

ROMANS: HOW GOOD DO YOU HAVE TO
BE TO GET TO HEAVEN?

Rom. 3:1-20

Open your Bibles to the 3d Chapter of Romans. In the first and second chapters of Romans, Paul is showing the need of all mankind for a righteousness they do not have. Or maybe to put it in a more popular language: is showing that no person can save himself and that the only way that anyone can be made right with God is through a provision, which God, Himself, has made, in Christ. We'll talk about this in just a few moments.

Now you say 'but this would not apply to the Jews'. The Jews certainly said that. They said 'we are the sons of Abraham; we are in the Kingdom; we are the pets of God; we are saved'. In the 2d chapter of Romans, as we saw last Sunday, Paul shows the Jews that the three things that they were depending upon were not salvation at all. And they were just as lost and as guilty as the Gentiles. ¹ They depended heavily on the law and he shows that that is no dependent. ² Then they depended heavily upon circumcision and he shows them that that doesn't count.

Then they finally say ³ 'but we're the sons of Abraham' and he knocks that prop out. So when we come to the 3d chapter, Paul is holding a dialogue, a conversation, with an imaginary Jew. This Jew is saying ¹ 'listen, you say that circumcision is not the answer, you say the law is not the answer; you say that our relationship to Abraham is not the answer -- well, what advantage is there in being a Jew?' ² We've heard all our lives there are great advantages and you've taken all these props. That's the way this conversation begins, in Chap. 3. Actually Romans is in the language of the Court of Law. Paul is a Prosecuting Attorney and he really becomes that in the latter part of Chap. 3. Let's look at it with this in mind.

V. 1 (read) See? What advantage hath the Jew? ^{circumcision} If ~~the law~~ ^{say} if the law doesn't ^{say} If the blood of Abraham in our veins doesn't ^{say} What advantage is there in being a Jew? Or what profit (or value) is there in circumcision? ^{same} Now these are addressed to Paul by the imaginary Jew. Paul answers in

V. 2 (read) he says 'first and foremost, because unto them (unto the Jews) were committed the oracles (that's the word 'logia' in Greek, which is the Greek word 'Word of God'). Paul says

there is an advantage in being a Jew because unto to Jews, God gave the O. T. Scrip. and you really to have an advantage because to you, and none other, were given the Scrip., which, indeed, promised the Messiah. I've often thought of the Jews 'how sad'. If they had read Isa. 53 with an open heart, they would never have missed Jes. but there was a veil over their hearts and actually, when Jes. first came (the first time) they were expecting the Jes. of the minor prophets (that is: of the Second Coming).

The Jes. coming in power and glory to rule and reign and to put down the Romans and to put them in the drivers seat. They had not read the major prophets or if they had read them, they just did not understand the major prophets. You see, the major prophets ~~W&K&~~ presents Jes. as the Lamb of God coming to be crucified for the sins of the world. This is one of the things that I want to ask when I get to Heaven. The Jews had read these minor prophets, relatively short, and when He came the first time, they required that He be the Christ of the Second Coming or the Great Conqueror, when their major prophets had said He would come as a lowly, lowly man to die and to suffer for the sins of the world.

What an advantage they had but they missed the boat entirely, and rejected Jes. Now in V. 3 through 8, you have some of the most complicated English prose in Scrip. It can certainly be understood. There's not a part of Script. which cannot be deciphered. The theme will be taken up again in Romans, but we want to go through it and show you what it says because once again, Paul is talking to an imaginary Jew and they're talking to him and he's talking back to them.

V. 3 (read) 'what if some' (that is, what if some Jews) did not believe or have been unfaithful? Shall their unbelief (shall their unfaithfulness) make the faith (or promise) of God without effect?' Some Jews disbelieved, of course. Quite a few. So the question is: does that mean that this nullifies Gods promise to the Jews?

V. 4 (read) what a statement the first part of this verse is! If every Jew in the world is unfaithful, that will not make God ~~XX~~ unfaithful. God will keep His promises, regardless of what

Jews do or anyone does. 'Let God be true but every man a liar'. Rest of the verse: that is: that Thou might be blameless in Thy judgment!' Those are the words of David in Ps. 51: 4 when he says to the Lord 'against Thee and Thee only, have I sinned' and then he makes this statement: 'that Thou mightest be justified in Thy sayings and blameless in Thy judgment'. God will keep His Word, regardless of what we do. And it seems sometimes that maybe His promises fall to the ground as in the case of the Jew.

God promised the Kingdom to Abraham; promised it to the Euphrates River, that Jes. would rule upon the throne of David. It looks like the promise never has been fulfilled. When we get to the 11th Chap. of Romans, we will see how that is yet to be fulfilled. In

V. 5 (read) First part: if our sin makes the righteousness of God look even better, what shall we say 'is God unrighteousness - unrighteous who taketh vengeance?' If our sin makes Gods righteous shine more brightly, isn't God unrighteous when He punishes us? Or pours out His wrath upon us for our unrighteousness? You see, Paul has said no matter ^{un}how righteous you are; ~~that~~ the Grace of God is much greater. 'Where sin abounds, Grace much more abounds'.

So they're saying 'alright, Paul, if this is true, the more ungodly we are, the more wonderful it appears God to be and how in the world can God punish us for our ~~un~~ ungodliness if our ungodliness makes God look ^{good} bad? Isn't that a stupid argument and yet, they were saying that.

In Chap. 6: 1, it is stated even more clearly: (read). The last part of V. 5 in Chap. 3, Paul says 'I speak as a man'. That is, I speak with a human argument.

V. 6(read) if God is not gonna judge the Jews, how shall He judge the world if He honors the sin of the world because it makes His Grace and His Righteousness look more wonderful? That's a foolish argument, indeed.

V. 7 (read) 'judged' (condemned). And Paul even puts it in the first person: if Gods Truth is made clear (or more wonderful) because I lie (he says) why am I judged, when I lie?' And of course, they are trying to twist the words of Paul to justify their own sin.

V. 8 (read) 'and not rather' (and why not say, is a better way to translate it) let us do evil that good may come?' Paul says 'why not just say that? Let us do evil.' He says 'I've actually been accused of teaching this kind of doctrine, that it's good for people to do evil, so God can show His Righteousness and His Grace'. That is not ~~wak~~ what Paul taught at all. Paul never taught that it was good to do evil. But they were twisting his great doctrine of salvation by Grace, without works, to try to justify their sins.

Latter part of V. 8 'whose damnation(or whose judgment) is deserved?' He says people who talk that way, they deserve damnation. They deserve judgement. Now he deals with these things here and when we come to Chap. 6, he's gonna come back to this. I just went through it, to show you that all of Scrip. can be interpreted and can be understood. Sometimes people read this section of Romans and they say 'this is totally unintelligible; no one can understand it. But I think you see that it can be interpreted and we deal with every verse in the Books, when we study.

Now when we come to V. 9 through V. 18, Paul indeed becomes the Prosecuting Attorney against the entire human race. He brings together the Scrip. from the O. T. on Ps. 5, 10, 14 and 53 and Isaiah 59. He brings forth an accumulation of all Testament Scrip. to show the total depravity of man. Or his total inability to save himself and his total lostness, apart from the work of Christ. So let's look at this:

V. 9 (read) 'what then (or what are we to conclude then) are we (that is: are we Jews) better than they (or better than others). No, in no wise'. You say 'well that contradicts V. 2- it says the Jews DO have an advantage because they have the O. T. Scrip. They, indeed, had the advantage but they are no better off than a Gentile when it comes to their standing before God and thejr need of His kind of righteousness and His kind of salvation. Not one bit better. Not a bit better! And that's what Paul is going to establish.

'For We have before proved' and this verb 'proved' means 'laid charge in court'. We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin'. And he has. Up to this point

He has proved that the entire human race is under sin and cannot save itself. Then he goes into a recitation of Scrip. He is bringing together the O. T. Scrip. to prove what he's just said. I know of no better way to establish any argument than through the Scrip. If I can quote a verse from the O. T., I would quote it anytime over any theologian who's ever lived. And I think you know. I don't quote the theologians much.

We have a generation of preachers who believe it's wonderful to quote the great theologians, but I don't believe that. I believe the word from the Psalmist is greater than any theologian and Paul didn't quote the theologians. You say 'well, there were no theologians' - oh, yes, there were plenty of theologians in his day and he could have quoted the theologians but he went to the O. T. Scrip. You know when Jes. arose from the dead, the way He proved His resurrection from the dead? By quoting the O. T. Scrip. Read the 24th Chap. of Luke. The risen Christ arose from the dead and these two people met Him on the road to Emmaus and the way He proved that He was the Christ, the Risen One, was not through some philosophical explanation of the resurrection of the body, but through the plain quoting of the O. T. Scrip.

And that's the issue in the world today: Will we believe the Bible or will we not believe the Bible? That's the question before our whole denomination. Do we believe the Bible or don't we believe the Bible? Paul believed the O. T. Scrip. when it said what it did about mans needs.

V. 10 (read) 'as it is written' and he's quoting from Ps. 14; also re-quoted in Ps. 53. The Greek is clearer - 'there is not one righteous.' There is not ONE righteous, no, not one! You ever thought of that statement? There is not one person righteous, no, not ONE! Now you think of all the people that you know. The world is full of nice people. Think of your nice neighbors. Nice kinspeople. Think of the nice people you work with. The nice people you know. Not ONE - NOT one - NO, not one has a righteousness that will stand before God. You say 'but you didn't know my grandmother. You don't know how wonderful my daddy is.' BUT - no, your grandmother, my grandmother, your wife, - there's never been ONE'.

Nice People

You say 'oh, you forgot Mother Teresa and you forgot St. Francis of Assisi'-- no, there's not ONE that's ever lived, my friend, that can stand before God in his righteousness. My, what a statement this is. You say 'but we don't need that, we're all righteous and we're all saved'. Listen, if we've been saved for fifty years, we need to hear it to remind us of Grace and if it were by anything, it's by Grace! Not because we're a Baptist or a church member; it's by the GRACE of God and if we don't feel this, we haven't experienced grace in our lives. We're just a lost church member.

SM Richard Baxter, the great Xtn, sitting in his little house, saw a drunkard saunter by the door, a good for nothing drunkard and his famous statement 'there goes Richard Baxter, except for the Grace of God'. Do you believe that? Some of you do not believe that today, probably. That you never would have been a drunkard; that you could never have done what we read in the newspapers. Listen, except for the Grace of God, we're capable of ANYthing and we ought to realize that. That helps us to identify with this old lost world and be concerned about getting them saved. There's not one righteous, no, not one.

V.11 (read) now that's not saying that mankind is mentally stupid. It's talking about a Spiritual understanding. It says 'there is none that searcheth after God'. You say 'wait a minute, wait a minute, think of the millions of people in Temples this morning, praying and think of the millions of people going through religious rituals and bowing down and bringing their idols in Bangkok and Jakarta and Calcutta. People of the great religious world, seeking after God. That can't be true. They're not seeking after God. They might be seeking a god but they are not seeking after the true God. As Martin Luther said five hundred years ago, those who do this are doing it in their own pride and foolishness. If they really wanted to know the true God, they will find Him.

They may be seeking "a god" but not the true God

SM Did you ever run into a person who said 'oh, you know I used to be a Bapt. and I left the Bapt. and I went to the Methodist and then I left the Meth. and I became a Charismatic and then I finally gave up on all of these and now I'm studying the world religions. I've studied Buddhism and I've studied Confuciusism and you know now I'm studying Mohammedanism. Have you

ever run into this person? That person is not seeking God; they're just getting deeper and deeper into their delusions. Paul is right, the lost world is not seeking after the true and living God; they're seeking A god and they're seeking some answer they're trying to work out, but they're not seeking God.

Jes. says in John 7: 17 (read) . If any man WILL to know My will, he shall know the true Gospel.

V. 12(read) 'gone out of the way' (or gone aside) - that's what that phrase means - they are all turned aside; ALL turned aside). Isa. 53: 6 (read); Prov. 14: 12 (read); Judges 21: 26 (read) 'that which was right in his own eyes' - -not that which was ~~XXXX~~ wrong, but that which was right. That's the last verse of Judges. Man goes in his own way. It appears to him to be right. Millions of people are lost because they're going away which seems right to them, but which is as wrong as anything in the world. What is the wrong way? Listen, when a person is trying to be saved, apart from JC, and exactly what the Bible says, that person has turned ~~XXXX~~ aside and gone his own way!

He's doing that which seems right in his own eyes, but which is totally wrong! Nothing could be more wrong than this. 'They've all' he says gone out of the way or they've turned aside.' 'They have become unprofitable' and the word 'unprofitable' is translated 'worthless' - that's just to appreciate the sensitivity of Western man. If the translators had translated it, they would have translated it 'all have become garbage'. 'Skubala' - (that's what Paul says 'all of his works were' - in Phil. 3: 8 (read) he says 'all the things that I used to think could save me; all the wonderful works that I was doing in my life, they are as dung or skubala - garbage.' And That's EXACTLY what he's saying here: they are become as garbage.

The things that man tries to do to save him and impress God outside of Christ, is worthless. It's more than that - it's garbage in the sight of God. It is a stinch in the Holy nostrils of God. There's only one thing that impresses God the Father at all and that's Jes. There's

nothing I do that impresses Him. If you doubt this, you turn to Matt. 7: 21, 22 & 23 (read) these people standing before the Lord in the Judgment and they say 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your Name and have we not cast out devils and done many wonderful works in Your Name? and J es. says 'then will I profess unto you 'I never knew you; depart from me ye who work iniquities'. You say 'you mean prophesying is iniquities? That wonderful work of casting out demons is iniquity'? That's garbage, if it's being done to get us into Heaven.

That's garbage. You see, the world can't understand it. Because the world, basically, believes that man is good. Do you realize that when this nation was born in 1776, the writers of the Constitution of the U. S. - they believed Rom. 3. So Government took in account the fact that man IS sinful; that he needs restraint; that Government is never the answer - it's only to restrain and to give man an inducement, but is not to answer his problems, at all. That man is a sinner. But you know what happened to this country? About 40 years ago, while Xtns slept, while Evangelical Xtns literally slept in the churches and the Baptist led the crowd, there crept into our society an entirely different view of man. That man is good!

Said 'all you have to do is educate him and give him enough money and give the Government enough money and you can solve all your problems and that's brought us to the brink of ruin as a people. When we deny the Biblical Calvinistic view of man - that Man is sinful, he can't solve all of his problems, that Government cannot solve all of our problems, that we don't have the answer!' John ^{Collins} stood right here - this brilliant statesman - and analyzed us for this and he's put it in his books and there's a few people who understand it. Most of the people in our government do not understand our history; they're not students of history at all; they're not students of the Bible. It's a sad thing, indeed!

The Constitution is built upon this view of man. Not the humanist manifesta. Gonna have five interns this summer and one thing I'm requiring of them is that they master Humanist Manifesta #2. Along with reading the N. T. through and trying to master it and learn one Scrip. a day to memorize. But one thing they're gonna have to do is to know what the Humanist Manifesto

says and, of course, on their exam, will be 'contrast the doctrine of the H. Scrip. with the Humanist Manifesto' and when they get to Seminary and they get to college, it'll save them from destruction and disaster _____. That's what we're teaching our interns. If you want to pray or help us financially with this great program. All right. They are together become garbage.

Latter part of V. 12 again - you say 'oh, wait a minute, no one that doeth good, no not one? Why goodness you don't even have to be saved to do good.' Right. 'Some of the greatest things in this world are being done by lost people. The engineer of the Empire State Building, I understand, was not a Xtn. The man that invented the jet plane, which takes us across the world, was not a Xtn. Those things are good.' Oh, they certainly are good and many of us are alive because of discoveries made by atheist. You say 'that's not good?' Good as MAN sees it but no good to save a soul. Not worth a thing to save a soul. You say 'you mean that Albert Einstein, who discovered the atom and opened an entire world for us - that he was lost when he died?' Well, he didn't believe in God, I understand.

Engineer of Emp. State Bldg. not a Xtn.

Yes, if he didn't know Jes., he's lost forever. You see this is a test of whether we believe that salvation IS by grace or not or if man can really add something to it, you know, and God's going to really give him credit for - especially for the extra-ordinary. NOT FOR THE LIFE OF YOU! Not one person has ever done one good thing that would get them into Heaven. Not a thing!

V. 13(read) now he's given a general summary in V. 10 & 11 & 12 of character. Now he moves, very, interestingly, to the tongue. Isn't this interesting? To the tongue. That in this ~~XXXX~~ classic description of the nature of man, the first thing - specific thing - he deals with is the tongue. This ought to tell us something. You know you go to a doctor and the first thing he says is 'open your mouth' (or at least that's what my doctor says) and the second thing he says is 'stick out your tongue' and that's what Paul says here. Open your mouth and stick out your tongue! That's an indication of where we are, physically and that's an indication of

*doctor "Open mouth"
"Stick out tongue"*

where man is Spiritually.

V. 13 (read) he likens the throat to an open grave in the near East. And you'd open those graves and unbearable odors would come from those corpse and he says 'in the throat of man (deep in him) is strotteness and corruption indescribable'. This is so true. We witness it all the time. Excuse this expression, but had you ever stopped to think of how children engage in toilet talk and how adults like to use words with double meanings? The throat, deep down, you see - Jes. said 'out of the heart proceeds this evil talk. The Throat, compared to a graveyard and an open sepulchre.

deceit - smooth

Next part of this verse: 'deceit' means they use 'smooth' language. They say something to our face, they say something else to your back. They use their tongues to deceive, to lie, and then he says 'the poison of asps is under their lips' and he has in his mind, the Egyptian Cobra which had a sac of poison under its tongue and he says 'under the human tongue, there is a sac of venom and poison. Oh my, what a statement. The poison that is dispensed through the tongue every day we live. You say 'well, I haven't poisoned anyone'. There's not a one of us here who's not misused our tongue in a disgraceful way.

worst sin of church - misuse of tongue

people

The worst sin in the church is/misusing their tongue. It's hard for a group of people to get together and not misuse their tongues. It's an awful tragedy and many people do it and they don't even think of it and they get themselves going and it's just sad. Except for the grace of God, It's the most terrible thing in all the world. I'm more afraid of a person with a wagging tongue, far than I am the adulterer. Or the drunkard. I'm afraid of people like that. I'm afraid to be in their presence. That's an awful thing. Man is born with this. It's through a rotten core and under his tongue a sac of venom. How sad it is - the condition of man - that can be seen when you just hear him talk. You don't have to do a thing but just walk up to most any group and you will see mans need.

V. 14(read) the cursing would be the outward expression and the bitterness the inward attitude.

My the cussing that goes on in our world today. A lot of it is done by people who call themselves Xtns. Xtns! I was in a restaurant this week and ~~there~~ were four men sitting at a table. One man was a Baptist S. S. teacher. I did not hear him curse, but he was very much a part of a conversation and the man - one of the men talking - took Gods Name in vain, a dozen times! This is a cursing age in which we live. So much of this. But bitterness is even more serious. Heb. 12: 15 (read) 'roots of bitterness that spring up in the peoples heart' and this is one of the greatest problems today, is bitterness.

People get bitter in a church. They'll let the devil put a root of bitterness in their lives. Oh, my friend, don't you let this happen to you. The devil will cause you to have a root of bitterness and you know what that is? That's just self-righteousness. Somebody has hurt dear old me and someone has mistreated me and I didn't get my rights. It's generally just the root of self-righteousness in our own heart. Man, if we don't deal with roots of bitterness, we will be destroyed! This is a part of the original sin and the package of man fallen in his sin: cursing and bitterness.

V. 15 (read) That was the first sin, outside of the Garden. Cain killed Abel (Gen. 4: 8). Life is cheap for men who are without Christ. You read the headlines this morning, read the headlines this morning. Death everywhere. New Deli last night. Their feet are swift to shed blood. You say you mean this? That man is born with murder in his heart? Absolutely! With the possibility of murder in his heart. It's an amazing thing - someone has said that man can't go more than a generation without a war. We want peace and yet we don't want peace!

Mankind longs for peace and yet he can't live without war. Just think about it.

"Men can't go ~~but~~ one generation of war."

We've gone about a generation. The man says we can't go MORE than a generation without war. You say 'but you're talking about the Nazis and you're talking about the holocaust.' No, this is man universally!! There's something in man that just wants to strike back and wants to kill - unregenerate man is capable of doing anything! The devil will put it in the hearts of his own people to kill somebody almost, or to want to kill. Jes. says when it's in the heart

it's as good as in the hand. When it's in our hearts, to kill. Jes. says in Mark 7, 'out of their heart proceeds murder, adultery and all those things. In the heart of man. You know if we've been reared in respectability, in a Bible believing home, went to church and we read all these things about people and all these murders and all these things and we're subject to say 'well, you know I'm glad I'm better than that'. That is NEVER the way to look at that.

That's never the way to look at that. Except for Gods Grace, any of us is capable of any of these things. Man is lost and man is hopeless as he is in his own nature. Destruction and misery are in their way, it ways in V. 16(read).

Those are present - that's present tense verbs: destruction and misery ARE in their way. Are continually in their way.

V. 17 (read) I say that would be a very fine slogan to put over the United Nations 'And the way of peace they have not known!' Isn't it amazing that the U. Nations is unable, with all of its power, to stop the conflicts of the world and yet, it's not amazing at all. The U. Nations cannot stop conflicts. Because it's in the heart of man. It says 'the way of peace they have not known'. Because they have not known the God of peace and the most miserable people in the world are the people who march for peace. The reason they're marching is because they don't know anything about peace. And the great protesters of peace are the worst victims of non-peace. 'The way of peace they have not known'.

People is march for peace how no peace or they would not be marching.
Someone asked me if I believed that Jes. was gonna come again. I believe He's coming again or we're gonna have a revival. The world cannot continue like this. We could have a revival. In 1000 A.D. when the world was so corrupt, they were saying 'Jes is coming again'. Well, He didn't come again. Fifteen hundred, they said 'He's coming again'. But He didn't come. In 1750, they said 'He's coming again'. He brought revival. We'll either have a revival or He will come again, I believe. Because the world cannot continue in the misery and in the terrible situation that it is going without some action of God.

It's all summed up in V. 18 (read) that summarizes everything. There is no real reverence for God. There is no real concern to know God's will and to do it. There is no fear of God. Ps. 110: 10 I believe it says (read) fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. But there is no fear of God before their eyes.

① V. 9 - Charge ② 10-18 - Bill of Particulars

Now Paul has laid down the charge in V. 9. He's given the charge and in V. 10 through 18, he has presented a Bill of Particulars. As they would say in Court or Legislature. That's the Bill of Particulars. Now the imaginary Jew comes back and says 'but wait a minute, wait a minute; these Scrip. you've been quoting, yeah, we recognize this as Scrip. but don't you realize, Paul, that these Scrip. were addressed to the Gentiles and not to the Jews?' What does Paul say? They try to make a defense. This would be their defense but there is no defense "But these Scrip. add. to Gentiles," not the Jews.

V. 19 (read) Paul's answer is the first part of this verse. And then he says that here's what the law does:

1. Every mouth may be stopped. God's stopped every mouth with His Word. He stops the Jewish mouth, as well as the Gentile mouth. He stops anybody who believes what God says' his mouth is stopped and there is no talking back to God. When we appear in the judgment, if we appear in the judgment, we certainly won't stand there to plead our case. There won't be any talking back. ^{SM - Rousseau} Ruth Soe(?) the atheist, did not marry, ~~XXXXXXX~~ had a housefull of children, sent them to an orphanage, mocked God. Said 'when I appear in the judgment, I'll stand there and I'll defend myself, against God'. I've often thought of that. How stupid this great philosopher of the 18th century, in France and he said that! He said 'I'll make my own defense; I'll stand before God and I'll argue my case'.

Rousseau - "I'll stand & defend myself vs God."

Side Two of Tape

...it's by showing that the whole world is guilty before God and stands in need of God.

V. 20 (read) or 'therefore, by the works which the law prescribes, there shall no flesh be

justified in His sight'. NO flesh, he says. There is no work that man can do that will justify him in Gods sight. The purpose of the law was not to save but to only reveal the depth of mans sin.

Latter part of V. 20 - now look back there at all of this verse: 'therefore by the deeds (or by the works) which the law prescribed' but the 'the' is not before the word 'Law' there in V. 20. 'Therefore by the deeds of law' is what the Greek says. Now this is very important. Why isn't there a definite article before the Law. Well, if it were THE Law, it would mean just the Law of Moses. But because it says 'law' or 'a law' it's general. It refers to every kind of law in the world. It would include the law of Moses, but it would also include the law written on our conscious that he's been talking about and it would include the law of Christ, in the Sermon on the Mount.

v. 20 - a law, not "the" law.

Have you ever heard anyone say 'well, my religion is the religion of the Sermon on the Mount and I just keep the Sermon on the Mount'? ~~That will not save.~~ *or "I'll get my conscience"* That law will not save. No, the ethics of love (1 Cor. 13) nor the conscious (what's in the conscious). 'Therefore, by the deeds of any kind of law there is, there shall no flesh be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin'.

Now this is what we call 'the total depravity of man' which Paul has described. The total depravity of man. Man is totally depraved. What does that mean? Totally depraved? Does that mean there's nothing good in man? No. There's a great deal good in man. We've built a great civilization upon the genius of unregenerate man. What does it mean? It means that because of the fall of Adam, that sin has infiltrated every part of our being. Our body - oh how our bodies have been affected by sin. Our mind, our wills and our emotions. Until you and I are incapable of saving ourselves or doing any good works that would save us.

Therefore, the only way to be saved is entirely by Grace, through Faith. Paul says there's no difference (we'll see in next Sundays lesson) no difference. You say 'no difference?' No difference in a moral man and an honest man, with that of an immoral man and a dishonest man.

Oh, there's an outward difference - sure! And society will look on him different but as far as salvation is concerned, the moral man, the honest man is no more saved than is the immoral dishonest man. You say but listen, if they begin to do good things; if they begin to do these, they can certainly be saved, if they do enough good things. NO, you can't do good things to be saved. You'd have to be as good as Jes. You'd have to be as good as Jesus. To do enough good to save yourself. No one can do that. Why? Because of the disease that infects us - sin.

SM - We can't do it because of sin. So Paul deals with this predicament of man. Back home, in N. Carolina, five miles off the coast where I was reared, there's Bald Head Island. It's five miles out in the Atlantic Ocean, right off Southport. Well, I've thought about people standing on the shore in Southport and jumping over to Bald Head Island. Everybody wants to go to Bald Head Island; it's tropical. Wild animals run around. But suppose a group of people gather there in Southport and are gonna jump to Bald Head ~~XXXXXX~~ Island. Well, some, naturally, could jump further; some would jump less, but nobody can jump five miles, to Bald Head Island.

What good would there be in some that could jump a little further, looking at those who didn't jump quite so far and saying 'well, you know I didn't make it, but I jumped a few feet more than you did'. You see how stupid that is? Because noone jumped to Bald Head Island. And that's the way it is when anybody would come along and say 'I can do enough to get to Heaven'. Some do more than others, but they don't make it. There's no one can jump that distance from mans lost condition to Heaven. God bridged it with Calvary and with His Cross and we cannot DO enough but we can BE enough to go to Heaven. We can BE the righteous of God in Jes.

SM - "I didn't just sin - I was nothing but sin."

John Bunyan said when he saw his condition that he did not see that he had just committed sin, But that he saw that he was nothing but sin, from the top of his head to the bottom of his feet. He said 'I hadn't just done sin, I WAS sin' and that's what we are, friends. You and I are just

a chunk of total sin. We've not just done wrong; we are a chunk of SIN without Christ. But Jes. has come and 11 Cor. 5: 21 says (read) the Greek says 'we can become' and that is the word 'be' in language. We can BEcome the very righteousness in God, in Jes. ~~XXX~~ until the righteousness, which was Jes., becomes US'. It doesn't say 'DO the righteousness'. It says 'God made Jes. to be sin for us'. Because we're just a chunk of sin. God made Jes., though He knew no sin, to be made sin (notice) to be made sin for us - in order that we might be made- or come or be - the righteousness of God, in Him!

That's the only way that you and I can ever stand before God. But in our very being, God looks upon us as being the righteousness of God, through Jes. And that's a gift. He calls us by His Spirit; we truly repent of our sins; we truly trust Him with all of our hearts and when we do, He gives us that righteousness. And we become His righteousness. PTL.

Let's stand.