9-18

While the Law put the Jews in a better position to know and do God’s will, the reality is that they were not profited by having the Law. So, we, Jew and Gentile alike, are caught in the web of sin we have spun, as these quotations (mostly from the Psalms) tell us. The indict-ment is severe: we are without understanding, not seekers of God at all, unrighteous every one. We sin in our rebellion, our violence, and our words. In short, we have no fear of God (although still “religious”), and that is our natural state, without exception. There is nowhere to hide.

***Guilt Assessed*.** vv. 19, 20

The conclusion is staggering. The whole TANAKH (our Old Testament) is a tribute to the failed experiment of a privileged people whose privilege made things even worse. Ironically, the same Law that they looked to for salvation served only further to condemn them. With or without the Law, each of us (left to ourselves) is without hope.

**Applying God’s Truth to Life**

✔ Do you blame God?

When our own conscience condemns us, it is easy to accuse God of unfaithfulness. But our unfaithfulness does not change God’s perfect record for keeping His promises. Hebrews 6:13-18; 2 Timothy 2:11-13

✔ Do you believe God?

When we hear what God says about our sin, it is easy to turn the tables by pointing to our good works or comparing ourselves with others. He will forgive us, but we must confess to Him. 1 John 1:9

✔ Have you come to God?

Jesus alone has made provision for you. Acts 4:11, 12