

God's Faithfulness and Man's Sinfulness

Romans 3: 1 – 20

1) God's faithfulness

- Deuteronomy 7: 9 “Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands.”
- 2 Timothy 2: 11 – 13 “Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us; if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.”
- God has called us into covenant love with himself and He will always remain faithful to us regardless of our lack of faith in him.
- Faithfulness is an inherent quality of God and thus He cannot be unfaithful for to be so would be to deny who He is.
- However many people misunderstand God's faithfulness and ask how such a faithful – or loving, or kind, or good – God can condemn someone to hell.
 - The question that Paul presents as people's arguments are:
 - Romans 3: 5 But if our unrighteousness brings out God's righteousness more clearly, what shall we say? That God is unjust in bringing his wrath on us?
 - Romans 3: 7 “If my falsehood enhances God's truthfulness and so increases his glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner?”
 - Romans 3: 8 "Let us do evil that good may result"
 - Paul states that such people's condemnation is deserved
 - The reason for stating that is that that attitude shows that there is no repentance in such a person and that person wants the benefits of salvation and God's faithfulness but has no desire to change their lifestyle.
- God has made a covenant with His people. He will always be faithful to keep the covenant but it is the sinfulness of man that breaks the covenant and a covenant is only valid if kept by both parties – particularly the suzerainty treaty.

2) All have sinned

- The Jews had always considered themselves to be the chosen people and that they are saved on the basis that they are Jews.
- They considered the Gentiles to be sinners.
 - This attitude came through very clearly when Jesus ate with “tax collectors and sinners”.
 - The Jews always remained separate from Gentiles not wanting to be polluted by them.
- Here Paul has stated very clearly that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin.
- It doesn't matter how good or moral a person is. It doesn't matter how much charity a person shows or how religious a person might be. ALL are under sin.
- Paul emphasises this fact by quoting from numerous Old Testament sources stating that:
 - No one is righteous, not even one
 - No one understands

- No one seeks God
- All have turned away and become worthless
- No one does good
- Their tongues practise deceit
- Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness
- Their feet are swift to shed blood They do not know the way of peace
- There is no fear of God before their eyes
- This contradicts the modern teaching of man's worth and that he is actually good.
- Man is actually utterly sinful and will be held accountable to God
- We might think that our good works and works of the law might make us right before God.
- All the law does is make us aware of how sinful we really are and how much we actually need God.
- It is like a group of people who have fallen into a deep pit that is impossible for them to get out of. They can do all the good works that they want but they will not get out of the pit. They might have a book of rules how to get out of a pit but do not having the resources to get out and remain in the pit. It just makes them realise that they desperately need someone from outside the pit to reach down to them and get them out of the pit.

3) Justified by faith

- This is what Jesus did for us
- The righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus to all who believe.
- Jesus reached down into the pit of our lives and gives us a hand to pull us out. If we believe we take his hand and He lifts us out. If we don't believe we will refuse His hand and perish in the pit.
- We have all sinned but Jesus died on the cross taking the punishment for our sins so that when we believe God declares us righteous on the account of Jesus having paid the penalty of our sin.
- Jesus was the sacrifice of atonement
 - Sin offerings could be offered without blood but the sacrifice of atonement had to always be offered with blood by the high priest to cleanse or to make right those before God who had sinned.
 - Atonement was more than appeasing God but making right with God. *
- We cannot boast in our righteousness because the only righteousness we have is that that God has given us on Christ's account.
- The same standard is for all people – Jews and Gentiles alike.
- There is only one God for all people and one saviour who died for all people.
- We were all sinners and there is one way of salvation for all people – faith in the work of Jesus Christ on the cross.