

Romans 3:13~20

The story is told of a man in Scotland who was walking through a park one Saturday afternoon, carrying a small New Testament in a leather case. Thinking the case contained a camera, a group of young people asked him to take their picture. In response, he said, “*I already have it.*” When the astonished youths asked him where and when he had taken it, he took out the Testament and read Romans 3:9-23. After saying, “*That is your picture,*” he took the opportunity to witness to them about Christ.

We can look out across this land we live in, across the waters to other countries and nations and cultures, and see a vast difference in people, as far as outward appearance... But strip away the flesh and bone, and you will find that we all are the same... Romans 3:9~23... is a “*picture*” of the soul of every man/woman.

Paul begins this section, by asking a question...⁹ *What then? are we better than they?*

Is the man, who conforms to the “*letter of the law,*” of God, any better off than those who have no affiliation in the law of God?

No, in no wise: *for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are **all under sin**;*

Looking closely... you’ll find that he is not simply saying... that every man has “messed up.” He’s not saying that man is generally good, but somewhere along the way, they “slip and fall.”

To be “**under sin** ...” is to be in denominated by it, or under the authority of it!

He is speaking to the fact, that all man can produce is sin!

★ Paul is speaking to the “**Total Depravity of Man!**”

^{9b}...they are **all under sin**...

¹⁰**As it is written**, There is **none** righteous, no, **not one**...

¹¹There is **none** that understands...

...there is **none** that seeks after God...

¹²They are **all** gone out of the way...

...they are together **become unprofitable**...

...there is **none** that doeth good...

...no, not one...

Nobody Understands... **Nobody** Seeks God... **Everybody** is going their own way...

Everybody is useless in the things of God... **Nobody** does good! **...no, not one...**

Whether you conform to the law, or whether you don’t... Both alike are sinners!

Paul is telling this man... Your sin may not be as obvious... but you are still just as sinful!

Society sins “naked” before men, while religious people sin “Clothed in religion” ...

Back in 2:17~20, Paul gave a description of the “*external man*”, the “*Religious man*...”

Now, here in 3:13~18, Paul gives a description of the “*inward man*”, the man’s “*unregenerate heart!*”

One of the “*best descriptions*” to the “*degree*” of man’s depravity is found in Ephesians 2.

¹And you hath he quickened, who were **dead in trespasses and sins**; ²Wherein *in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now*

works in the children of disobedience: ³Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

⁴But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, ⁵Even when we were **dead in sins, hath quickened us** (made us alive) together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) ⁶And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: ⁷That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: ⁹Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Paul declares that all men are “**Dead In Sin...**”

It means, that we are “*spiritually dead*” to God! There is no life at all in relation to God! Regardless what we DO! As dead men and women, we “*Cannot see*”, we “*Cannot hear*”, we have not the least inkling of “*breath*” in us... **WE ARE DEAD TO GOD!**

Read (Vs 13~18) *Is what I have entitled... The “Dead Giveaway...”*

The “*Proof*” of Paul’s claims of the “*Spiritual Deadness*” of all men, the depravity of the human heart... is manifested in man’s “*Words*”, in his “*Will*” and in his “*Ways...*”

All of which, are derived out of a man’s heart...

In short... Paul says his heart will give him away...

This is the same principle and truth that Jesus taught in Matthew 7:15...

¹⁵*Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.*

Jesus warned of “*false shepherds*” coming into the fold... And by all *outward appearances*, they appear to be good godly men... But remember, Satan is a deceiver... how else do you think one of his servants would come to deceive the flock of God? But Jesus tells us, that you can know the true from the false... How? Well you don’t go by “*outward appearances...*” you see what they are inwardly... *but inwardly they are ravening wolves...*

Jesus says... ¹⁶*Ye shall know them by their fruits. Listen very closely...* Their “*Fruits...*” are not the “*Good Deeds*” they do... For it is precisely the good deeds they do that gives them the “*appearance!*” The “*Fruit*” Jesus is making reference too here is that of *the man’s character!* The “*Inner Man*” that you can’t see with the human eye, will reveal a hard heart, unregenerate heart... *but inwardly they are ravening wolves...*

(Vs 13) Paul begins by describing man’s body as simply a tomb... ¹³*Their throat is an open sepulcher...* A “*Tomb*” if you will, in which lies the “*dead*” soul of every man. And he likens the “*entrance*” to the tomb, as being the mouth, with the throat being the passage, which leads to the place of the dead!



I think it’s significant to point out, that Paul describes it as an, “***OPEN***” *sepulcher...*

For, if a tomb is sealed with a stone, you are unable to see inside to the remains of the deceased. But having no stone, being unsealed, the passerby’s are able to see inside, and bear witness of the deceased!

In like manner, Paul declares that an unregenerate man’s mouth, is like an uncovered tomb... one in which reveals his “***Deadness***”, manifesting *the condition of a his heart!*

The same truth that Jesus taught... *for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks...*

(Mt. 23) Jesus made the same point using a “*sepulcher*”... ²⁷Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men’s bones, and of all uncleanness.

Illus: Zacharias Sepulcher... A SEPULCHER was an elaborate burial place for the dead... In Palestine ordinary people were buried in shallow graves covered by stones or a stone slab. Only people of importance and wealth were placed in sepulchers...

²⁸Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

Christ was speaking to the same man that Paul is speaking to here in Romans 3... The man who by all “*outward appearances*” appears to be righteous...but his heart reveals a much different man!

(James 1) James eludes to this same truth... ²⁶*If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridles not his tongue, but deceives his own heart, this man’s religion is vain.*

Why does James say his religion is vain, “*Empty*” “*Worthless...?*”

Because his mouth reveals that his religion **has not helped** his heart any...

His religion may have straightened up his life, but it is still worthless, because it hasn’t gotten to the “*root of the problem!*”

(Vs 13) ¹³*Their throat is an open sepulcher; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips:* ¹⁴*Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:*

Paul encompasses the entire mouth...*the tongue, the lips...* Which speaks once again to the “*Total depravity*” of man... Every aspect of man is sinful...

...with their tongues they *have used deceit*; This speaks to how “*Unregenerate man*” lies and deceives others... Knowing that his tongue is connected to his heart, it reveals that of a wicked heart!

... the *poison of asps* is under their lips... Jesus said the same thing to the Pharisees and Scribes...

³⁴*O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.*

It’s inevitable...Jesus says, *it is only Natural...how can ye, being evil, speak good things?*

There’s nothing any of us can do about it, or to change it! Whatever the state or condition of our heart is, will be “*revealed*” in our words...

I once preached a message, I entitled, “**You Can’t hide the MAN in MEN...**”

Whatever’s in there...is coming out! ³⁴*O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.* ³⁵*A good man out of the good treasure of the heart brings forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.*

We may hide our true feelings for a time...but they will eventually come out...

Man “**Always**” give himself to the “*Desires of his Heart!*” **That’s why man needs a new heart!**

Jesus goes on to declare that man’s judgment will be based on our words....

³⁶*But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.* ³⁷*For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.*

The only thing that will stand in the day of Judgment, is a changed heart which only comes through Christ Jesus... A heart Changed by Christ will produce a different speech!

In 13~14, Paul pointed to the “Unregenerate man’s speech...” using the throat, the tongue, the lips... Concluding in verse 14, that “his entire mouth” reveals a wicked heart!

Having spoken to the “Words” of this man...he now speaks to the “Ways” of this man...
(Vs 15~18) ¹⁵*Their feet are swift to shed blood:* ¹⁶*Destruction and misery are in their ways:* ¹⁷*And the way of peace have they not known:* ¹⁸*There is no fear of God before their eyes.*

This speaks to “the unregenerate man’s WILL...”

And once again, this speaks to the sinful condition of “his heart!”

His life does not consist in obedience to the Will of God... He pretty much does his own thing... he loves this present evil world....He shows no fear of being disobedient to God...

Paul closes as he began this section, by asking a question...⁹*What then? are we better than they?*
Is the man, who conforms to the “letter of the law,” any better off than those who have no part in the law?

The answer...^{9b}...No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;

Q: If that’s true... Then why the Law?

(Vs 19~20) ¹⁹*Now we know that what things so ever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.* ²⁰*Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

Simply put... The entire purpose of the Law, is to reveal to those who give themselves to it, that they too are sinners. That they have the same heart as those out in society! God gave the law to “Shut Up” those who boasted of their goodness...

It is the straight-edge of the Law that shows us how crooked we are... Phillips

The law is a chain... A dog on a leash, tied to a tree always comes to my mind when I think of the law... That chain is the only thing keeping him from doing what “ALL DOGS” do...

Those in society show no restraint, and follow the desires of their heart!
While those under that law, simply show restraint!

The truth is...every man, woman, boy and girl stand in need of a changed heart!
...**And that’s where Christ comes in...**