

Greetings Brothers and Sisters,

I am so excited about the upcoming sermon series and the opportunities we have to grow together in the knowledge of God's Word and obedience to His commands. Let me remind you that the studies included in this book are a critical part of our overall disciple making strategy. The time you invest to prayerfully study and prepare beforehand for each sermon will significantly enhance your ability to grow and implement the truths of the Bible into your life. There are five devotional studies for each week that have been written to prepare your heart and mind prior to hearing the sermon in one of our weekly worship services. After hearing the sermon, our hope is that you will use the small group discussion guide in a group setting to allow for deeper discussion in the days that immediately follow the sermon.

In this particular study we will be addressing some of the most critical questions that we as Christians are confronted with from the non-believing world. Has anyone ever asked you, "What about the native out in the bush that never has a chance to hear about the love of God?" At first it seems like a compassionate question filled with love for all of mankind. What does the Bible have to say about this issue? Can we believe in a God who would judge people who seemingly didn't have a chance to be rescued from condemnation? Are all men really created equal? If some never hear, is there possibly another way to get to heaven?

In Romans, chapter 1, verses 18-20, the apostle Paul wrote, "For God's wrath is revealed from heaven against all godlessness and unrighteousness of people who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth, since what can be known about God is evident among them, because God has shown it to them. From the creation of the world His invisible attributes, that is, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what He has made. As a result, people are without excuse." According to Paul, "people are without excuse." Over these eight weeks

we will discover that the question of accountability before God is a two-sided coin. On the one side, all people are accountable to God as the creator because He can be seen and understood through what He has made. On the other side, all who know Him are accountable and responsible to bear witness of Him to the all the world.

Oddly enough, when a person stands before us and asks this question, we become accountable to bear witness to them and not be distracted by their “concern” for the native in the bush. While all of creation is “without excuse” to acknowledge the Creator and seek Him, all Christians are equally without excuse to bear witness of Him to the world around us. In other words, all people are without excuse when we stand before the Creator. We are expected and obligated to engage and reach our world with the gospel message. The bottom line is that all people in all places are absolutely without excuse!

You are cordially invited to join us as we grow together!

Pastor Daniel Lambert

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Pastor Daniel's Text and Focus: Week One

Romans 1:18-20

All people are exposed to knowledge of God!

This week meditate on the key verse and think about ways in which you sensed the Presence of God – perhaps even today or from a time before you came to Believe. Ask the Holy Spirit to bring these ways to the forefront of your mind. These prompts are the very things you can use to engage those who are lost; because they most likely have felt “something” too!

Week One/Day One

All people are exposed to knowledge of God!

Ever wonder why people in our society engage in evil practices or lead such sinful lifestyles? Read Romans 1:18-25

God is revealed through His wrath because men suppress the truth and follow their own evil desires. Romans 1:18, 28, 2 Peter 2:19

God's wrath here means that He is totally and permanently opposed to everything evil. See John 3:36. In the beginning, Eve was deceived by the serpent. Satan is still in the business of deceit. God's word shows us how to live and escape His wrath, but warns us not to be deceived or be disobedient. Read Ephesians 5:3-7

Stop to consider: Are you being deceived today?, In what way?

What is Truth? Read John 17:17, John 8:31-32, and John 3:36,

How are you doing on resisting evil and deceit to ward off God's wrath? Colossians 3: 5-6

Christ died to rescue us from God's Wrath: see Romans 5:8-11

How does being obedient to God's word (Truth) put you in a position to save someone else from God's wrath?

Week One/Day Two

All people are exposed to knowledge of God!

Read Romans 1:18-20:

Verse 19 says God has made knowledge about Himself plain to us. Do you agree? Is it difficult for you to plainly see an invisible God?

Proverbs 1:7 tells us that fearing the Lord (reliance on the Lord in all circumstances and humble submission to His lordship) is the beginning of knowledge.

Can you rely and submit to someone you don't know? Would you let a stranger take your kids for the weekend? Spend time, right now, in prayer and His Word that you may get to know your Heavenly Father so that you may trust Him.

Men who have never heard of God have a moral compass (conscience). How did they get it? Romans 2:14-15 Do you agree that God has written his law on our hearts?

Does your conscience ever weigh heavy on you? When?

Amidst the total destruction of everything dear to Job, he was confident that he would see his Redeemer. Why, because he knew and trusted God and believed in his righteousness. Job 19:25-26

The scriptures reveal the nature of God and His love for us (His creation)! Pray in your daily bible study, that God will make Himself plainly known to you. All of us fall short of God's plan for our lives, but there is hope. Read John 20:30-31

Week One/Day Three

All people are exposed to knowledge of God!

How has God revealed Himself to you? Do you allow yourself to see God accomplish the impossible in your life? Creation itself exclaims God's existence. Meditate for a moment on the complexity of the human body and yet it is made of simple elements and water. Can it be by evolutionary chance or a purposeful creation by the hand of God? Read Psalm 19:1-4

God provides testimony of His existence. Acts 14:17

Imagine yourself on a difficult climb to the summit of a mountain. There you find a spring that provides life-giving water to all creation on its way to the sea. It was difficult for you to reach the summit, yet all over the world, water pours out of the mountaintops. How? Why?

Read Psalm 104:1-35: This Psalm speaks to his eternal power, divine nature, and how He provides for His creation.

Imagine an automobile disassembled down to the smallest piece. Would we expect the car be put together correctly in the right order by random chance? Of course not, only by the hands of a creator could this be possible; this too with creation.

Read Romans 1:20: We are without excuse as He has made his creation.

Read Hebrews 11:1 and then pen your reaction to the following statement: One measure of my faith can be found in how much I depend upon worldly possessions.

Week One/Day Four

All people are exposed to knowledge of God!

To punctuate with an exclamation, God had revealed Himself by coming to Earth Himself as the Christ Child, Jesus. John 1:1, 14, 18

Jesus tells us that if we know him, we would know his Father also. John 8:19. What does that speak to you? Are you spending enough time getting to know Jesus and what His purpose is for your life today? If not, what will you do different?

Read Hebrews 1:1-4: Here we see that God has spoken to us through his Son. Take time right now (and each day) after you read the scriptures to listen for His voice to speak to you.

Jesus is the way to know the Father and provides us with the truth that we seek. John 14:6-7

Read Romans 1:18-20:

How much more plainly can God speak other than plain direct and undisputed evidence of Himself within each human?

Week One/Day Five

All people are exposed to knowledge of God!

Read Romans 1:18-20: We are without excuse! God has revealed himself to us in many ways:

- Wrath – for our suppression of the truth and tendency to follow our own evil desires.
- Law written on our hearts – even those who haven't heard of God have a moral compass.
- Creation – on its own declares the wondrous, intelligent, powerful, and creative nature of God.
- The scriptures detail numerous prophecies fulfilled, wonders, and wisdom.
- Jesus – God spoke plainly through Jesus and He demonstrated how we should live.

We have the complete revelation of God in the Bible, which to us is knowledge of God. Read on! Roman 1:21-32

As you pray for God's word and revelation for your life to be made plain to you, be mindful that God is serious and totally opposed to sin. Those who ignored the knowledge of God, were given over to a depraved mind. Does that explain anything about our society's condition today?

For some encouragement, read Romans 5:6-11! Share this good news with a friend today!

SERMON NOTES

PRAYER NEEDS

Pastor Daniel's Text and Focus: Week Two

Romans 1:21-25

All people by nature reject God!

Paul wrote his letter to explain the Gospel to the Roman Christians. In the event he couldn't tell them in person he wanted to leave them a record of the nature of the Gospel of Christ. He didn't want the Gentile Christian to be without excuse. In Paul's era the Jews were especially without excuse because they knew God's Law but they too came up with many excuses to reject God. God let them go their own way. This week meditate on the key verse and think about ways in which you have gone your own way. Ask the Holy Spirit to bring these ways to the forefront of your mind.

Week Two/Day One

All People by Nature Reject God!

Romans 1:21: “For though they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God or show gratitude. Instead, their thinking became nonsense, and their senseless minds were darkened.”

Do you know God? Or do you just know about Him? If you know Him do you glorify Him? In Psalm 69:30 we are told to “praise God’s name in song and glorify him with thanksgiving.”

It’s easy to go to God when life gets tough but we should also remember to thank God and praise Him when things go well. There are people always watching to see how you react to situations in your life.

Be the Christian who stands out from the crowd. We are supposed to be different. Be the light. In Matthew 5:15-16 Jesus said: “Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Today think about ways that you are hiding your light and make positive changes that others can see, in this way you will glorify your Father in heaven.

Week Two/Day Two

All People by Nature Reject God!

Romans 1:22: “Claiming to be wise, they became fools...”

Solomon asked God for wisdom and God gave it to him: “God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore.” 1 Kings 4:29

He used his wisdom to make good decisions and rule his kingdom. People came from neighboring lands to seek out his wisdom. But later in his life Solomon was seduced away from God and toward idolatry by his hundreds of foreign (non-Jewish) wives and concubines. He had wisdom but he became a fool.

Do you have a good education? Perhaps you have advanced degrees and you think you're fairly wise. But real wisdom does not come from books. James 1:5 tells us “If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.”

Have you asked God for wisdom lately? Do you pray before you make important (as well as unimportant) decisions? Today think and pray about how you can incorporate more of God's wisdom into your life. Maybe you can start by spending more time in the Word today.

Week Two/Day Three

All People by Nature Reject God!

Romans 1:23: "...and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man, birds, four-footed animals, and reptiles."

When we think of idols we often remember the golden calf built by the Israelites on the foothills of Mt. Sinai (Exodus 32). Or perhaps we think of an ancient Greek temple such as the Parthenon in Athens. The first part of the Ten Commandments says: "Do not worship any god except me. Do not make idols that look like anything in the sky or on earth or in the ocean under the earth. Don't bow down and worship idols." (Exodus 20:3-5a)

We would have to look for a long time before we found someone in the Flathead Valley who worships an actual physical idol. But the point is that anything we put above God can be considered an idol. Ephesians 5:3-5 tells us "You are God's people, so don't let it be said that any of you are immoral or indecent or greedy. Don't use dirty or foolish or filthy words. Instead, say how thankful you are."

Being greedy, indecent, or immoral is just another way of worshiping idols. You can be sure that people who behave in this way will never play a meaningful part in the kingdom that belongs to Christ and to God.

Today think and pray about ways that you are putting greed, foolish words, immoral behavior, or any other idol above God. Pray that God uses His Word or the good counsel of others to break any idolatry in your life.

Week Two/Day Four

All People by Nature Reject God!

Romans 1:24: “Therefore God delivered them over in the cravings of their hearts to sexual impurity, so that their bodies were degraded among themselves.”

Remember the Israelites that we thought about yesterday? God allowed them to build the golden calf; He allowed them to be caught up in the sins of the flesh. Yesterday we talked generally about immoral behavior. In today’s passage Paul is speaking specifically about sexual immorality.

Galatians 5:16-26 talks about walking in the Spirit and not in the flesh. Read these verses now and pray and think about some ways in which you may be walking in the flesh and not in the Spirit. Verses 19-21a list some works of the flesh: “sexual immorality, moral impurity, promiscuity, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambitions, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and anything similar.”

Do you have any sexual sin in your life? Confess it now to God, ask for His forgiveness, and walk anew and refreshed in the Spirit.

Week Two/Day Five

All People by Nature Reject God!

Romans 1:25: “They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served something created instead of the Creator, who is praised forever. Amen.”

Throughout history people have exchanged the truth of God for a lie. In 1 Kings 18 King Ahab and his family worshipped Baal instead of God but Elijah showed up and challenged Baal’s prophets to a contest. They believed the lie that Baal would take care of them. Elijah, God’s prophet, won the contest and the prophets of Baal turned back to God but it was too late because Elijah killed them anyway. They believed the truth of God too late.

Currently we see people “worshipping” the theory of evolution instead of God. If humans all evolved and were not created in the Image of God because there is no God, then human life does not have worth over and above animal life and we do not have a Creator to whom we are accountable. In Genesis 1:27 makes it clear that man has worth and value to God: “So God created man in His own image; He created him in the image of God; He created them male and female.”

No other creature was created in the Image of God. Do you reject this truth? If you accept the Bible as God’s truth do you treat others like they are made in God’s Image? Think about your daily life. As you go about your day look at the people with whom you interact at work, in school, at the store, and pray and make a commitment to treat them as precious children of God, made in His Image. What are some ways you can honor God by your actions toward others?

SERMON NOTES

PRAYER NEEDS

Pastor Daniel's Text and Focus: Week Three

Romans 1:28-32

All people who reject God are condemned!

This week's subject aims at the heart of our secular relationships. The text is written to Believers who are living with one foot in the world and the other in the church. It gives a clear picture of how the Lord sees our behaviors when we "type-rope" our allegiance to Him in order to be part of the world's freer value system. The list of behaviors Paul cites seems beyond the capacity of Believers, and yet he wrote them to us. This is a good place to begin your study in prayer, asking the Heavenly Father for courage to self-assess in Truth.

Week Three/Day One

All people who reject God are condemned!

Read Romans 1: 28-32

Now after reading this passage reread verse 28. As we look at the first part of the verse we see the words "they did not". The question is: to whom is Paul referring when he said "they."

NASB: And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer,

Holman: And because they did not think it worthwhile to have God in their knowledge,

The people in this verse have a choice to either accept or reject the knowledge of God. We as Christians it is our choice to accept and follow God. The people, who Paul was talking to, chose to reject God, because they saw a greater benefit from the world's treasures. What is Jesus' reaction to those that deny Him? (Read - Mark 8:38 and Luke 9:26.)

We accept and acknowledge God, but what does it mean to acknowledge him? Make a list of how you acknowledge God.

Here is something to think about for the next 24 hours, are you all in or all out. Read 1 John 1:6

Week Three/Day Two

All people who reject God are condemned!

Read Roman 1:28:

Let us look at the second half of verse 28

NASB- God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper,

Holman- God delivered them over to a worthless mind to do what is morally wrong.

John Piper Writes: “So what Paul does in the following verses is describe for us the effects of suppressing the truth of God. He wants us to see all the evil of the world as a river that flows from this spring. Reject God, suppress God, distort God, recreate God in your own image to your own liking, and the effect is worse than we expect. And the thing that is worse than we expect is that God joins our crusade against God, as it were, and delivers us into the debasing effects of our own rebellion against him”.

So when we look at God “giving them over” what did that mean? God was not giving up on His people by giving them what they wanted; He was giving them over to something that was inevitable; He was permitting the downward spiral of human reasoning and conduct to take its natural course as a form of judgment. The divine abandonment of men to their sin is not eternal abandonment. As long as men are alive, God provides and offers salvation. Like her Old Testament namesake, the Jezebel who was misleading the church at Thyatira was the embodiment of idolatrous, immoral godlessness, yet the Lord graciously gave her opportunity to repent.

Read Revelation 2:20-21: Despite His righteous wrath against sin, God is patient toward sinners, “not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance”.

Read 2 Peter 3:9.

Week Three/Day Three

All people who reject God are condemned!

Re-read Romans 2:29-31:

We must remember this list is here as a reminder to us about how we, Believers, sometimes behave.

Read 1 Corinthians 10:11.

Take a moment and review each of these behaviors. Pray over them asking God to bring the conviction of the Holy Spirit upon you where it is needed. Then take time out to consider how you might counter revealed tendencies.

Let's consider just one of these elements together: Strife.

Strife takes many forms. In one sense, it describes the effects of raw interpersonal conflicts in life. God has not promised Believers a life without people-struggles. Check out Romans 12:18. Sometimes even when we have done all we can, wounds remain. Endure, Friend, endure. There is not much you can do except pray for Peace and continue to look for opportunities to show Christ.

Strife can also fester when we find ourselves "busy" all the time. We grow overwhelmed and frustrated by a life packed tight with commitments and activities. The stress of relentless obligation will bleed into every facet; shortening tempers, straining relationships and tempting us to steal time from activities of the Faith. Is strife gnawing away at your time in the Word? Do your prayers grow short and repetitious? This is strife at its most insidious. We grow accustomed to it; we accommodate it. When in Truth we need to stop and evaluate. It's' time to get a grip on these pressures! Don't go it alone. Is there someone with whom you could confide in for accountability and support?

Week Three/Day Four

All people who reject God are condemned!

Read Romans 2:32: Notice Paul says “they know.” He is aiming these remarks at Christians; at you and me. Note too he says “although.” This word means that these Christians are behaving against what they know; that they should know better. This is picture of you and I when we are inattentive to the practice of the Faith. We know, but we do otherwise.

The next two points are pretty meaty. Romans 6:23 teaches the wages of sin is death. We know we all will die sooner or later. But have you ever considered when you practice sin that God considers those activities as Deserving of death? The wage of sin has been paid by the blood of the Lamb. But for you and I to continue in sin is to thumb our nose at its consequence to the Son of God. What does our continued involvement with the things that nailed Him to the cross say about how we value His life?

Paul talks about these Believers “giving hearty approval” to those who practice sin. This is because sin is much easier to practice with others who think sin okay to do. How are your friends? Do you have good-time buddies? Gathering non-regenerate friends about you will take things to the "next level." Boundaries gray up. The secular values of the unsaved will most certainly lure you to escalate your sin behaviors. Sin's empty promise will leave you yearning to get "more out of life." You position yourself do more evil with their encouragement.

In plain terms, when we live a double-life we are rejecting God. Search the Scriptures for examples of what happens to God's people when they snub the Creator. Try on Jeremiah 16:21 for size.

It is time to get serious about shedding aside those things which displease Him.

Week Three/Day Five

All people who reject God are condemned!

“Without Excuse! ...both them and us – an urgent call to engage and reach!”

Many unbelievers maintain that Christians are hypocrites; that Believers profess a stricter standard than they live to. In many instances, they are probably right. Perhaps you too have lived seasons where you were less particular in your obedience to the prescriptions of the Word.

Pastor Daniel reminds us that all people are “Without Excuse.” Not only the lost who reject the Christ of the Lord; but even more so, you and I. We have been given the full revelation of the God of Creation in the Word. We study together, we worship together, we hear God’s message from the pulpit – and yet we reserve sections of our lives for our own use. We accept behaviors that the Lord expressly forbids.

How can we expect to make righteous and God-ordained decisions in our life when we cater and coddle unsundered territories in our living? What conception of God do we have that justifies in our mind calling out His name in prayer and song while at the same time living out sinful behaviors? Do we really think He respects that; that He honors that; that He even cares to listen? (Psalm 66:18)

The beauty of being a Believer is the Cross. It is the place where we can reconnect with His sacrifice for us; to re-experience His anguish on our behalf; the place to yield once again to His tender entreaties to take up our own cross and follow. You can do it. You can kick that habit, that vice. The Holy Spirit of God lives in you. Get alone with God for confession and sanctification; get together with another Believer for accountability and support. You are loved.

SERMON NOTES

PRAYER NEEDS

Pastor Daniel's Text and Focus: Week Four

Romans 2:1-11

All people will either find eternal life or God's wrath!

This week we study how the Apostle Paul reinforces his instruction on the nature of God with respect to corrupt Man. As a backdrop, keep in mind His perfection; the aspect of His Being which cannot accept evil – that only by accepting the perfect sacrifice of Christ can men and women be brought back into fellowship with Him. Look to gain a deeper understanding of His righteousness as He stands in judgment; that in His perfection, He is without flaw to punish and condemn sin.

Week Four/Day One

All people will either find eternal life or God's wrath!

Read Romans 2:1: Ok Stop. Notice how Paul says 'therefore you', and 'every one of you'. Who is Paul talking to? Therefore you read Romans 1:6-7. Again, who is he talking to? When we read this, let's keep this in mind!

Read Romans 2:1-2: Therefore, 'you' have no excuse. What is the personal pronoun? It is all about you, not anyone else. The walk is personal. Look up the definition of the word practice found in verse two. What does it say?

Are you good at passing judgment? If so you must have had lots of practice! Remember when we judge, we misappropriate authority. We skip the sentencing and go straight to the punishment. Remember to pass judgment is to ultimately condemn yourself!

Read Romans 2:3: Do you suppose? Remember the personal pronoun is 'you'. Rewrite what the verse says in your own words.

Notice how Paul says "O man", like wow! you who are so mighty; you who are so much better than everyone else. Do you think you will escape the judgment of God? Let's not be deceived, God's judgment is sure. Read Romans 2:9. Is there any partiality here?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:10 and talk about it (key word is all). Let's examine ourselves Brothers and Sisters and get rid of this disease of judgment from our lives and from the church. It does not belong in the Body of Christ! Or his Temple! Let's be sure not to store up for ourselves this wrath.

Close today with this: 1 Corinthians 3:16

Week Four/Day Two

All people will either find eternal life or God's wrath!

Let's take a look inside ourselves today.

Read Romans 2:4: Do you think lightly? Let's take a look on the inside. Read Matthew 23:13-15, v23, v25, v27, v29

What problem did Jesus have with the spiritual leadership in Israel during his ministry?

They were acting one way in front of people, but another way behind people's backs.

They were being hypocrites! They practiced the same things.

Read Romans 1:28-32; James 2:1 and Matthew 7:3-5. How do those verses speak about us?

We are no different than others. Our sin may not be exactly the same but it is still disobedience. If we break one of the commandments we have broken them all! Notice how he said in Matthew "then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye". We need to see clearly in order to help our fellow brothers/sisters.

If God can have so much kindness, tolerance and patience toward us, shouldn't we have this for our brothers and sisters? How can we show these to others?

Look up the definition of Repentance. Write it down.

Close with this thought: Let's focus on ourselves today; let us look within. Know that the kindness of God leads you to repentance.

Week Four/Day Three

All people will either find eternal life or God's wrath!

Read Romans 2:5: What is the nature of your heart?

I know we like to think of our own hearts as tender. But read Jeremiah 17:9. What does this verse say?

Sin tricks us into thinking we have a pure and tender heart but it is more deceitful above all else. Read Jeremiah 16:12. What does this verse tell us?

See, if we are being stubborn then we are not listening to God! Read Jeremiah 16:12-13. What does it say to you?

When we are consistently stubborn, God allows us to come into the grip of our sin. Bad place to be and a terrible punishment indeed!

Read Proverbs 29:1. What does it tell us?

We get ourselves involved in sin because we are stubborn and if we ignore the Holy Spirit when He reveals our sin, we are unrepentant! Do you ignore Him?

Read Proverbs 28:13 and write it down:

Close today with this: Let's listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit brothers and sisters; let's repent and not store up for ourselves this wrath!

Week Four/Day Four

All people will either find eternal life or God's wrath!

Read Romans 2:7 and then look up the definition of perseverance. Write it out.

See, it's without giving way, without budging! Read James 1:12 and write down what it says to you.

Notice James says nothing about the trials ending. Think about that. What does he mean by "for once he has been approved"?

Romans 2:7 tells us those who persevere in doing good are seeking for glory, honor and immortality; eternal life (crown of life). Read Romans 2:8, look up the definition of indignation. Write it out.

Read Romans 2:10: What is good? Read Romans 3:10, Psalm 14: 3 and Ecclesiastes 7:20. What do these verses have in common?

Jesus says in Mark 10:18: "No one is good except God alone". How can we BE good? We can't, but we can DO good!

Doing good is doing what we should do as believers, by letting the Holy Spirit guide us!

Read Romans 2:11: Does God have partiality towards some but not others?

Now read Romans 2:12. What do you think it means to "perish without the law" VS being "judged by the law"?

Read Romans 2:15: What does it say?

Week Four/Day Five

All people will either find eternal life or God's wrath!

“Without Excuse!...both them and us – an urgent call to engage and reach!”

This topic of wrath is a tricky one for most unbelievers. How can a loving God send the work of His own hands into eternal torment? How would you answer that? You and I must study to have a Bible-based understanding of wrath.

There are two points of emphasis you might place in your spiritual tool box to help others with this topic. The first has to do with Authority.

The Bible teaches that God has the right to judge because He alone is righteous; He alone is without error. One way to illustrate this is how would you like to be brought before a crooked and evil judge who frowns upon everything you stand for? A judge who mocks and scoffs at your efforts in living well; at your values and priorities? Such a judge most assuredly will sentence you to the max. On the other hand, how about a judge who is Perfect; One who is totally and completely unbiased? That Judge will be fair.

We have such a Judge, though the “sticking point” is that His standard of measure for human behavior is Perfection. Therefore humans have the need for a Savior; which leads into our second point of emphasis in this topic of wrath.

We must convey to others (and believe ourselves) in the nature of the Father's heart. He does not want anyone thrown into eternal perdition. His heart is for each and every soul to come to Him and the Cross is the way He confers His Perfection upon mankind. The sacrifice of Jesus pays the price for every sin of those who believe. God has total authority to condemn the prisoner of sin; but He also sets the prisoners free through Jesus.

SERMON NOTES

PRAYER NEEDS

Pastor Daniel's Text and Focus: Week Five

Romans 3:21-26

All people are guilty before God without grace!

Acknowledgement of sin is the first step toward forgiveness. Outside of the Bible sin is very loosely defined. It's subjective to the culture and its goals. God has given us in His Word the specifics of how sin came into being, the penalty of sin and His ultimate payment for our sins.

Consider for a moment "How can a Holy and sinless God become sin and forgive us?"

Week Five/Day One

All people are guilty before God without grace!

What does the Bible teach us about God's Glory? How can we reveal God's Glory to others?

It is extremely difficult as an unbeliever to comprehend God's Glory. Even as a believer, it can be just as hard once we understand that sin separates us from God and the only way back to a relationship with God is by His Grace. When we freely accept God's payment for our sins we are able to see God's Glory and glorify Him with our lives.

Psalm 19:1 gives us some insight to understanding God's glory. His creation gives us a glimpse. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky proclaims the work of His hands." Look around and see God's glory. Let the Holy Spirit bring you to a place of comfort and rest. Jot down some pressing cares you have and give them to God.

Proverbs 3:5-6 gives us a great formula to trust God, lean on Him and acknowledge Him so we can see His direction for our lives. Read those verses and let God take control so you can give Him the glory He deserves.

How can we glorify God? Obedience comes to mind. Matthew chapter 5 gives us an insight. "No one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket, but rather on a lampstand, and it gives light for all who are in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven." Matthew 5:15-16

So we can show God's Glory to the world by living for Him instead of our own selfish desires. The Law teaches us obedience (that we could never fulfill), but we are not under the Law we are now under Grace. Jesus paid the sin debt,

He fulfilled the Law. As a believer we now have a new Law, the Law of Love.

In John 13:34-35, Jesus gives us a new way to demonstrate God and His Glory, with our lives and how we should love. “I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you must also love one another. By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

See God’s Glory in His creation today and show the world God’s Glory in your life as a child in Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:17

Week Five/Day Two

All people are guilty before God without grace!

Jesus is the Waymaker:

Romans 3:24b-25: “being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed”

"Propitiation means the turning away of wrath by an offering. In relation to soteriology, propitiation means placating or satisfying the wrath of God by the atoning sacrifice of Christ." Charles C. Ryrie (1999-01-11). Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth (Kindle Locations 5503-5504). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”
Matthew 11:29-30

And He was saying to them all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. Luke 9:23

As Savior, Jesus paid our debt of sin and sentence to eternal separation from God. We only have to believe in Jesus and receive Him as Savior and Lord. Reflect back on the time you accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior. As you think about that time in your life ask Him to renew that joy you had. Make it your prayer that God will show you opportunities to ‘take up your cross’, maybe, in being kind to someone, giving some of your time, or even sharing Jesus’ love with them.

Jot down some people you know that you might be able to serve this week.

Pray for opportunities to serve Jesus and when they appear take them. His yoke is easy.

Week Five/Day Three

All people are guilty before God without grace!

Now that I am 'justified', what am I doing about it? Romans 3:26 for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

- It was always God's plan to redeem us from the penalty of sin and pay our sin debt
- It is God's plan for our lives to free us from the power of sin in our daily lives.
- One day we will be free from the presence of sin and be with the Justifier.

Pray for a moment that God will give you His power in the Holy Spirit to resist temptation so you can worship Him with your life today and tomorrow and forever.

Look up Ephesians 2:10 and 1 Peter 2:5. Who are we now in Christ?

As a new creation, what are we created for?

What does He call us to do?

Are you hearing the calling? If it seems like you are unable, that is because you may need to restore that relationship with Jesus. Remember His yoke is easy, but He must be Lord.

When we stand before God the Father and He judges us, the Justifier will stand up for us and claim our debt. "Paid in full"

Some like the reminder that justified is “Just as if I’d never sinned” Yes that’s how we will stand with Jesus. But we are now free to serve Him in all we do. As you go through your daily activities, have a continuous conversation with your Heavenly Father. Walk with Him.

He does care for you. 1 Peter 5:7

Write down some anxieties and cast them to Him.

Week Five/Day Four

All people are guilty before God without grace!

Are you staying clean? What is the Christian bar of soap? If we know that Jesus paid for all of our sins; past, present and future, then what happens when we sin today?

Romans Chapter 8 says we can never be separated from God's love. Read it again for reassurance.

So what happens when we sin today? We take Jesus off the throne and make "self" Lord again. Jesus is still there and we still have the Holy Spirit to guide us, but we are not in that relationship God so desires for us.

1 John 1:9 says "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

This is the Christian's bar of soap..... confession.

Just as we take a physical shower each day, we need a spiritual shower. We need to confess our sins and agree with God that we did what we hate to do and did not do what pleases God.

Stay clean; confess sin as soon as you are convicted. Read 1 John 1:9 again. Pause and ask God to bring to mind any un-confessed sin.

It is a daily walk, He is always with us but we need to keep Him first and ourselves last. To be happy in Jesus, we need to trust and obey.

Take time and pray for yourself and your relationship with Jesus as your Lord. Think about the joy of your relationship with Jesus that so many miss out on.

Week Five/Day Five

All people are guilty before God without grace!

Look up Ephesians 2:8-9

A good mnemonic of what Grace means is “God’s Riches at Christ Expense”. Grace is getting what we don’t deserve. Mercy is not getting what we do deserve. How would you explain God’s Grace to an unbeliever?

How can God’s Grace be abused? Look up Romans 6:15-16

What is the first way God’s grace could be abused? Are there some who abuse God’s grace, thinking, “Oh well, I know what I am doing is a sin, but God’s grace is sufficient...He will forgive me anyway.”? Yes. Continuing to live a lifestyle of sin after receiving God’s grace is willfully breaking God’s law.

Look up Romans 7:1-4: When did Paul say our obligation to the Law (keeping laws in order to be right with God...being legalistic...fallen from grace) ended? The answer is when we died to the law through the body of Christ.

The second abuse of God’s grace is quite the opposite of willfully sinning and is very subtle and attractive to many Christians because it has the appearance of spiritual [religious] wisdom. It is known as legalism. (For additional study on this get online at: <http://www.raystedman.org/new-testament/romans/the-continuing-struggle>)

What can we do to demonstrate God’s Grace to someone?

Avoid ‘falling from Grace’. Avoid sin and avoid legalism. Be free in Jesus to love Him. Honor God with your good works, it is one way to worship Him. Romans 12:1-2.

SERMON NOTES

PRAYER NEEDS

Pastor Daniel's Text and Focus: Week Six

Romans 4:1-25

All people who follow Jesus have righteousness credited to them!

This week we look at the critical question of just what it is that permits us to have fellowship with God. Many of your friends, family or co-workers are convinced living a "good life" and not being "as bad as others" is sufficient to please God. Their conception of Who God is accommodates these views. The Believer therefore should have a firm foundation of Truth in this area to help in discussions with the lost.

Week Six/Day One

All people who follow Jesus have righteousness credited to them!

Getting the foundation

Faith or the Law?...that is the question. Do we have salvation by the acts of righteousness we perform or do we have salvation through the faith in Christ? Are we considered righteousness because of what we do or what we believe?

Religions throughout history have put on the backs of its members tasks or acts that must be done in order to become righteous. Some say flagellation (a whipping or flogging, especially as religious discipline, scourging) others require sacrifice of many different kinds. So what does Christ require?

Romans can be one of the most difficult books in the Bible. God is defining for us and asking to come to an understanding of our relationship with Him and educating us in what He has done for us. It's not what we have done for Him or what we do but what He has done for us.

Our focal point is Romans Chapter 4 verses 1-25. But in order to understand these verses it is important to have a foundation of chapter 3 verses 27 –31. These verses from Paul give the foundation of where our righteousness comes from. Let's look at these verses and let's analyze what God is telling us about Abraham and why that relates to us.

Romans 3:27-31:

27 Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. 28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law. 29 Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, 30 since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith. 31

Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law. NIV

Q. So what is the main premise in verse 27? What exactly do we have to boast about in our relationship with God?

Q. What exactly does observing the law really require? And who's law are we to observe? The laws given to us by Moses or by man? And who is able to keep all the law. (Romans 3:23, Eccl 3:20)

Q. Is the principal of faith VS works applicable for Jews only? Who is Paul talking to in Romans?

Q. If our relationship is based on faith does it nullify the law? Can we do whatever we want because of faith?

Romans 3:27: Where, then, is boasting?

What can we learn from Abraham? To remind yourself what Abraham did, read Genesis 22: 6-13.

Q. The sacrifice that Abraham was about to give was it credited to him as righteousness or was it his willingness to follow the will of God?

Q. When a man/woman works for a set amount of wage isn't he obligated to perform his portion of the bargain before the payment is received? Can you expect payment without performing the work? Can you brag about the work you did and expect more than the wages you agreed upon?

Q. What does David say about the blessings of God? “ God crediting righteousness apart from works”? (4:6 & 7)

Q. Is this blessing reserved only for the Jews? The law requires the Jew to be circumcised. Was Abraham credited as righteous before he was circumcised or after? (Acts 13:38 & 39)

A big question as to righteousness is answered here (Romans 4:11-12). Q. Who exactly is the offer of righteousness offered? Is righteousness the gift of just Jews, just those who have been circumcised or to “all who believe”?

Q. What exactly does it mean to “walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had”?

How exactly does it apply to you?

Week Six/Day Two

All people who follow Jesus have righteousness credited to them!

Read Romans chapter 4: 1-15:

Paul is showing that Abraham and David are in the same lifeboat, which he is offering his own people in his day, labeled “justification by faith.” the law was a pedagogue — it took the man under law by the hand to lead him to the Lord Jesus Christ.

God is now going to give us an example of logic and He is going to walk us through it.

4:1 What then can we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found? 2 If Abraham was justified by works, then he has something to brag about—but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him for righteousness.

Q. It says that Abraham may have something to brag about but not before God. What is Paul getting at here? What would Abraham have to brag about and to whom?

Q. Is bragging a trait of man and why is it so important?

Q. Do you ever find yourself bragging about yourself, your spouse or your kids?

Q. What point is Paul making when he asks “What does Scripture say?” Is he not taking us back to the reason for bragging? Is it our right or is the credit due someplace else?

The startling thing to discover was these good works were not the ground of salvation, but were the result of his salvation and the result of being justified by faith. You see, James and Paul did not contradict each other when James said, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works?" The works that James describes are not the works of the flesh under the law, because Abraham wasn't under law. They were works of Faith. Abraham believed God, and he offered up Isaac.

4 Now to the one who works, pay is not considered as a gift, but as something owed. 5 But to the one who does not work, but believes on Him who declares righteous the ungodly, his faith is credited for righteousness.

This is a critical point that Paul is making here. He is asking if you do what you contracted to do or what you were supposed to do, do you get the right to brag about it?

Q. Can you claim credit for a job well done when you were supposed to do a job well done in the first place? Q. Can you claim credit for a job well done when you had nothing to do with it except accept the outcome?

David Celebrating the Same Truth

6 Likewise, David also speaks of the blessing of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: 7 How happy those whose lawless acts are forgiven and whose sins are covered! 8 How happy the man whom the Lord will never charge with sin!

Is this cool or what? The lawless are forgiven and their sins covered. How happy should man (and women) be because of this? But is it our work or God's that gives us forgiveness?

Look up Titus 3:5. Q. What exactly is the washing of rebirth and renewal of the Holy Spirit?

Week Six/Day Three

All people who follow Jesus have righteousness credited to them!

Now God, through Paul, is going to explain just who this grace is for. Is it just for the good Jews? All Jews? Or all who choose to accept it?

Abraham Justified before Circumcision

9 Is this blessing only for the circumcised, then? Or is it also for the uncircumcised? For we say, Faith was credited to Abraham for righteousness. 10 How then was it credited—while he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while he was circumcised, but uncircumcised.

Paul is now asking the readers to use some logic.

Q. What is Paul's reasoning at this point? Is he not asking for a review of a sequence of events?

Q. What events is Paul asking the reader to review?

Q. What point is Paul making here? Is it obedience to the law or faith in God?

Q. What came first: Abraham's obedience or the rule of circumcision?

11 And he received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while still uncircumcised. This was to make him the father of all who believe but are not circumcised, so that righteousness may be credited to them also. 12 And he became the father of the circumcised, not only to those who are circumcised, but also to those who follow in the footsteps of the faith our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised.

Q. So who is Abraham the father of? Just the Jews?

Q. So what is the relevance of this proclamation to us?

Q. Is God playing favorites?

Q. Is there anyone who is outside the love of God? What about evil people? Can you name a few?

Q. How does it make you feel that God opens His arms to everyone?

Week Six/Day Four

All people who follow Jesus have righteousness credited to them!

The Promise Granted through Faith

13 For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would inherit the world was not through the law, but through the righteousness that comes by faith.

Q. So what implication does this statement from the Bible mean to you?

Q. What does “righteousness that comes by faith” look like?

Q. Is this faith something you can grasp or achieve and if so how?

Q. How do you know this “faith” that you have is real or genuine.

Ps 106:39

Acts 26:20

In comparing these two verses what can you conclude?

How do these verses from 2 Peter enter into your thinking and the verses about faith?

2 Peter 1:5-9

5 For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; 6 and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; 7 and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. 8 For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. NIV

14 If those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made empty and the promise is canceled. 15 For the law produces wrath; but where there is no law, there is no transgression.

Q. What exactly does verses 14 & 15 mean?

Q. So is there salvation in following the Law?

Q. Who is that person who can follow the entire Law?

16 This is why the promise is by faith, so that it may be according to grace, to guarantee it to all the descendants—not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of Abraham's faith.

Q. What exactly is Grace?

Q. What/who is Paul referring to when he asks “who are of the law?”

Q. And who is he talking about when he says “those who are of Abraham's faith?”

Q. What does this have to do with us?

He is the father of us all 17 in God's sight. As it is written: “I have made you the father of many nations”. He believed in God, who gives life to the dead and calls things into existence that do not exist.

Q. Who is Paul referring to when he is talking about “gives life to the dead?”

18 Against hope, with hope he believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what had been spoken: So will your descendants be.

Q. Why does Paul say “against hope” and then in the same sentence say “with hope?”

Q. How does that apply to us? Do you have loved ones who do not know the Lord and show no hope of ever accepting?

19 He considered his own body to be already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb, without weakening in the faith.

Q. Why did Abraham consider himself dead and his wife too?

Q. Could they be saying that in and of themselves there is no hope. But.....

20 He did not waver in unbelief at God's promise, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, 21 because he was fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. 22 Therefore, it was credited to him for righteousness. 23 Now it was credited to him was not written

for Abraham alone, 24 but also for us. It will be credited to us who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. 25 He was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

Q. Do you consider your faith as strong as Abraham's?

Q. Why not?

Q. What must you do to get/acquire that kind of faith?

Week Six/Day Five

All people who follow Jesus have righteousness credited to them!

“Without Excuse!...both them and us – an urgent call to engage and reach!”

The thrust of this week’s study has been the unearned, unmerited and undeserved accruing of perfection upon those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. That the blood of Christ shed upon the cursed Cross not only covers sin (as in the Old Testament *atonement*) but totally smokes, destroys, blasts, and exterminates it.

This is a wonder to meditate on! The action of God, totally without our supervision or instigation, places before human discretion and will, the Way to total forgiveness and perfection. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says we have been made the righteousness of God in Christ. Consider what that says: the righteousness of God; perfection. Here is where you’ve heard ministers say “when God looks at you, He sees Christ.” It is not that we are living perfectly. Clearly there’s ample evidence to refute that. But the point is that we have access to perfection (the Throne of Grace); that the Believer is viewed by God with tenderness and even joy because we love and accept His Son.

What about our neighbors, friends and family who are without Faith in Christ? Can we stand by, in our conferred perfection with promise of eternal bliss and not reach out to them with the Good News? You and I stand “Without Excuse” if we do nothing knowing what we know. There is a lake of fire waiting for all who reject Christ. God has prompted you about a certain somebody you need to talk to.

You can do it! To him who has been given much, much is required.

SERMON NOTES

PRAYER NEEDS

Pastor Daniel's Text and Focus: Week Seven

Romans 6:1-23

All people who follow Jesus are called in grace to live in righteousness!

The question we address this week is how does our Faith affect who we are? Are you best described as a Church-goer who draws sincere benefit from the praise and teaching at church, but then upon leaving fails to apply the experience to help yourself and others? Or are you best described as a Disciple; someone whose journey of faith is evident both to yourself and to others around you? Do you believe in the sufficiently and authority of the Word of Truth to live righteously in obedience to It? Take time to pray over this topic before you begin.

Week Seven/Day One

All people who follow Jesus are called in grace to live in righteousness!

In the 1st verse of Chapter 6 Paul asks a subtle but succinct question. “Are we to continue in sin?” The “continue in sin” is written in the present active tense and is what our life before Christ looked like. Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and Galatians 5:19-21 and make a list of what an unrighteous person “in sin” might look like.

Not a pretty picture and we know that the wages of sin is death! But we who believe, according to John 3:16-18 “are not judged and shall have everlasting life”. This, my friends is God’s amazing grace!

We deserved to be judged yet God extends His hand of grace (unmerited favor) and forgives us ALL our sins. God did it for Abraham (Genesis 15:5-6). Abraham believed as each one of us must do and then God “reckoned it” to Abraham and you and me as righteousness, simply put God said NOT GUILTY.

Stop right now and thank God for His truly amazing grace and for our salvation that resulted from Christ’s free gift to us.

Week Seven/Day Two

All people who follow Jesus are called in grace to live in righteousness!

In the 2nd verse of chapter 6 Paul asks another pointed question. "How shall we who died to sin still live in it?" Then he goes on to clarify that question by asking another Read verse 3.

Let's take a look at why baptism is so important in the life of a believer. Read Luke 12:50 and Acts 2:24 to get a picture of Christ's "baptism". The baptism Jesus speaks of in Luke is His death. Read Isaiah 53:4-6 slowly and with purpose. This is a picture of the death of Jesus, the one who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, and yet according to Luke was distressed until it was accomplished!

In Romans 6:3-4 Paul tells us as believers that our baptism is a picture of Christ's death, burial and resurrection. Read Colossians 2:12-14.

Do you get a picture of baptism as a serious milestone in the life of a believer, the exclamation point at the end of a confession of faith and the beginning of a life with Christ. Read Colossians 3:1-4.

Week Seven/Day Three

All people who follow Jesus are called in grace to live in righteousness!

Our baptism is a picture of a new person the old sinful one has passed away. In Romans 6:15 Paul now asks another question. As that new person in Christ should we continue to sin? Let's take a look at what Paul says Read verses 15-18.

May it never be! I guess that is clear, so if I occasionally sin am I a failure? Did my conversion "take"? Let me tell you God is good and He answers that question in 1 John 1:8 and gives us His awesome grace and mercy in the next verse, verse 9. I had a pastor that used to say after conversion that we are now saints who occasional sin. But how does God want us to live in Romans 6:18. Paul says we are now to be slaves to righteousness. In the following verses on slavery and righteousness we see a picture of what being a "slave to righteousness" looks like. Read the verses and write your thoughts.

Slavery

(Our Example) Luke 22:42
Psalm 40:8
Luke 12:36-38
Galatians 4:8
Ephesians 6:5-6
1 Peter 4:2

Righteousness

Matthew 5:6
Matthew 6:1
Matthew 6:33
Philippians 3:9
1 Timothy 6:11
1 John 2:29

Week Seven/Day Four

All people who follow Jesus are called in grace to live in righteousness!

As Slaves of righteousness, we are being sanctified. This word sanctified or the process of sanctification means “the course of living our life befitting those who are separated to God”. When I think of the sanctification process I think of Galatians 2:20 (this is a good verse to memorize) in part it says “it is no longer I who lives but Christ who lives in me”. Read the Book of Philemon it’s only 1 Chapter long 25 short verses. Onesimus a slave to Philemon has run away and his path has crossed with Paul’s. Onesimus is now a believer and faced with doing his Christian duty returns to Philemon who is within his power to put to death Onesimus for running away.

Read this Book looking at it from a personal point of view, once paying attention to what is said about Onesimus, read it again with Philemon in mind and then once again with Paul as the focus. Write down what you learn about all three. Does one of the three stand out as a slave of righteousness or perhaps all three are slave of Christ. Look for each of their attributes.

Week Seven/Day Five

All people who follow Jesus are called in grace to live in righteousness!

Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-21: These verses are a picture of God's love for each one of us in Christ. I heard a Pastor once say that "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature" we have new DNA or Divine Nature Acquired. The verse goes on to say the "old things passed away behold, new things have come."

As a new creature verse 20 we are to be ambassadors for Christ. I like the Webster's definition of ambassador "an authorized representative or messenger" Jesus is relying on each one of us to GO and tell the good news. Read Romans 10: 15-17. Who will do the talking if faith does come from hearing? The answer is Christ's ambassadors and who are the ambassadors anyone who has new DNA! We are without excuse, the last 4 days we have looked at all that the death and resurrection of Christ has meant to the believer, just think what it would mean to the life of an unbeliever. Someone who right now is in pain mental or physical, who is in anguish or perhaps someone who, as my mother used to say, "has the world by the tail" yet we know what awaits them in eternity. We simply have no excuse if we want to be obedient, slaves of Christ.

List what stops you from being an ambassador of Christ.

SERMON NOTES

PRAYER NEEDS

Pastor Daniel's Text and Focus: Week Eight

Romans 10:11-21

All people who follow Jesus are responsible to declare the gospel of salvation!

There isn't much room for the Believer to negotiate away the responsibility of sharing the Gospel, the "Good News" of salvation in Christ the Lord. Often we think that is something left for the Minister, or "the other guy." But as you read this week's lesson and listen to the Message from the pulpit may you be challenged to take another look at your commitment to obedience in this area. There are no programs to learn, no "magic words." Just share your own story with someone about what a difference Christ has been in your life. This is something we all are responsible to do.

Week Eight/Day One

All people who follow Jesus are responsible to declare the gospel of salvation!

God's promise, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame", (Romans 10:11-13).

After reading Romans 10:11-13, read back in Romans 9:30-33. You will notice the words again, "they would never be put to shame or disappointed". These words are also proclaimed in the Old Testament by Isaiah in 28:16. In the Romans verses Paul talks about Israel's unbelief in Jesus as the Messiah. He talks about how Israel was so convinced if they followed the law of God with painstaking obedience, He would show favor and accept them. However, Jesus made it clear they could not earn God's favor by pursuing a law of righteousness. His favor is reserved for those who realize that they can never be good enough (works by human effort) and so must depend on Christ (salvation by faith). And, if they followed this simple "foundation", "they would never be put to shame or disappointed". Simple, but we know from history, Israel rejected Jesus and crucified him on the cross.

And, even after Jesus resurrection, the Jewish nation refused to repent and acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah. Their "shame" came with their fall to the Roman Empire.

It is God's will and by His grace that anyone, whether Jew or Gentile who calls on His name shall be saved. There is not one god more kind to the Jews and a god less kind to the Gentiles. There is only one sovereign God and He doesn't show favoritism. His process of salvation is the same for everyone no matter what nation we are from or sinful behaviors we have participated in. Salvation is not complicated; believe with our hearts and confess with our mouths Jesus is the Risen Lord and we are saved!

We, as a nation, have turned our back on God just as Israel had. Think and meditate on the things our nation has done and is doing right now that indicate something or someone else as our foundation other than Christ.

Indicate personally what you have trusted in in the past as your foundation other than Jesus that brought disappointment, despair or ruin? What was the outcome?

Week Eight/Day Two

All people who follow Jesus are responsible to declare the gospel of salvation!

Not everyone who hears will accept the Good News – Romans 10:16-19.

Despite the evidence, not even the Jews who witnessed the power of Jesus' miracles believed the Good News (John 13:37-40). In verses 16-19, there are only two reasons given for the Jews' unbelief. The first being the Jews never heard the gospel; that God did not spell out his terms for salvation. The second being they heard the gospel but did not understand it. At any rate, they gave their excuses. Paul raises both of these concerns and addresses them with proof that Israel both heard the terms of salvation. The Gospel of salvation was clear and continual throughout the Old Testament prophecies and through God's messengers. Their unbelief was not out of ignorance but out of rebellion against God and His word. They still refused to repent and acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah even after His resurrection. However, thankfully, God's sovereign plan continues with the Good News being spread throughout the Gentile nations.

Think back to your life prior to accepting Christ. What excuses did you make for not accepting his free gift?

Week Eight/Day Three

All people who follow Jesus are responsible to declare the gospel of salvation!

There are people everywhere who are eager to believe – Romans 10:20.

Although there were a few Jews who accepted Jesus, the nation as whole did not. This rejection forced the Saints out of Jerusalem and scattered them to other nations. The Holy Spirit was with them guiding and directing allowing them to share the Good News to the Gentiles (Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth) (see Acts 1:8) which was fulfillment of Jesus' plan. Although the Gentiles were not aware of a promised Messiah, they accepted with joy and responded with action when they heard. The Gentiles were coming to faith in great numbers. New churches were started, strengthened and encouraged by the Holy Spirit; and these new Christians grew in their faith. God used the unbelief of Israel to achieve the salvation of the Gentiles as foretold in His Word.

Take a few more moments to read about Paul and his companion's missionary trips in the book of Acts. You will realize God reaches those who want to know him and He will go to great measures to do so. One such companion God used, with the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit, was Philip as he witnessed to his new faith in Christ to the Ethiopian eunuch. Read the story Acts 8: 26-35 and be encouraged and inspired!

Sharing the gospel can be a little "un-settling" and can be far and in between with people we know much less people we may have pre-conceived notions about due to their nationality, family background or the way they look.

What would you do if the Holy Spirit prompted you to share the gospel with someone you didn't expect to?

Week Eight/Day Four

All people who follow Jesus are responsible to declare the gospel of salvation!

How will they know? Romans 10:14-15

There is no commands here - just a series of questions. At first glance, one may consider the primary idea of the text is missions. While missions may be implied by Paul's teaching, missions are not the goal. Paul is not reiterating the Great Commission rather he is stressing the necessity of the Great Commission. Israel was presented the gospel and the steps to salvation personally by Jesus, and they still rejected Him. And, if the whole chapter is considered, this confirms this point. Jesus is not only salvation to the Jews but also to the Gentiles. He gave of himself to His chosen people. He presented it clearly to them. But, still in the verses that follow, Israel still rejected Christ and continued to remain "disobedient and obstinate".

Paul is stressing that although man is responsible to respond to the gospel, God is the One who initiates its proclamation, who sends out those who proclaim it, and who personally speaks through them as they do so. It is not us just speaking about Christ; it is Christ speaking through us. Christ is saying, "Here I am". How beautiful are His feet! (Read Isaiah 52:7)

Week Eight/Day Five

All people who follow Jesus are responsible to declare the gospel of salvation!

“Without Excuse!...both them and us – an urgent call to engage and reach!”

1. We cannot look down or shake our heads at the stubborn unbelief of Israel.
2. Are we doing any better than they? We see the result of a lost and sinful world all around us.
3. How much Truth are we practicing and are we sharing it?
4. The Word of God is a two-edged sword; it is the basis for our belief and behavior the revelation in which we base our foundation of faith; on the other hand the word is truth for which we are held responsible and our actions judged.
5. We cannot afford to “skirt” our responsibility to share the gospel. Like Israel we need to pay attention to the warning signs or pay the consequences.
6. Our lack of submission and obedience will lead to devastation.
7. We will be found guilty – without excuse at the time of judgment.
8. Teach what you know now and continue to learn.
9. Gods law reminds us of our sin and the need of saving grace but we cannot let it make us self-righteous.
10. We cannot keep the blessings to ourselves.
11. Paul in Romans has given us all we need to know (Romans 10:9-13) and to share.
12. Like Paul we should consider it a privilege to share the gospel.

SERMON NOTES

PRAYER NEEDS

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