

WHY STUDY ROMANS?
Introductory Message

Scripture Reading: Romans 1:13-17; 15:30-33.

Intro: This morning I want to begin an exposition of Paul's Epistle to the church at Rome which was written from Corinth (as far as we can tell), during his third missionary journey, and his second visit to Corinth, probably in the year A. D. 57, as he was on his way to Jerusalem to take a gift from the churches in Macedonia and Achaia to the saints in Jerusalem.

When Paul wrote to the church in Rome, we know that he had never been there. We do not really know who established the church there, nor when. But there was a church there, and, as we learn from chapters 1 and 15 especially, Paul hoped to visit them after he had fulfilled his mission to Jerusalem.

From Romans 1 we learn that Paul was very anxious to visit the believers in Rome -- that he had a great concern for them, a concern which was expressed "without ceasing" in his prayers for them. See Romans 1:9.

I have said that I am beginning an exposition of the book of Romans. My method will be, by God's grace and blessing, expository preaching. What does exposition mean? What is expository preaching?

Expository preaching is preaching in which the preacher seeks to explain in detail the meaning of the Word of God. Sometimes it may be the exposition of one of the many subjects of Scripture. Sometimes it may be of a single verse of Scripture. Sometimes it is of a passage, i.e., of several verses taken together. Sometimes it may be of an entire book, not taken up in one message, but in a series of messages going through a book explaining verse by verse the meaning of the entire book.

Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, in the introduction to his commentary on Romans, has this to say about expository preaching:

It is my opinion that we have far too many brief commentaries on and studies in the Scriptures. The greatest need today is a return to expository preaching. That is what happened in the time of the Reformation and the Puritan Revival and the Evangelical Awakening of the 18th century. It is only as we return to this that we shall be able to show people the grandeur, glory and majesty of the Scriptures and their message (Romans, Atonement and Justification, p. xii).

Therefore, it is going to be my purpose to go through this Epistle with you, verse by verse and chapter by chapter, from beginning to end, and to seek to set before you, as the Holy

Spirit enable me, the meaning of this book.

But, to get started, let me ask and answer a question. It is this: WHY STUDY ROMANS in such detail? Why is it important enough to receive all of the attention that we intend to give to it?

In answering this question I am going to be able to do two things:

- 1) To help you to see the purpose behind our study. We always profit from anything more if we know the reason for it.
- 2) It will give me an opportunity to set before all of us this morning the distinctive purpose for the existence of Trinity Bible Church. Trinity Bible Church is a different kind of a church. I am not saying that there are no other churches like our church (thank God there are others). But I am saying that we are definitely seeking to do something here that is not characteristic of the majority of churches today -- although every church should be doing what we are seeking to do. I am not here to entertain you, to try to be cute and novel in what I have to say, or in the way that I say it. I am here to teach you the Word of God, to show you how the Word of God is to affect your life. That is the distinctive purpose of Trinity Bible Church. We are a church dedicated to the expository teaching of the Word of God.

But WHY ROMANS? Let me give you several reasons. I hope that you will write them down so that you can be reminded of them, and so you will understand why we are doing what we are doing here at Trinity Bible Church.

We are going to study the book of Romans

- I. BECAUSE GOD HAS COMMANDED US TO PREACH HIS WORD, ALL OF HIS WORD, AND ROMANS IS A VITAL PART OF THAT WORD.

Cf. 2 Timothy 3:16-4:2. See also 2 Peter 3:15, 16.

Paul's charge to Timothy is God's charge to the Church in every generation. The church that fails to preach the Word, all of the Word, is failing in its mission as a New Testament church!

- II. BECAUSE IT GIVES US A SYNOPSIS, A SURVEY, OF ALL THAT PAUL TAUGHT.

Here we see his theology. These are the truths that changed his life, and for which he ultimately laid down his life!

Paul was the Apostle to the Gentiles. He wrote more books of the Bible than any other writer. Next to our Lord, Paul

is the outstanding teacher of Scripture -- the one whom God used to draw all of the threads of Scripture together, and give the teaching in its most complete form.

And this leads me to a third fact about Romans.

- III. We should study Romans BECAUSE. as one writer has expressed it, ROMANS IS "an abridgement of all that is taught in the Christian religion" (Haldane, p. 7).

You will not find any conflict in Romans with what Moses taught, or with what Abraham believed, or with David, or with any of the OT prophets, or with any of the Apostles of the NT, or with our Lord. Romans gives us a summation, an exposition if you please, of all of the teaching of Scripture. The person who wants to find the heart of all Biblical teaching in one place will find it in the book of **ROMANS!**

All of this leads me to a fourth ~~point~~. Since the above is true, then it must follow that we must study Romans

- IV. BECAUSE NO CHILD OF GOD CAN BE TRULY GROUNDED IN THE FAITH WHO IS IGNORANT OF THIS EPISTLE.

My job as a pastor is to seek to edify you who are the people of God. Edification comes through knowing the Word of God. Therefore, for a book to have such a key place in Scripture, it is obvious that this is a book which must be known by every child of God.

But let me point out another very important reason in this connection.

- V. We need to study Romans BECAUSE IT GIVES US THE MOST COMPLETE STATEMENT OF THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION THAT IS TO BE FOUND ANY PLACE IN SCRIPTURE.

The whole Bible deals with salvation. It has its roots in Genesis. We see a gradual unfolding of God's plan of salvation as we go through the OT. Finally, after the coming of Christ, the revelation of the doctrine of salvation could be completed, and the Apostle Paul was the one whom the Holy Spirit chose to give us this completed statement of the glorious doctrine of salvation! No other book in the Bible holds such a place. And in view of the fact that salvation is the main theme of Scripture, no child of God can afford to be ignorant of this Epistle.

But let me give you another reason.

We need to study Romans . . .

- VI. BECAUSE THIS HAS BEEN A BOOK WHICH GOD HAS ALWAYS USED TO BRING MANY OF HIS PEOPLE TO HIMSELF.

The preaching of Romans in an expository manner has been honored by the Lord in the salvation of sinners.

Closely related to this is another fact of history. We need to study Romans

- VII. BECAUSE ROMANS HAS HAD A MAJOR ROLE IN THE GREAT SPIRITUAL AWKENINGS OF THE PAST.

Donald Grey Barnhouse points out in his commentary on the book of Romans that

the Swiss commentator, Godet, has pointed out that every movement of revival in the history of the Christian church has been connected with the teachings set forth in Romans. He writes: 'The Reformation was certainly the work of the epistle to the Romans and that to the Galatians, and it is probably that every great spiritual renovation in the Church will always be linked, both in cause and in effect, to a deeper knowledge of this book'" (Barnhouse, Vol. I, p. 2).

Luther had his life transformed by that little but powerful statement in Romans 1:17, "The just shall live by faith" -- a quotation from Habakkuk 2:4! And afterwards Luther wrote,

The epistle to the Romans is the true masterpiece of the New Testament and the very purest gospel, which is well worth and deserving that a Christian man should not only learn it by heart, word for word, but also that he should daily deal with it as the daily bread of men's souls. It can never be too much or too well read or studied, and the more it is handled the more precious it becomes, and the better it tastes (Luther, quoted by Barnhouse, Vol. I, p. 2).

Chrysostom, one of the greatest of the church fathers, had Romans read to him twice each week.

In view of all of these facts, a renewed interest in the book of Romans could be an indication that the Lord is again preparing to visit the world with a true spiritual awakening.

But whether we will see an unusual work of the Lord in the coming days, or not, there is one more reason that I would bring to you this morning for the study of Romans. It is this:

- VIII. BECAUSE THE DOCTRINES OF ROMANS ARE THE VERY DOCTRINES THAT

ARE BEING EITHER NEGLECTED OR PERVERTED BY THE CHURCH TODAY.

All of the doctrines of sovereign grace are here. Paul begins by showing the need for salvation as indicated by the total ruin of man through sin. He gives us the evidence of man's utter depravity. Paul exposes the myth of free will. He expounds the mission of our Lord Jesus Christ into the world to suffer and die that sinners might be forgiven and saved. Here Paul writes in most glowing terms of that doctrine which many hate -- the doctrine of divine election. He shows that salvation was especially provided for the elect of God, and that there are certain marks you can expect to see in the lives of those who are truly born again. In Romans Paul leaves no doubt but that those who are justified and sanctified will ultimately be glorified. Romans deals with the privileges of Israel, the purpose of the Law, God's grace to the Gentiles, and the ultimate accomplishment of all that God has ordained according to His eternal purpose.

In short, Romans teaches us that salvation has to be a work of God because it could not possibly be any other way, and that God has revealed Himself in all of the aspects of our salvation. Romans is a book that will cause us to see that peace and joy and all of the blessings of salvation come when our lives are centered in the Three Persons of the Godhead, and not in ourselves or in any other creature.

These are the major truths of Scripture, and truths which are being ignored or denied or accommodated today more to the liking of men!

We here at Trinity Bible Church stand unequivocally for all of the doctrines of salvation, all of the doctrines of sovereign grace, because they are taught in the Word of God and because they alone will give God the glory which properly belongs to Him! See Romans 1:14-17.

- IX. Finally, for this time at least, we need to study Romans BECAUSE ROMANS TEACHES US THE INSEPARABLE LINK BETWEEN DOCTRINE AND DUTY, PRECEPT AND PRACTICE, CREED AND CONDUCT.

The doctrine is found in chapters 1-11; the practice follows from chapter 12 to the end.

No person should ever expect that he can understand Romans without having his life changed, changed to be more conformed to Christ, and changed for greater victory over sin and for greater joy and peace in daily life.

We have great things ahead in the study of this book.

Concl: In conclusion I would like to make two requests.

First, I would like for you to read this Epistle through at least once a week while we are considering it together. Some of you might even want to memorize it, as Luther recommended. But please read it -- over, and over, and over again!

Secondly, will you pray faithfully for me as I teach it?

And I would like for you to use Paul's prayer request in Romans 15:30-33 as your pattern in praying for me:

- 1) Expect it to be a struggle -- v. 30.
- 2) Pray that I will be delivered from those who do not believe, both inside and outside of the professing church because the doctrines of God's grace in salvation are doctrines which men hate until they are changed by the Lord. This is verse 31.
- 3) Also in verse 31, pray that my teaching will be accepted by those who are true saints.
- 4) Next, that verse 32 may be descriptive of our Sunday morning service -- in fact, of all of our services.
- 5) And lastly, that we will all experience the result mentioned in verse 33.

A SEVENFOLD GREETING
Romans 1:1-7

Intro: Paul in Romans 1 is in a position similar to that of John the Baptist which is recorded in John 1 -- the main difference being that John the Baptist was dealing with hostile Pharisees, but Paul was dealing with the saints in Rome.

Two questions were asked of John:

- 1) "Who art thou?" (John 1:19).
- 2) "What sayest thou of thyself" (John 1:22).

The Pharisees went on to ask another question regarding his baptizing, but I want to concentrate on these two basic questions as I begin because they have to do with Paul's objective in the first seven verses of Romans! It was as though the believers in Rome were saying to him,

- 1) "Who art thou?"
- 2) "What sayest thou of thyself?"

Do you remember John the Baptist's answer?

I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias (John 1:23, quoting from Isaiah 40:3).

Paul could not refer to any passage in the Old Testament in answering such questions for the church at Rome, but his answer was just as necessary and just as true!

Why was it necessary for Paul to answer these questions?

There are two reasons that I am sure we can recognize if we will think about Paul's circumstances as well as this Epistle which he has written.

- 1) First, he had never been to Rome. While doubtless most of the believers there had heard of him, and some knew him, yet, for the most part, the church there had had no personal contact with him.
- 2) Second, to read and re-read this Epistle will show us that there is no book in the Bible like it. Dr. James Packer says that "there is one book in the New Testament which links up with almost everything that the Bible contains: that is the Epistle to the Romans . . ." (Fundamentalism and the Word of God, p. 106).

It is in this book that we have the only systematic presentation of the great doctrine of salvation that is to be found in all of the Word of God! Obviously this book was originally written for the believers in Rome, but it also became the authoritative statement regarding salvation for every generation of the Lord's people from that day until this. If you want to understand the Biblical doctrine of salvation, then read Romans.

So, therefore, it was important that the church at Rome should

know who Paul was, what he had to say about himself, what authority he had to write such a book as Romans.

He is dealing with this in the first seven verses of chapter one.

He did this as a greeting. He begins his letter in that way that was customary in that day (so no one would have thought that it was unusual), but he obviously had a very important reason behind what he did.

I would like for you to note that there are seven main parts of his greeting:

- 1) First he identifies himself by name, giving his titles.
- 2) Second, he speaks of his message.
- 3) Third, he refers to what we might call, his textbook -- although because of his calling he is able to go beyond what we have in the Old Testament.
- 4) Next he speaks of his theme -- in verses 3 and 4.
- 5) After that he gives his commission.
- 6) In verse 6 and the first part of verse 7 he identifies those for whom this letter was originally intended -- his addressees.
- 7) Finally, we have his prayer for the church at Rome -- the first prayer of the Epistle.

Before we consider each of these, let me point out an unusual thing about this sevenfold greeting.

It is this: Although Paul is obviously speaking of himself and of his authority to write such a book, you cannot read this greeting without realizing that Paul has said much more about God, and about Jesus Christ, than he has said about himself. Note this throughout these seven verses, not only in the way Paul refers to himself and his work, but even in the way he describes the Roman Christians themselves.

Thus, while Paul fully establishes his authority, yet you can see that he wrote this Epistle because of what God was doing, doing through and in conjunction with His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

So the greeting is not Paul-centered, but God-centered and Christ-centered. And that is true of the entire Epistle.

Let us look now at the details.

- I. THE WRITER: "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle."

Here he uses the name ~~that~~ became his after he was saved. He may have had it before, but, as a Gentile name, it became important afterwards in indicating that a change had

taken place in his life, and that his particular place of ministry was to be among the Gentiles, as we will see in this passage.

It may also be important that "Paul" means little -- his stature, his voice, his feeling about himself.

But in the two titles that he uses here he does two things:

- 1) He takes his place with Moses, and David, and all of the servants of the Lord in the Old Testament as well as in the New. He was a slave of Jesus Christ."
- 2) He claims the highest position of authority ever given to men in the New Testament: "called to be an apostle."

But note the word, "called." He had not taken this position on his own; he had been divinely "called" to this place of ministry.

Now this meant one thing in particular that we must not miss: It meant that he, like Moses and David, had been chosen by God to be a human instrument of divine revelation -- thus giving this Epistle a place among the other books which can rightfully be called, the Word of God!

Actually Paul did not need to say any other thing, but he does so because of the tremendous importance of this Epistle. And so we see that next he speaks of

II. HIS MESSAGE: "separated unto the gospel of God."

Paul was set apart, "separated," from everything else -- "unto the gospel of God."

The proclamation of the Gospel was the reason for his life and ministry. It was always to have the greatest priority. He was not to be sidetracked by anything else.

But why does he call it, "the gospel of God"?

I like what Robert Haldane has written about this. He says that it is "the gospel of God" because:

- 1) It originated with God.
- 2) It has been made known by God.
- 3) It is a revelation of God.

Let us keep these three things in mind as we go through the Epistle.

The third thing to note in Paul's greeting is that he rejects any thought that he was the first one to speak of this Gospel. For want of a better expression, I have described what Paul says in verse 2 as

III. HIS TEXTBOOK: "which he had promised afore by his prophets

in the holy scriptures" (Rom. 1:2).

Paul is not only stating ~~that~~ the Old Testament is divinely inspired, that it is the Word of God, but he is saying that both the Old Testament and the New speak of the same Gospel.

Make sure that you understand this.

Paul's message was not something that men had never heard before. Paul, to be sure, is giving the greatest and most complete statement of it, But at no point was Paul in conflict with anything that any other prophet or apostle had ever said about the Gospel!

But, what is this Gospel? This brings us to the heart of that message, which we can certainly refer to in connection with Paul as

IV. HIS THEME.

You can see it in verses 3 and 4 -- obviously a most important point because of the space Paul gives to it.

The Gospel has to do with Christ.

It has to do with His Deity,
 His mission (as "Jesus"),
 His appointment to that mission ("Christ"),
 His sovereignty (as "Lord"),
 His incarnation ("made of the seed of David"),
 His confirmation as God's Son ("declared to be the Son of God with power . . . by the resurrection from the dead").

It is impossible to preach the Gospel unless we preach Christ. Leave Christ, and you leave the Gospel. Without Christ there is no Gospel!

Nothing you can do in reading Romans will be of greater help to you in understanding it than to notice all that it has to say about the Lord Jesus Christ!

In verse 1 Paul had said that he was "called to be an apostle." But what right did that give him to write to the church at Rome. And so he speaks next of

V. HIS COMMISSION (Rom. 1:5).

Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles. Cf. Romans 11:13. Therefore, he could not ignore the heart of the Gentile world in his day without being negligent in carrying out his commission.

And so as the sixth part of his greeting we are told who are

VI. HIS ADDRESSEES (Rom. 1:6, 7a).

Paul cannot refrain from speaking of the sovereignty of God in connection with those to whom he was writing.

Why did they belong to Jesus Christ? Why could they be addressed as "saints"?

Because they had been "called" by God.

Why had they been "called"?

Because they were "beloved of God."

Why were they the "beloved of God"?

No reason is given. It is attributed only to the goodness of God, to the grace of God -- a decision which rested entirely with God, not dependent on anything that He saw in the ones He has seen fit to love and to call to Himself.

Thus, Paul could not glory that he was an apostle, nor could they glory in the fact that they were saints.

Finally we come to

VII. HIS FIRST PRAYER (Rom. 1:7b).

Those of you who have read Paul's Epistles very often may have gotten so that you can read over this characteristic prayer and benediction as though it were not very important. We treat it like our expressions, "How are you?" or, "Have a good day!"

But this was not just something to fill space for the Apostle Paul. You can be sure that this was a petition that came from his heart and lips as he prayed for the Romans, and the Corinthians, and the Galatians, etc.

We may all have different kinds of needs, but every child of God stands in daily need of these two gifts from God, and from Jesus Christ (an evidence also of His Deity) -- the need for "grace . . . and peace"!

Will you stay on the lookout for these two words as you read Romans? You need them every day. "Grace" is the strength which God gives, which we do not have, and which we do not deserve. "Peace" always accompanies "grace," and it is that tranquility of heart which "grace" brings in the recognition that:

- 1) God is indeed "God."
- 2) That He is also "our Father."
- 3) And that His Son is "the Lord Jesus Christ."

Will you be sure to notice all that Paul has to say about them? If you do, you will have no reservations about what he writes about this wonderful salvation.

Concl: What a greeting!

And what a wonderful person Paul must have been! Wouldn't you like to have known him? His zeal would put us to shame. And his knowledge would have made us want to read everything he wrote, and to be present every time he spoke.

But, you know, I am sure that this kind of talk would have grieved the Apostle Paul. He only directs attention to himself because of what God had done in his life, and because of the work that the Lord had appointed him to do. BUT THE GREAT JOY OF HIS LIFE WAS TO SPEAK OF GOD, AND OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND OF THEIR LOVE AND OF THEIR GRACE AND OF THEIR POWER, AND OF THE PEACE WHICH ONLY COMES FROM THE TRIUNE GOD. It was because of God and because of Christ that Paul wanted to go to Rome. It was because of God and of Christ that he wrote this letter. And it was because of what God and Christ and the Holy Spirit had done in his heart that he would lay down his life in that very city of Rome knowing that death would only elevate him higher and make his joy complete.

May our study of Romans make us love the Lord like Paul did. That is what would make him happy. And that is what will bring blessing to us, and that is what will cause the blessing of God flow out to others in our day as it did to those who were "beloved of God" in Paul's day.

THANKFUL AND UNCEASING PRAYER
Romans 1:8-12

Intro: After reading the five verses of our text, some might be inclined to say, "You are not going to spend a whole message on those verses, are you? They do not seem to be that important."

But they are! And I want you to see why.

In the first 7 verses of Romans we see Paul's position -- his titles, his authority, his commission, his message. By the time we have read through those 7 verses we know that this Epistle has been written by one who had every reason to write it, and that we should give our undivided attention to the words that follow.

However, the Apostle Paul cannot leave the matter there. And so in the next 5 verses, the verses of our text, he reveals to us, not more of his authority, but his heart. We learn in these verses that Paul wanted to come to them not just because it was his calling, his duty, but because it was his life, his joy -- the work that meant more to him than anything else. And that he was coming to them because in his heart God had placed a great love for them.

The combination of these two, the authority that we see in verse 1 through verse 7, and the love which we observe in verses 8 through 12, are the combination that ought to be present in every servant of the Lord.

We could point out the difference between these two passages in another way.

Do you remember that, as the work in the early Church grew and the Apostles needed help, their statement about their own work was this,

But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word (Acts 6:4).

In Romans 1:1-7 we have an emphasis on Paul's message, the Gospel, the ministry of the Word. In Romans 1:8-12 we see something of his prayer life. Thus, he was carrying on in the same way as did those who were Apostles before him.

Having said that we must also recognize that in the 5 verses before us today we not only see how and why Paul prayed, but we get a glimpse also of his understanding of the ministry that the Lord had given him. However, it all speaks primarily of Paul's prayers.

Let us look, first of all, at

I. PAUL'S THANKSGIVING (Rom. 1:8).

This is very characteristic of Paul. In 9 of his 13 or 14 Epistles he begins with words of thanksgiving:

- 1) In Romans.
- 2) In 1 Corinthians.
- 3) In Ephesians.
- 4) In Philippians.
- 5) In Colossians.
- 6) In 1 Thessalonians.
- 7) In 2 Thessalonians.
- 8) In 2 Timothy.
- 9) In Philemon.

And besides he has a great deal to say throughout his letters about the need to give thanks. Do not fail to notice what he says as you read his Epistles.

But what does he say here about his thanksgiving?

Let us note first

- A. The reason for his thanksgiving: "that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world."

It was for their faith.

As you read through Romans notice how many times Paul speaks of faith, or believing, and it will make this verse come alive for you.

But let me just summarize a little of it for you this morning. See verses 16 and 17 of this chapter, for example.

Paul was thankful that they were saved,
 that they knew God and His righteousness,
 that their sins were forgiven,
 that they were saints,
 that they were trusting the Lord,
 that they were ministering by faith,
 that they were waiting for the Lord
 to come!

All of this, and more. They were standing true to the Word of God and boldly declaring it for others to hear.

In fact, so remarkable was their testimony that their faith was known throughout the entire Empire wherever there were people who knew the Lord. Thus notice this limitation to the expression, "throughout the whole world":

- 1) The "world" was the Empire.
- 2) In that "world" he was speaking of how the faith of the Roman church had affected all other churches.

We might have given thanks for other things, but Paul was thankful for their faith -- with all that that expression is meant to convey to our minds.

But notice a second thing about his thanksgiving:

B. The One to Whom he gave thanks: "I thank my God."

Now there is a very important truth in these words which Paul will enlarge on later in the Epistle. But let us notice it here: The reason that Paul gave thanks to God for their faith was because their faith came from God! And this is one verse which would prove that.

Do you have any doubts about this? Cf. Rom. 10:17.

Cf. also Matt. 16:17,

Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

Or listen to these words of the Apostles in Luke 17:5,
Lord, increase our faith.

Here is what Acts 11: 21 says,

And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

Do you remember what we are told about Lydia in Acts 16:14?

And a certain woman named Lydia . . . heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken by Paul.

Or, back to Romans -- 12:3,

For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

What about Phil. 1:29?

For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.

Add to these Eph. 2:8, 9 and Heb. 12:2.

Just one of these verses would be enough, but together they give overwhelming evidence that our faith comes from God -- and therefore God is the One Who deserves the praise that anyone has believed!

But notice a third thing about Paul's thanksgiving:

C. The One through Whom he gave thanks: "through Jesus Christ."

You see, we are so unworthy to approach God in ourselves

that the only way we can even praise Him is "through Jesus Christ."

This ought to remind us of another verse: Heb. 13:15, "By him (that is, by Christ) let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually . . ."

It is only "by him" that we can come to God -- and we ought to recognize this every time we praise. That is why we pray in Jesus' Name!

What a lesson this is in praising God, and what a picture it gives us into the heart of the Apostle Paul.

But notice, secondly,

II. PAUL'S REQUEST (Rom. 1:9-12).

This includes the remaining verses of our text.

Note that it was an unceasing request.

It was so important that he takes God as his witness that these were not just words, but that they expressed the true longing of his heart.

It was a part of his ministry, but he wanted them to know that it was not just a cold, hard duty, but that it was a service that he rendered to God with his spirit.

It was always on his heart.

But what was it?

It was a threefold request. Note carefully each part.

A. He wanted to come to see them.

He had never been to Rome, but he wanted to go -- not to see Rome, but to see the saints!

And yet he wanted it to be "by the will of God," because only in that way could it be "a prosperous journey."

Paul was praying about this. He prayed about it continually. And he had been praying about it, apparently, for a long time. He believed that you pray, and then wait on the Lord to lead. And this is just what he was doing.

This is the first part of his request.

But why did he want to see them? This brings me to the

other two points in his request. Let us point them out as

B. The reasons for his request.

1. Verse 11: "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established."

The first reason was for them.

2. Verse 12: "That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me."

The second reason was for himself.

What did he mean by "some spiritual gift"?

He probably meant this book of Romans. He meant that he had received a gift from God, probably through the Holy Spirit (and that is the reason he called it a "spiritual gift") -- and he wanted to give it to them so that they would be "established."

What a lesson there is here for every pastor! This means that when I come to you my only right to come is that I have received something from God through the Holy Spirit which the Lord intends for me to understand first, and then give to you. And the only reason that you would come here and sit for an hour is because you believe that I am going to impart to you "some spiritual gift to the end ye may be established."

That is what the ministry of the Word is -- God giving to His servant so that His servant will have something to give to His people.

But can I ask you a question?

Are you receiving the "gift," the ministry of the Word?

In the past year I have said a lot about the Gospel, and about salvation. Is it possible that any of you are not saved?

In the past year I have said a lot about the spiritual life, about walking with God, about trusting Him. Have you who know the Lord been receiving the "gift"? Is it evident in your life?

You see, what I have to give I only have because God has

given it to me, and He has given it to me for you!

But there is another side to this giving -- and I want to say just a word about that before I finish.

Not only has God given me something for you, but He has given you something for me! Look at verse 12 again: "That is, that I (says the great Apostle Paul) may be comforted, i.e., that I may be encouraged, together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me."

When Paul wrote this letter, he had no idea how the Lord was going to fulfil his request and answer his prayer. He did not know that he would go to Rome as a prisoner. Nor did he know that, as he approached Rome, tired and undoubtedly discouraged, that some of the brethren would come to meet him, and that it would affect him as we read in Acts 28:15b: "whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage."

Alexander Maclaren, a Scottish preacher who lived in the days of Spurgeon and Ryle once said this after he had returned to his pulpit following a long illness:

There is only one Giver who is only a Giver, and that is God. All other givers are also receivers. (See Vol. 8, p. 20 in the section on Romans.)

And then he went on to speak to his people about their part in his life. Among other things he said,

All earnest work has ever ~~at~~ travelling with it as its shadow seasons of deep depression; and the Christian teacher does not escape these. . . If you have ice in the pews, that brings down the temperature up here. . . And if you want your minister to preach better, and in all ways to do his work more joyfully and faithfully, the means lie largely in your own hands. Icy indifference, ill-natured interpretations, carping criticisms, swift forgetfulness of one's words, all these things kill the fervour of the pulpit.

On the other hand, he said, the true encouragement to give a man when he is trying to do God's will, to preach Christ's Gospel, is not to pat him on the back and say, 'What a remarkable sermon that was of yours! what a genius! what an orator!' not to go about praise it, but to come and say, 'Thy words have led me to Christ, and from thee I have taken the gift of gifts.'

And then he concluded with these words. Remember he had just returned to his people. He had been with them some thirty years, and so he was well along in his ministry as I am. Perhaps his words can be mine:

Dear brethren, the encouragement of the minister is the conversion and the growth of the hearers. And I pray that in this new lease of united fellowship which we have taken out, be it longer or shorter--and advancing years tell me that at the longest it must be comparatively short--I may come to you ever more and more with the lofty and humbling consciousness that I have a message which Christ has given to me, and that you may come more and more receptive--not of my words, God forbid-- but of Christ's truth; and that so we may be helpers one of another, and encourage each other in the warfare and work to which we all are called and consecrated.

Concl: At the time that Paul wrote these words which we have considered this morning, they were just in his prayers. They expressed his gratitude to God for what God had done, but they expressed also the great longing of his heart for what he hoped God would do in the coming days.

God wonderfully answered those prayers.

Could we do any better than to pray the same way? Let us pray that I and all who minister the Word here at Trinity will never come to preach and teach without "some spiritual gift" from the Lord which you will receive. And let us pray that all of us who minister will minister with the realization that we, too, need to receive from you -- and that in humility we will look to God to give the encouragement and blessing that will kindle the flames of zeal and devotion every time we are together.

That was Paul's desire. May it be ours. Romans was the main gift. May our hearts be opened by the Lord to receive it in its fulness in the coming days!

A STRANGE KIND OF A DEBT
Romans 1:13-17

Intro: It is increasingly apparent that Paul wanted the believers at Rome to know that he had wanted to come to see them for a long time.

We saw last week in verses 9-12 that this had been a matter of unceasing prayer with him.

He explained in verses 11 and 12 a part of the reason why he wanted to come; NOW, BEGINNING WITH VERSE 13 HE GIVES THEM ANOTHER REASON.

The detailed way in which Paul went into this may remind you of the way he explained himself to the Corinthians in his second Epistle to them. He had delayed his second visit to them, and so he had been charged with not keeping his word -- of promising one thing, but doing another. These were serious charges to Paul, and he wanted the matter cleared up.

In the same way there must have been some feeling among the believers at Rome that Paul was negligent in his duty because he had not come to them. He wanted to clear this up, too.

Thus the introductions to Romans and to 2 Corinthians give us two good illustrations of the principle which Paul expressed before Felix in Caesarea when he said,

And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men (Acts 24:16).

Also -- 2 Cor. 6:3, Giving no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed, but in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God.

It seems that Paul was actually answering four questions in the passage before us just now. They are these?

- 1) Why had he not come before? See verse 13a.
- 2) Why did he feel that he should come? See verse 13b, 14.
- 3) Did he want to come? See verse 15a.
- 4) What would he do when he got there? See verses 15-17.

Let us look at them in order.

I. WHY HAD HE NOT COME BEFORE? See Romans 1:13a.

It was not because he did not want to come. Nor was it because he had not planned to come, and even tried to come. "Purposed" actually means that he was determined to come to them, but he had been hindered (which is the meaning of the word, "let").

He had not been hindered by sickness, nor by a lack of finances, nor by Satan, nor by other churches, BUT HE HAD BEEN PROVIDENTIALLY HINDERED BY GOD!

See Rom. 15:19-22.

Paul's calling was to go where the Gospel had not been preached!

But he goes on to say in Romans 15, verse 23, and verse 24a:
But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you; whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you.

But then he indicates that this will not be immediately for the following reason expressed in verse 25:

But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints.

Paul had learned, and the Roman believers needed to learn, that the Lord orders our steps. See Psalm 37:23. Also Prov. 16:9,

A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps.

Also Prov. 20:24,

Man's goings are of the Lord; how can a man then understand his own way?

George Mueller used to say, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and the stops are, too!"

How wonderful it is to recognize the providence of God, the wisdom of God, the timing of God, the plan and purposes of God, when we pray, and then wait on Him for our direction!

Thus you can see that Paul was not only explaining things to the church at Rome, but he was graciously teaching them at the same time.

The second question:

II. WHY DID HE FEEL THAT HE SHOULD COME? See Romans 1:13b, 14.

Here we come to the heart of this passage, and actually to the reason for the writing of this Epistle. It is found in these words: "I am debtor."

This has sometimes been explained to mean that he was a debtor to the Romans.

But this cannot be the explanation if we take it as meaning that he had gone many other places and so he was obligated to go to them, too.

Nor can it mean that God was obligated to them. God is no man's debtor!

Then what does it mean?

It means that Paul was a debtor to God -- meaning that he had an obligation to fulfill, a duty to perform for God -- and that was to preach the Gospel "both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise."

See Rom. 1:1, 5, and 6.

In Romans 11:13 you will find these words:

For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office.

Thus, since Rome was a great center of Gentiles, Paul knew that Rome had to be included in his ministry. The only thing that he did not know was WHEN!

Although, as we will see, there was much more to Paul's ministry than just the fulfillment of a duty, yet back at the very foundation of all that he did was the realization that he had been called, that God had set him apart for the work that he was doing, and that he must, by the grace of God, be faithful to that calling. Nothing must turn him aside. And nothing ever did turn him aside; nothing could turn him aside -- so great was the call of God upon him!

This obviously was the reason that he was so greatly concerned when anyone questioned the manner in which he was carrying out his ministry.

He felt himself obligated to God because of God's calling to go to every Gentile, regardless of his social standing, his education, or anything else that might be said about him. It was "both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians" -- explained by the words that follow, "both to the wise, and to the unwise." And he expected "fruit."

John Owen, 9, 219, "... the Lord Jesus Christ hath engaged us in a debt."

But a third question -- Was it just a duty, or

III. DID HE WANT TO COME? See Romans 1:15a.

Paul wanted to be faithful to his calling, but there had to be more than that!

Yes, he wanted to come! That had been on his heart for years. No one had been more disappointed in the delay than he had been. And he expressed it in those words, "So, as much as in me is, I am ready."

This meant not only that he was willing, but that he was eager. His zeal to come had only increased his disappointment. If it had been up to him, he would have been there long ago!

But this leads to my last question:

IV. WHAT WOULD HE DO WHEN HE GOT THERE? See Romans 1:15b-17.

The answer is: he would preach the Gospel to them!

But notice two things about what Paul says in these verses:

- 1) He says, "to you that are at Rome also."
- 2) Also he says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ."

You can see from these two statements that the charge, the criticism, had been aimed at him that he did not mind preaching the Gospel in other places, but that he was afraid, ashamed, to preach it at Rome!

This is very possibly why he felt compelled to write at this time -- and to write so fully about the Gospel. He would not only answer the charge, but he would deny it. We can see that Paul knew what it meant to have the biting criticism that people often hurl maliciously at a servant of the Lord.

But, in answering the charge, he gives two reasons as to why he was not ashamed of the Gospel -- and, in doing so, he gives us **THE THEME OF ROMANS.**

PAUL WOULD COME TO ROME, AND HE WOULD PREACH THE GOSPEL THERE BECAUSE:

First, "for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

This statement means that Paul was not the least bit ashamed of the Gospel because:

- 1) It was from God.
- 2) Inherent in the Gospel was "the power of God."
- 3) Through the Gospel, and through the Gospel alone, could men experience "salvation" -- and Paul used this all-inclusive word for God's work in the **hearts** of men -- salvation past, present, and future, salvation from sin's penalty, sin's power, and sin's presence. Or, as the Epistle will show us, salvation means justification, sanctification, and glorification.
- 4) Lastly, it is "to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

This was not just a way of salvation; it was the only way. It was God's way. And he does not have one way for Jews, and another way for Gentiles, or Greeks. It was the same way for all. And it was not to be received in any other way but by faith!

Paul knew that this was not popular -- that it was foolish-

ness to the Gentiles, and a stumblingblock to the Jews. But he would not change it for the philosophers, nor water it down to appeal to the masses, nor, as we shall see, would he mix it with the Law to appeal to the Jews. HE WAS UNASHAMED OF IT AS IT WAS, AND THAT IS EXACTLY THE WAY HE WOULD PREACH IT WHEN HE GOT TO ROME!

But that is not all. He was not ashamed of it for another reason.
Second, "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."

It is in the Gospel that God has "revealed" His righteousness.

Note very carefully that Paul does not stress the love of God first, but the righteousness of God!

This means that God Himself is made known in the Gospel.

He has made known that which otherwise would be "unknown and unknowable" (Trench, p. 356). It also means that He has interpreted, He has explained, what He has revealed. So salvation is not a matter for human speculation, but it is a matter of divine revelation.

We see in the Gospel what God requires. The Gospel is the good news concerning Christ. The Gospel takes us to the Cross to see not only what happened there, but the One to whom it happened, and why! It was there that God made known His righteousness, that He satisfied His righteousness, that He provided righteousness, and it is only through the Cross and through the Gospel that righteousness is imputed to those who believe!

And it is "revealed from faith to faith."

This has been explained in various ways, but it is clear from verse 17 that the quotation from Habakkuk is meant to explain it. Cf. Hab. 2:4 -- which is also quoted in Gal. 3:11 and Heb. 10:38.

Perhaps it is best to say that two ideas are indicated:

- 1) That this revelation was made by faith, and that it is to be received by faith.
- 2) That there is a continuity to the faith that is true faith -- that it goes on. The person who truly has faith, continues to believe. Thus it would indicate that salvation is unto eternal life.

And please note that again Paul shows the harmony between

the Old Testament and the New on the subject of salvation by quoting from Habakkuk, as well as confirming the authority of the Old Testament.

Concl: What a wealth of truth we have in these 5 verses!

Do you know it in your own heart?

Perhaps some of us who know the Lord need to learn what Paul was learning about patience, about waiting on the Lord for His time concerning things that we know are in His will.

Perhaps we need to be sensitive to our testimony as Paul was to his.

Perhaps we need to see witnessing in its true light, as a debt to God -- which, nevertheless, must be carried out with zeal and with faithfulness and with joy.

Or, it may be that some of you this morning have never really understood what the Gospel is. You may have been led to believe that it is something other than what you have read in verses 16 and 17. But this is the truth of God. This is the very word of God. That Gospel cannot be anything but what it is said to be here. Will you believe it? Will you receive Christ? The Gospel is only for those who will believe. Your faith, given by God, will confirm that it is for you! It makes no difference who you are -- Jews or Gentiles, wise or unwise -- there is only one Gospel, one Saviour, one way to be covered with the righteousness of God. Repent of your sins, and call upon God to save you through Christ.

AN ANGRY GOD
Romans 1:18-23

Intro: From verse 18 of chapter 1 to verse 20 of chapter 3 the Apostle Paul has explained why man is rightly under divine condemnation -- or why, according to the words of David in Psalm 7:11, " . . . God is angry with the wicked every day."

As is so often the case with Paul, he summarizes at the first that which he intends to show throughout the whole passage. This is what he has done in verse 18. Verse 18 tells us three things:

- 1) That God has made Himself known. He has not concealed Himself, but He has revealed Himself. This is the meaning of the expression, "the truth," as the passage clearly shows.
- 2) That man has not only rejected the truth, and sinned against the truth, but he has suppressed the truth. "Hold" means to hold down the truth. The word pictures a situation where a tyrant, a dictator, will imprison or kill those who know incriminating things about him so that the truth cannot come out! Man does this with what God has revealed about Himself thinking that this will mean that he can go on ignoring it and is not responsible for the light that God has given.
- 3) The third thing in the verse follows from the first two even though it is stated first: Since God has revealed Himself, and since man has rejected and is suppressing that revelation by all kinds of "ungodliness and unrighteousness," man is under divine judgment -- and "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven"!

Now all of this about man's condemnation and God's wrath is being explained by Paul for another reason: Paul is laying the foundation for the teaching of salvation which will begin in Romans 3:21. In that explanation he will show that salvation has to be initiated and carried out to its completion by God, and that there is no other way that God can save men except on the basis of infinite grace.

All of this means that Paul has stated the situation in verse 18 -- that man is under divine condemnation, and then he begins his proof, showing first,

- 1) what God has done to make Himself known, and secondly,
- 2) how man has despised and rejected that revelation.

These two points are indicated in our text by the two times that we have the word, "because," in the KJV. (See verses 19 and 21.)

Therefore, I want to discuss verses 19 and 20 first, then verses 21-23, and finally come back in conclusion to verse 18. Let me suggest these headings:

- I. WHAT GOD HAS DONE (vv. 19, 20).
- II. HOW MAN HAS RESPONDED (vv. 21-23).
- III. WHAT GOD HAS DECLARED (v. 18).

I. WHAT GOD HAS DONE (Rom. 1:19, 20).

Stating it very simply, and yet very accurately, we can say two things:

- 1) Verse 19 tells us that He has revealed Himself to man;
- 2) Verse 19 (the latter part) and all of verse 20 tell us how He has done it, how He has revealed Himself.

Before we begin to look at the details, be sure that you notice one very important fact. It is this: An understanding of man's sinfulness begins with an understanding of the existence and character of God!

We often forget this in dealing with people about salvation. No person can possibly understand His need for salvation until he knows something about God! Again David agrees with Paul on this point. Note what he wrote in Psalm 36:9,

For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.

Therefore, all that we can do to set before men the glory of God, the majesty of God, the perfections of God, the absolute sovereignty of God, the more they will understand about their own unfitness to stand in His presence.

Going back to our text, verse 19 states the indisputable fact that

A. God has revealed Himself to man (Rom. 1:19).

Notice three things in this verse:

1. That God has taken the initiative in making Himself known -- that He can be known because He has chosen to reveal Himself.

This is not something that God was obligated to do, but it is what He has done of His own will!

2. That this is an effective revelation.

Man cannot deny it because "GOD hath showed it unto them."

But thirdly I want you to note :

3. That this is a revelation according to "that which may be known of God."

Actually God is incomprehensible as to the fulness of what it means to know Him, but He has revealed Himself in accordance with His purposes, and in accordance with that which man can understand.

Calvin was right when he wrote, " . . . God in his greatness can by no means be fully comprehended by us" (XIX, 69) -- and this applies even to believers.

Oh, how thankful we should be for this fact alone -- that God in His grace has chosen to make Himself known to man!

But now notice

B. How He has revealed Himself (Rom. 1:19m, 20).

Here we come to another fact about God: He is "invisible." "The invisible things" are His attributes.

But these "invisible things" are "clearly seen" in one particular place: "from the creation of the world."

THIS REVELATION
ACTUALLY PRE-
DATES THE FALL
OF MAN.

Look at this statement carefully. Paul is not only saying that the evidence is in creation, but that it has been seen "from the creation of the world" down to the present time!

In other words, Paul is not only saying that the world was created, and that God is revealed in that creation, but that God also is revealed by the providential way in which He has governed all creation from the beginning to the present!

But then we need to notice how very effective this revelation has been (as all of the works of God are). Note these statements:

- 1) They are "clearly seen" (v. 20).
- 2) They are "understood by the things that are made."
- 3) It is "manifest in them; for . . .
- 4) "God hath shewed it unto them."

The result: "so that they are without excuse" -- not as to the Gospel of grace, the way of salvation, but as to God's "eternal power and Godhead"! And to man's ~~unfitness to find acceptance with God!~~

Let me mention at this point the seven main ways in which God has revealed Himself -- three of which are in this passage:

- 1) By creation.
- 2) In the consciences of men.
- 3) By His providences.
- 4) By "the law written in their hearts" (Rom. 2:15) -- which is related to 2) above.
- 5) By the written Word of God.
- 6) By the coming of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, into the world as a man.
- 7) By preaching. Cf. Rom. 10:13-15.

But, to return to our text, what has God revealed by creation, and by His providences, to the consciences of all men? His "eternal power and Godhead."

Man has been given a revelation that there is a God, that He is truly God, that He is "eternal," and that in creating and governing His creation He has not only manifested "his eternal power," but also those that reveal His "Godhead" -- such attributes as, His wisdom, His goodness,

and others including those already indicated in this passage: His incomprehensibleness, His invisibleness, His eternity.

Paul is speaking here especially about the Gentiles who had not had the privileges of the Jews. But even with them, without the Word, without Christ, and without the preaching, "they are without excuse"! IF SUCH HAS BEEN THE CASE FROM THE VERY BEGINNING, WHAT MUST BE THE CONDEMNATION OF MEN NOW SINCE CHRIST HAS COME, AND WE DO HAVE THE WORD, AND THE GENTILE WORLD HAS BEEN THE RECIPIENT OF PREACHING FOR THE PAST 2,000 YEARS!

This means that there are no true atheists! No man will ever be able to stand before God and say that he did not know that there was a God!

Now let us look to see

II. HOW MAN HAS RESPONDED (Rom. 1:21-23).

What has he done with these revelations of God?

These 3 verses give us a whole list of incriminating evidence since it begins with "when they knew God" -- indicating that the revelation of God has gotten through to them!

Note the evidence:

- 1) "They glorified him not as God."
- 2) They were NOT "thankful."
- 3) Trying to cover it up, they "became vain in their imaginations," their philosophies, their religion, their science, their explanations, their reasonings, their speculations.
- 4) Rejecting the light, their condition became even worse: "their foolish heart was darkened."
- 5) They were lifted up and blinded even more by their own pride: "professing themselves to be wise, they became fools," because only a fool would say in his heart, "There is no God" (Psa. 14:1; 53:1). David and Paul again are in agreement!

But the last is probably the worst:

- 6) "And changed the glory (His attributes) of the incorruptible God into . . ."

Man did not like what he understood to be true, and so he proceeded to make God what he wanted Him to be -- less than a man, and more vile than a man.

And add to all of this what we saw in verse 18 -- the suppression of the truth, not only by each man for himself, but indicating the way man tries to keep others from the truth!

This is the real reason why we are not permitted to teach creation in our schools. This is the real reason why we do not want our children to pray. This is the real reason why we do not punish crime and the real reason why we tolerate sin of all kinds. This is the real reason why our world is in the mess that it is in today. We do not want God, nor His sovereign power, nor His will, nor anything else about Him; instead, we will make ourselves believe that He is less than we are; we will make Him into the kind of a God that we can be comfortable with in our sin.

Let me ask you a question at this point: ARE THERE STILL SOME OF YOU WHO WILL SAY THAT, IF MAN IS ONLY GIVEN A CHANCE, HE WILL TURN TO GOD, AND HE WILL ACCEPT CHRIST? To say such a thing is to deny the plain teaching of the Word of God, and it is to close your eyes to the reality of all that you can see around you. Man is totally depraved, utterly ruined by sin. God has spoken over and over and over again in many different ways, but the heart of man witnesses to the fact that "God is not in all his thoughts," or as the marginal reading renders Psalm 10:4, "All his thoughts are, There is no God!"

Paul is teaching us in this passage that

- if God had not chosen to save man, and
- if God had not taken the initiative of constraining man by His irresistible grace and power by putting him under unbearable conviction,

that no one would ever have been saved! Ask God to make this truth clear to you if you are inclined to argue with it -- and with HIM!

But now the last point:

III. WHAT GOD HAS DECLARED (Rom. 1:18).

He has "revealed" His "wrath" "from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." Whenever the truth is rejected, man's relationship to God and his relationship to his fellow man degenerate beyond what was ever thought possible. We will see more about that in the verses which follow.

Will you notice that Paul has been speaking of the righteousness of God, and of the wrath of God, but that he has said nothing so far about the love of God? Note that carefully in this day when men feel that God is too loving to judge anybody.

But, we might ask, How has God revealed His wrath? In more ways than I have time to mention:

- 1) By physical death.
- 2) By putting man out of the garden of Eden.

- 3) By the problems that man has in growing food.
- 4) By the sins that one man will commit against another, even within a family -- as with Cain and Abel.
- 5) By catastrophic judgments -- such as the flood, and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.
- 6) By wars.
- 7) By natural catastrophies -- floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, etc.
- 8) By financial reverses and the withdrawal of the blessings of life.
- 9) By disease.

And in many, many other ways. Read your Bible, and read your newspaper, and you will have overwhelming proof that the God of heaven has revealed, and continues to reveal, His wrath.

BUT THE GREATEST OF ALL EVIDENCE IS TO BE SEEN IN WHAT HAPPENED TO JESUS CHRIST WHEN HE CAME TO THIS EARTH. No man can stand in the shadow of the cross and say that man's heart is not wicked beyond repair, nor can he say when he sees the cross that man could remedy his own situation, or even that he wants God. Man himself, the world, and the Word of God all unite in telling us that man is utterly and hopelessly lost, and that, if he is left to himself, he will only go farther and farther from God and deeper and deeper into sin.

Pray that God will make these truths clear to you.

Concl: Is it any wonder that Paul wrote what he wrote in verses 16 and 17? There is no other hope but in God, and in Christ, and in the Gospel!!! It is already obvious, is it not, that man cannot save himself, that he will not save himself, that he is trying to conceal the fact that he needs to be saved, that he is a sinner. Thus it is ridiculous to say that salvation could ever be by works of man. It has to come from God or there can be no salvation.

What is the answer?

The answer is Christ. He is the One Whom God has sent to be the Saviour of men. You must believe in Him, not in yourself. Only in Christ is there hope, and forgiveness, and eternal life. Trust Him now!

THE DOWNWARD PATH
Romans 1:24-27

Intro: The passage that we have this morning is a part of the passage we had last Sunday in verses 18-23, and it is also a part of the Scripture which follows -- all the way to Romans 3:20!

We are dealing with "the wrath of God" -- why it has been "revealed from heaven," and how it has been revealed. This is God's portrait of the human heart, and it is a very ugly picture for us to look at. In fact, if there is one passage in the NT that I would like to skip over and not discuss it at all, it is my text for this service: Romans 1:24-27! Perhaps some of you feel that I should, that this is no place to discuss such a subject. In my heart I am inclined to agree with you. But I want to point out two things in this connection so you will understand why I am not going to pass over it. The first is this:

- 1) This is a part of the Word of God. It is just as much a part as the following sections on justification, or sanctification, or glorification. God, in His infinite wisdom chose to put it here. In His judgment, we are in need of this teaching. Moreover, this is truth that we would not have and, therefore, would not know, if He had not given it to us in His Word. This is a part of the revelation which Paul mentioned in verse 18 above. To pass over this, or any other part of the Word of God, is to pass judgment against God in what He has chosen to put in the Scriptures. Obviously we must not do that.
- 2) The second reason that I cannot pass over it is because, as a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, I like Timothy of old, am under a divine charge to "preach the Word"! If I am going to be faithful to the Lord in teaching the book of Romans, I cannot pass this over.

It has become increasingly popular among preachers and teachers of the Word to pick and choose what they are going to teach. That is the reason that you do not hear much today about the sovereignty of God, or about divine election, or about the purpose that our Lord had in dying on the cross -- and a host of other great truths that have to do with the sovereignty of God. And consequently we hear a lot about man. Our teaching has become man-centered instead of God centered. Some have even gone so far as to say that there is a doctrine of the sovereignty of man in Scripture! We are living in a day when men avoid certain doctrines because people do not like them. And the result is that we have gotten into a lot of "doctrine" which is not the doctrine of Scripture at all. In dealing with man we give people the impression that the human heart is not as bad as God says that it is, and so it is no wonder that this has added to the contempt that people naturally have for the Gospel of the grace of God.

Therefore, I am going to teach this passage. I must teach it.

I do not like it any more than some of you like it. But it is the Word of God, the revelation of God, God's portrait of the human heart. It is a passage like this that gives us divine authority for saying that man is not only depraved, but he is **TOTALLY DEPRAVED**. But, thank God, this passage also teaches us that God has His restraining hand upon us so that we cannot go on to live fully in accordance with the sin that is in every one of our hearts.

But let me say this also.

I want to deal with this subject of homosexuality in the way that Paul deals with it in the Word, and in the way in which it is handled by Moses (and others) in Scripture. In dealing with the corruption of sin we must always remember what Paul wrote in Ephesians 5:12, that, speaking of the sins of men,
 it is a shame even to speak of those things which are
 done of them in secret.

We are not to go into detail beyond what we have authority to do in the Word.

But let me recognize that this was the sin which ultimately caused God to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. (See Genesis 19.) This was one of the sins which brought on the destruction of all of the Canaanite nations. (See Lev. 18:24, 25.) Let me recognize that this was the real reason that 25,000 men died under the judgment of God in the days of the judges when even the tribe of Benjamin fell before this sin. (See Judges 19, 20.) It was this sin that was forbidden in the Law because we read in Lev. 18:22, "Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination." And it is repeated in Lev. 20:13,

 If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman,
 both of them have committed an abomination: they shall
 surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.

Let me listen to what the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian church in 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10,

 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the
 kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor
 idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of
 themselves with mankind, Nor thieves nor covetous, nor
 drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit
 the kingdom of God.

Paul even spoke of this to Timothy in 1 Tim. 1:9, 10 when he told him that "the law" was "made . . . for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane . . . for them that defile themselves with mankind . . ."

Is it not **amazing**, an indication of how far our civilization has slipped into sin, that today we not only have homosexual churches, but we have homosexual preachers. Put this along side of the teaching of Scripture and then see what you have to believe.

But now let us look at our text.

We saw last week in verses 18-23 that God took the initiative to make Himself known to men. He has done this for all men

- 1) In their consciences.
- 2) In creation.
- 3) By His providential dealings with men.

He has done more than that now, but from the beginning of human history He has done all of this.

BUT instead of man humbling himself before such revelations of God, and then worshipping God, man has rejected the revelation, he has tried to make God something besides what He is, and man has worshipped images that dishonor the infinite God by making it appear that He is no more than a creature, and even the lowest of creatures!

And so as we come to verse 24 we have the evidence of

I. THE ACTION TAKE BY GOD.

Three times in the remaining verses of this chapter it is stated that "God also gave them up." The same verb is used in v. 24, v. 26, and v. 28.

This word teaches us two things:

- 1) That God has always exercised (and, thank God, He still does in most instances) a restraining hand upon man to keep him from living according to the sinfulness that is in his heart -- in every heart.
- 2) That there are instances when He not only lifts that restrain, but actually delivers men over to do the things that their heart dictates for them to do. This is what Paul is speaking about in our text.

In other words, homosexuality is in itself a judgment from God upon people, upon societies, upon nations, who are guilty of another sin which people are not inclined to look upon as sin: the sin of rejecting God and of failing to worship and glorify Him.

These statements do not just mean that God permits something; they mean that He positively does something -- giving man over to his own lusts, removing all fear of God, and all fear of the consequences of sin, so that man's determination to sin becomes what William Shedd has described as "unimpeded, and intense" (p. 25).

God is not responsible for man's sin. He does not give man the desire to sin, the impulse to degrade himself. He simply withdraws the restraint, and man acts according to the sin in his own heart.

Read carefully verse 24, and then notice the words that Paul has used in verses 26 and 27 to see how man will dishonor and disgrace himself when the restraining hand of God is removed from him. And notice also that he is not content just to disgrace himself, but he will disgrace others also and drag them down into "uncleanness" with him.

All of this means just one thing with respect to the condition of our society today: THAT WE ARE A NATION UNDER DIVINE JUDGMENT.

Let us never say that God is not concerned about what is going on. Paul in this passage brings us back to recognize the hand of God in connection with man's sin because, not counting pronouns, he mentions "God" not less than 17 times from verse 16 to the end of the first chapter of Romans!

II. THE REASON FOR GOD'S ACTION (Rom. 1:25).

It is stated again in case we missed it the first time.

If you are foolish enough to believe that man's will is free to do what is good in God's sight, then just read this verse over and over again until you see the light. MAN EVEN CHANGES AND CORRUPTS "the truth of God" WHICH HAS BEEN MADE KNOWN TO HIM.

"The truth of God" is the truth about God. The "lie" is idolatry -- that God is not the kind of a God that He has revealed Himself to be!

And Paul does not say, as it has been translated in the KJV, that man has therefore "worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator," as though he gave some worship and service to God, but it is instead of, or, as the NASB has it, "rather than the Creator."

Man has chosen to leave God completely. He deifies creatures by worshipping them INWARDLY and serving them OUTWARDLY -- which is the distinction in the expression, "and worshipped and served the creature" rather than "the Creator."

Oh, how much we would be spared if we only realized the dreadful consequences of rejecting the light which God has given!

But, I cannot stop even here -- as much as I would prefer to do so. Before I conclude I must point out

III. THE DEPTH OF MAN'S SIN (Rom. 1:26, 27).

Here Paul states that "God gave them up unto vile affections!"

"Affections" is the second of three words that Paul uses in this passage for lust -- each of which is inclined to bring out a different aspect of lust. The three words are:

- 1) "Lusts" in v. 24.
- 2) "Affections," here in verse 26.
- 3) "Lust" in verse 27 which is a different word from the one used in verse 24.

The first includes all of the desires that are in our hearts, desires which are all characterized by the fact that they will lead us to "dishonour" ourselves, especially our own "bodies." The second points out more forcibly how diseased, how depraved, our lusts are. They never lead us Godward, but always toward gratifying ourselves with things that are displeasing to God. The third (in v. 27) points out the hostility of these desires, not only toward God, but toward others! Trench in his book on NT Synonyms (p. 326) says that this last word means that, when God delivers a man over to his sin, he "is always . . . reaching out after and toward an object, with a purpose of drawing that after which it reaches to itself, and making it its own."

So our sin not only enslaves us, but it causes us to want to enslave others.

But notice the expression, "even their women did change," in v. 26.

Homosexuality is spoken of in Scripture as mainly a man's sin. But Paul says, "even their women did change . . ." Not only did men desecrate the marriage relationship, but "women" did too! Women who seem to have more restraint, more modesty, often more of a sense of right and wrong, even ~~THEY~~ have fallen into this sin.

And it is also worth noting that Paul in this passage does not use the ordinary Greek words for men and women, but he uses words which should be translated male and female to bring out the depraved nature of the sin which he is describing.

And so we have females with females, and males with males, "leaving" the normal and godly use of sexual relationships which are to be satisfied in married, and, instead, burning "in their lust onetoward another . . . and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet" -- the penalties which are due them because of the fact that they have turned away from God.

Concl: It is not a good picture at all, is it? Thank God, we do not see this in every case, but we are seeing it today in our country as never before -- even to the point that

such a life-style is being tolerated, defended, and even, in some instances, taught!

What are we to say about homosexual behavior from the Word?

- 1) That it is wrong, it is sinful.
- 2) That it is terribly wrong. There is only one thing worse in the whole gamut of human relations -- and that is when human beings engaged in such relations with animals (a sin of which the Canaanites were guilty, a sin which is also denounced in Scripture -- see Ex. 22:19; Lev. 18:23).
- 3) That it is always to be considered as a judgment from God. There is always a story of the rejection of God behind each case.
- 4) That it is a sin which is itself destined for greater judgment from God.

1 Corinthians 6:9, 10 make it perfectly clear that a homosexual is not a Christian.

What is the answer to this dreadful problem?

There is only one answer. It is not found in modern psychology or psychiatry, or present trends in sociology where men try to explain it, or excuse it, or teach that we must live with it, or even encourage it. THE ANSWER IS ONLY TO BE FOUND IN TURNING BACK TO THE GOD WE HAVE REJECTED AND SOUGHT TO CHANGE. THE ANSWER IS TO BE FOUND IN THE REDEEMING WORK OF JESUS CHRIST. IT IS TO BE FOUND IN THE GOSPEL.

Listen again to Romans 1:16, 17.

A homosexual will often be looking for help. The only help of which we do not need to be ashamed is THE GOSPEL. Christ sets men free. He died to deliver us from the penalty of sin, but He also died (as Romans teaches us) to deliver us from sin's dominion, its tyranny, its bondage. Man is totally depraved, unable to change, but God sends forth His Word, and with His Word, He bestows saving faith. Therefore, if this is your problem, flee to God at once. Turn to Christ. Take shelter in His grace and in His mercy. Only by His redeeming blood can you be forgiven. Only in Christ is there hope.

May God grant that many who are held in the grip of this sin will turn to Christ today, and be saved. Repent of your sin, and believe in Christ.

And may it be a warning to everyone of the dreadful consequences of turning our backs upon God and the revelations that He has made of Himself.

THE WORKS OF A REPROBATE MIND
Romans 1:28-32

Intro: John Brown, who was both a pastor and a professor in Scotland in the 1800's, wrote in 1857,

The details in the latter part of the first chapter (of Romans) of the downward course of mankind, are absolutely frightful, and we might have been apt to suspect the apostle of exaggeration, were there not abundant evidence, in the pages of contemporary pagan (or, secular) literature, that the darkest features of the picture are drawn from life (p. 14).

We could say the same thing. It would seem that the Apostle Paul is overstating the case until we look at the character of human life today throughout the world. This is the Holy Spirit's portrait of the human heart, and human experience confirms that it is true. We all must confess that this is a picture of our hearts. This is the Biblical doctrine of TOTAL DEPRAVITY. You may call it by any other name that you like, but this is what it amounts to.

One thing that we can all be thankful for, for ourselves, as well as for others -- and it is this: That God never does allow any person to go to the full extent of his depraved nature. But we all, either in thought, or in word, or in action, or in all three, have been able to see that the Apostle Paul is teaching that which is absolutely true of human nature and of human experience.

Now he is not doing this because he simply wants to run man into the ground, or because he likes to dwell on this subject. He is doing it to make us realize the depth of our need. He wants us to see that we cannot solve the problem which has literally consumed us. But he does want us to see the reason for the problem, the nature of the problem, and, most of all, the solution, God's solution for the problem.

If Romans 1 is true (and there is no doubt about that), then we must realize that, when we talk about all of the problems that face us on a world-wide scale today, we are talking about symptoms of the ^{real} problem, but not the real problem. We hear about inflation, about our sagging economy, about unemployment, about broken homes, about crime, about the possibility of war in the Middle East and other places. But all of these are either the evidences of the real problem, or they are they judgment of God upon us because of our immorality, our sin -- because of the way that we are displeasing and despising Him. He is not going to continue to bless people when they dishonor Him! He often blesses us in spite of our sin, but He is not going to keep on doing that forever. Our problem is sin, and all sin is traceable to one place: the human heart. Listen to what the Lord

Jesus Christ said on one occasion when He was here on earth. You will find it in Matthew 15:19, 20a:

For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things that defile a man . . .

— About 600 years before Christ the prophet Jeremiah had this to say:

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? (Jer. 17:9).

And then he answered his question with these words:

I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings (Jer. 17:10).

Let me go back even farther -- to Moses, writing about the times both before and after the great flood by which the Lord destroyed all but eight people. Before the flood he said,

And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually (Gen. 6:5).

After the flood Moses recorded the words of the Lord when He said,

I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth (Gen. 8:21).

— So what Paul is saying is not new; it is as old as the Garden of Eden. Sin has been man's problem ever since man first disobeyed God -- and it is our #1 problem today.

But let me get to my text. Let us see more about how the problem of sin has been aggravated by man. Paul is getting more and more specific, but the first thing that he does in our text for today is to repeat a point that he has made before in this chapter. And it has to do with

I. MAN'S REJECTION OF GOD.

Now please keep in mind that this does not have to do with the origin of sin. Paul will get to that later. But it has to do with the evidence of sin in our hearts.

How does he say it? Look at verse 28: "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge . . ."

— This means that man recognizes what he knows of God through his conscience, through what he can see in creation, and through his observance of divine providence in the operation of the world, tests it in various ways, AND DECIDES THAT HE WANTS NOTHING TO DO WITH GOD.

Now it may not be that cut and dried in every case, but that

is the conclusion of the heart of man in every case! Man does not want to have anything to do with God.

The word for "knowledge" here is the word, full knowledge, meaning that even when a man has never read the Bible, nor heard preaching, so that he knows nothing of Christ, he still turns his back on a tremendous amount of knowledge concerning God!

This is our problem today. Men do not want to hear about the God of creation, the God of providence, Who is the God of the Bible, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. They do not want to have anything to do with him. They are too busy doing what they want to do, going where they want to go, being what they want to be.

And the price for this attitude toward God is tremendously high -- as our text also indicates.

Note in the second place,

II. GOD'S JUDGMENT OF MAN (Rom. 1:28b).

Now I am not talking about the final judgment, about eternal judgment. That will come also. But I am talking about a present judgment -- a judgment that is being felt throughout this world on this very day! It is expressed in these words: "God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient."

This is the third time we have had this statement: "God gave them over . . ." How dreadful! And yet, as I have said, we can be thankful that He has not given us completely over. This statement contains in it the truth that God is the One Who stands sovereignly in control of all of man's sinning. Some go farther in sin than others, but the potential is there for all of us. The greater man's rejection, the more he is given over to sinning.

What is "a reprobate mind"? *First of all, it is the kind of a mind that everyone has. But God has restrained it.*

It is a disapproving mind -- a mind that disapproves of God and of the ways of God. It is a mind which is hardened to do "those things which are not convenient." What are they? They are the things that are completely unreasonable in view of the fact that there is a God. They are things that no man in his right mind would do UNLESS he could be absolutely sure that there is no God!

But there is a God! And so it means that a person who lives like Paul describes in verses 29 through 32 is a person who has departed from all sound reasoning. God has given him

over to a life devoid of all reasonable thought. This person may be brilliant in other areas, but not when it comes to God. He rejects God, and so moves deeper and deeper into sin as a judgment from God.

Will you notice that in moving from sins of the body in verses 26, 27, we come in our text for today to sins of the mind -- "a reprobate mind"?

The word for "mind" means not only that man cannot think straight about the things of God, that he has no capacity for the things of God, but also that he has a positive inclination toward evil things. He has this by nature, and it is intensified the more he rejects God, and the truth of God, which he knows in his own heart.

So you see how deeply involved man is in sin.

But now let us move on to look at

III. THE DETAILS OF GOD'S JUDGMENT. (See pp. (6) and (7) of notes.)

Here I come to my theme: THE WORKS OF A REPROBATE MIND.

I do not have the time to define each one for you. Most of them need no definition. Their meaning is clear in most instances. But be sure to notice that these come from "a reprobate mind," from a heart that has rejected God.

There are actually two groups as we can see from the way in which the Apostle Paul has presented them -- and they are indicated by his use of the words, "Being filled," and, "full" -- both of which are in verse 29.

These words suggest in the words of William G. T. Shedd, "that the sins mentioned are not shallow and superficial, but deep and central" (p. 31). These are sins which have consumed the heart of man, sins which hold man helplessly in bondage, sins from which he cannot deliver himself. These are sins which leave a permanent mark upon society in every generation!

It would also seem that "Being filled" and "full" could be used with all of the sins which follow them. So we would have, "Being filled with all unrighteousness,
with all fornication,
with all wickedness, etc.

And the word "all" indicates all kinds of.

The second group beginning with "full of envy" is more specific; the first group being more general in nature.

Some of the sins mentioned here are violations of some of the

Ten Commandments: "covetness . . . murder . . . deceit . . . haters of God . . . disobedient to parents . . . without natural affection . . ."

Some show man's exalted opinion of himself: "proud, boast-ers."

Some show how selfish man is, and how untrustworthy especially when it is to his advantage to be otherwise: "covenant-breakers, implacable, unmerciful."

Some show man's violence toward his fellow man -- in the use of his tongue as well as in employing more violent means: "envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, back-biters," etc.

But, finally, let me point out what we have in the last verse:

IV. THE UTTER INCONSISTENCY OF MAN.

"The judgment of God" to which he refers here is:

- 1) Not the eternal judgment,
 - 2) Not the judgment of giving men "a reprobate mind,"
- BUT IT IS THE KNOWLEDGE (lit., knowing full well) THAT GOD HAS DECLARED THAT ALL OF THE ABOVE ARE EVIL, THAT NONE OF THEM IS GOOD. Man knows this.

Not only do they know that such things are wrong, but they will often establish laws which impose the penalty of death upon their citizens who do such things -- saying that they "are worthy of death"!

And yet, as we so often see, those who are responsible to enforce the laws will not only break them themselves, but "take pleasure in them that do them."

Sin has not only defiled men, and made it impossible for them to control their own lives, but it has made man absolutely inconsistent with the knowledge that he possesses of things that are right and wrong in the sight of God!

Concl: Can you picture any more of a hopeless situation? Man rejects the truth because of the sinfulness of his heart, and God judges his rejection with greater sin. Man not only cannot get out, but he doesn't want out!

And remember that every word that Paul was writing here was a stinging indictment of Roman life!

What is the answer? Paul is leading up to it in the latter part of chapter 3, but he has already told us in Rom. 1:1-6 and then in verses 14-17. Christ is the only Saviour. There is no hope apart from Him. Cf. Rom. 6:23.

Definitions of the sins mentioned in Romans 1:29-31:The general category:

- 1) "All unrighteousness" -- Some take this as the heading for the whole list, but others link it with verse 18 and take it as meaning all forms of injustice, especially those which one person will do against others. It consists of that which is contrary to God, that which displeases him.
- 2) "Fornication" -- Although this is not in some MSS, it surely has a place here, referring to any and all violations of the Seventh Commandment.
- 3) "Wickedness" -- A general term for all forms of evil, the inclination to "practise and take pleasure in vicious and unprofitable actions" (Haldane, p. 67).
- 4) "Covetousness" -- Used in a general sense here for the inclination that man has to take advantage of others, to win in a bargain, to get all that he can for himself and to defraud, if necessary, to do it. This sin is often linked with the grossest of other sins. See Commandment #10.
- 5) "Maliciousness" -- This is the tendency to injure and to take revenge for wrongs done. The injury can be inflicted in a verbal way as well as physically.

The particular category:

- 1) "Envy" -- Illustrated by Cain, who did not want what Abel had, but he did not want Abel to have it. It is the parent of the next sin.
- 2) "Murder" -- A violation of the Sixth Commandment. It is a form of "maliciousness" above.
- 3) "Debate" -- Strife, quarreling, contention, a form of "envy" over what Shedd calls, "creature-good," i.e., created things. This is verbal, stopping short of murder.
- 4) "Deceit" -- Cf. Rom. 3:13. This is behind all that Satan does, and is a characteristic of man's sinful nature. This is a violation of the Ninth Commandment.
- 5) "Malignity" -- " . . . a desire to hurt others without any other reason than that of doing evil to them, and finding pleasure in their sufferings" (Haldane, p. 67). Trench also says (p. 40) that it is the tendency to put the worst meaning on the actions of others, charging them with the worst possible motives.
- 6) "Whisperers" -- Slandering another in secret, in private, as opposed to publicly. He wants to stir up trouble and to cause division without the accused knowing where the opposition is coming from.
- 7) "Backbiters" -- The public form of whispering. He will scandalize a person to his face, downgrading him.

- 8) "Haters of God" -- See Rom. 3:18; 8:7. This takes the form of violating any one of the first four commandments. "They hate His holiness, His justice, His sovereignty, and even His mercy in the way in which it is vouchsafed" (Haldane, p. 69). They also hate His people. They hate everything about God including all His ways.
- 9) "Despiteful" -- The person who insults and seeks to disgrace others just for the pleasure that he gets out of it. It includes contempt, insolence.
- 10) "Proud" -- The tendency in every heart to puff ourselves up, considering that we are better than anyone else. It includes the tendency to stay away from people because we feel that we are better than they are.

This is Satan's sin. Cf. 1 Tim. 3:6. God has gone on record that He hates it.
- 11) "Boasters" -- "An empty pretender" (Thayer, p. 25). The person who even boasts about that which he does not have, combining pride with deceit.
- 12) "Inventors of evil things" -- The person who is just looking for evil things that he can do. It shows how distorted the human heart is.
- 13) "Disobedient to parents" -- A violation of the Fifth Commandment. As with all of these other sins, this is a duty that is implanted in the hearts of all.
- 14) "Without understanding" -- The person "who is incapable of lending an ear to wise counsel" (Godet, p. 111). It speaks of man as undiscerning concerning the things of God. Cf. Rom. 1:21, says Shedd.
- 15) "Covenantbreakers" -- A person who will break an agreement once it is made, a violation of the Ninth Commandment, and also of the Eighth (against stealing).
- 16) "Without natural affection" -- Whenever you see a mother turn against a child, or a child against its parents, or a father leaving his family. It means that human beings will not love those whom you would expect them to love, a trait rarely seen among animals, or lower creatures.
- 17) "Implacable" -- Not in some MSS. It speaks of a person at war with someone else, who refuses to make peace. He is different from the covenantbreaker in that he will not enter into any covenant. He will not be reconciled to his enemy.
- 18) "Unmerciful" -- The person who does not respond to human need. Instead, he may inflict more suffering rather than to relieve any.

THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT OF GOD
Romans 2:1-11

Intro: Paul, in Romans 1:18 to 3:20, is like a prosecuting attorney. He progressively presents his case. He develops it with unanswerable arguments until he reaches the conclusion in Romans 3:19, 20. It is twofold:

- 1) That all the world is guilty before God.
- 2) That man is unable to do anything about it.

Up to the point where we come today in chapter 2, the Apostle has done three things:

- 1) He has shown how God has made Himself known to all men.
- 2) He has indicated that man has rejected that revelation, and has refused to glorify God as God.
- 3) He has then taught that God has given man over to the sinfulness that is in his own heart. God has removed much of His restraint so that man has been given over to more and more sinning.

He does not indicate that every man sins to the same extent, but that all men do sin, all men are guilty, and, therefore, all men are under the wrath of God!

However, as we come to chapter 2, Paul anticipates an objection from those who do not want to be classed with those who have fallen into gross sin. They feel that they are excused from the judgment which others will receive. They have never:

- 1) Committed adultery, or any kind of fornication.
- 2) Been arrested for stealing anything.
- 3) Killed anyone.
- 4) Led in a campaign of any kind against God.
- 5) Left their parents in great need, or despised any of their relatives.
- 6) Been known as hard-hearted or vicious in their treatment of other people.

In short, they are quite respectable and do not feel that they should be classed with those who are obviously guilty in the eyes of men.

But, what they do not realize is that Paul is not ^{just} speaking of the full extent of any of these sins, but of any evidence of it whatsoever -- even in the thoughts of a person! Paul would ask:

- 1) Have you ever experienced lust in your heart?
- 2) Have you ever wanted anything so much that you were not satisfied until you had it?
- 3) Have you ever been jealous of what others have?
- 4) Have you ever deceived anyone? Have you ever lied? Have you ever led people to believe something that was not really true?
- 5) Have you always obeyed your parents? Have you never felt any resentment in your heart toward them?

- 6) Have you never been proud? Did you ever brag about anything, or feel that you were better than some other person?
- 7) Have you ever done things that you are sorry for now?
- 8) Have you been stubborn when you knew that you were wrong, but you would not admit it?
- 9) Have you ever tried to get anybody else into trouble?
- 10) Did you ever gossip about anybody, hoping that you would get them into trouble?
- 11) And what about God -- have you always and in every circumstance, loved Him, and obeyed Him, because you wanted to glorify Him? Have you never taken His Name in vain?

The person who can read over the sins of verses 29 through 31 and say, "I am not guilty," is not paying much attention to what he is reading! THERE IS NOT A PERSON LIVING WHO IS NOT CONDEMNED BY MORE THAN ONE OF THOSE SINS, EVEN THOUGH HE MAY NOT BE GUILTY OF ALL IN THE EXTREME MEANING OF THE TERMS. You may not have killed anyone, but you have been mad enough to wish that they were dead -- and that is the very feeling from which murder comes and you are guilty because of the thought. Your punishment may not be as great as if you had actually murdered, but you are guilty of sin nevertheless.

So in this passage in Romans 2:1-11, Paul is dealing with the person, whether Jew or Gentile, who compares himself with others, and feels that he is not so bad, and therefore not deserving of divine judgment. And so Paul sets out to show that he is under judgment, too.

Some men will readily admit that they are sinners; others want to side-step the accusation. In order to bring them to admit their sin, Paul points out in this passage, first:

I. ^{SOME} ~~THE~~ MISTAKES ~~SOME~~ MEN MAKE.

Let me point out several things throughout these 11 verses.

- A. Sinful men are always inclined to underestimate GOD.
See verse 2.

Notice the expression, "the judgment of God is according to truth." What does that mean? It means that God will judge, not according to the way we make things appear to be, but as they really are!

He will strip the mask from the hypocrite. He will bring to light things that men have kept secret. He will show the one who has been fooling himself, and fooling others, that he has never fooled God -- not for a moment!

Read Romans 2:16. Read also 1 Sam. 16:7,
... for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man

looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord
looketh on the heart.

Read also Heb. 4:13,

Neither is there any creature that is not manifest
in his sight: but all things are naked and opened
unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

Or Psalm 139:12,

Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the
night shineth as the day: the darkness and the
light are both alike to thee.

Daniel said (Dan. 2:22),

. . . he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the
light dwelleth with him.

The Bible teaches not only that God will judge, but that
He will judge righteously. There is nothing, not even
the thought that we have kept to ourselves, which we can
hide from God.

Man's failure to recognize this about God is one of the
biggest mistakes he ever makes.

But closely parallel with that is another mistake:

- B. Sinful men feel that things are going to be the way they
have figured them out.

Solomon said,

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man,
but the end thereof are the ways of death
(Prov. 14:12).

Note the word, "thinkest," in Rom. 1:3. This means that
this man who is seeking to show why he will not be judged
as others has reached his conclusion as a result of his
own careful thinking!

But he does not realize that God said long ago, ". . .
my thoughts are not your thoughts"! Neither does he
realize that sin has made God's wisdom "foolishness" to
him, the sinner. Cf. 1 Cor. 2:14. Neither does he know
that when he thinks thoughts that are contrary to the
Word of God, it doesn't make any difference what he
thinks, or how he has reached his conclusions; he is
wrong!

And yet men will treat their own conclusions as though
they were infallible. Cf. Rom. 1:21-25, 28.

But there is a third mistake men make:

- C. Sinful men mistake the meaning of God's blessings.

Man says, "Look! I am enjoying life. I have good health. I have a good wife and family. I have a lovely home. I have a prosperous business. I have all the conveniences anyone could possibly want, and I have money for retirement. I have lots of friends. Surely God can't be too displeased with me when I see so many others who do not have what I have. I must be doing something right!"

What has that man done?

He has misinterpreted "the goodness of God."

Calvin says two very interesting and true things about this verse. He says that all of the blessings we have from God are designed to show us that they come from God, and, secondly, they are designed to cause us to expect mercy from God concerning our sins.

But man in his sin takes them as meaning that he already has God's approval the way he is. He evidently has forgotten, if he ever knew, that God makes the rain to fall on the just and the unjust alike. See Matt. 5:45.

So his thoughts in this area are wrong, too.

But look for a moment at a fourth mistake:

- D. Sinful man thinks that it makes a difference to God that we are who we are.

But see verse 11.

What do the Scriptures mean by the word, "persons"?

It means that we are inclined to think that it makes a difference to God, that it gives us special favor with Him, if

- 1) We are of a certain nationality.
 - 2) We live in a particular country.
 - 3) We belong to a certain family.
 - 4) We have social status.
 - 5) We possess wealth and lands.
 - 6) We have certain gifts and abilities.
 - 7) We have made outstanding achievements.
 - 8) We are in a position of special authority.
- And on and on we could go.

The Apostle Paul is an outstanding example of the fact that, when it comes to salvation, none of these things are worth the breath that it takes to say them. Note his comment in Phil. 3:7-9, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted lose for Christ. . ."

Where does all of this leave us then?

Well, it should help us to understand where we have been wrong about this most important of all subjects, and what the truth is about them. But it should also open our hearts to other things that we must believe. Let me mention some of them, things which also are found in our text.

II. THE TRUTH WE MUST BELIEVE.

The things which I have been dealing with, **THE MISTAKES SOME MEN MAKE**, has given us some of the truth, but now I want to point out several other things in the passage.

Before I do, let me call your attention to the opening words of verse 2: "But we are sure . . ."

James Stifler in his commentary on Romans says that this expression means that this "requires no proof" (p. 37). Paul is speaking by divine revelation, not according to his own finite knowledge. And this applies to the whole passage, and to the whole book. He knows it, and is sure of it, because it is the Word of God. That is what he meant by that expression, "we are sure"!

What was he "sure" of? What did he believe, and what must we believe?

- A. That every man is inexcusable before God where sin is concerned. See v. 1.

It is written on our foreheads in the sight of God; it is stamped upon every human heart: "INEXCUSABLE."
This is just another way of saying, GUILTY!

- B. That a day of judgment is coming.

See verse 2, 3, 5, 6.

- C. That continued rejection of Christ will only lead to greater judgment.

This is the point that Paul is making in verse 5. The more light you have, and the longer you delay, the more you refuse to believe God, the greater will be your judgment. Judgment is inevitable, but it will be worse because men have been hard and impenitent.

- D. That God's judgment will be on the basis of our works.

See verses 6 through 11.

But here a word of explanation is necessary. IS PAUL

TEACHING THAT, IF WE ARE TO BE SAVED FROM DIVINE JUDGMENT, WE WILL BE SAVED BY OUR WORKS?

Absolutely not! Keep in mind Romans 1:16, 17. We are not saved by what we do; we are saved by what Christ has done for us.

What does he mean then?

He means that our lives manifest what we are!

But is that not what this "man" (vv. 1, 3) has been saying -- that his life shows that he should not be judged?

Yes, that is what he has been saying, but if you will read verse 8 carefully you will see that this "man's" basis of thinking has been all wrong. He has been judging on the basis of his own conclusions; the right basis by which he should be judging his life is "the truth," the Word of God, the revelation that God has given to us in the Bible. The man who lives in obedience to the Word of God does so because he is saved -- not in order to save himself. He cannot obey such a book without having been changed in his heart by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Notice that the people who will escape the wrath of God are spoken of in vv. 7 and 10. The people who will suffer the eternal judgment of God are mentioned in vv. 8 and 9.

And this has nothing to do with whether a person is a Jew or a Gentile. "For there is no respect of persons with God." Or, to borrow a statement from later on in this book of Romans,

For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever will call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved (Rom. 10:12, 13).

Concl: You see, my dear friend, it is folly and disaster of the worst kind to think that you will not face God in judgment, that you are not at this very moment under the judgment of God IF you are without Christ.

But I have good news for you. Christ died for sinners. He suffered the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God. There is forgiveness and salvation for you if you will trust in Jesus Christ. He is your own only hope. May God in His grace move upon your heart and impart to you that saving faith which can only be found in Him.

THE LAW AND THE JUDGMENT OF GOD
Romans 2:12-16

Intro: Paul's subject in Romans from chapter 1, verse 18, to chapter 3, verse 20, is the wrath of God.

At the very outset of the passage on the wrath of God, he gives us the three reasons for the wrath of God against men -- all men. See Romans 1:18. They are:

- 1) "All ungodliness," i.e., man's rejection of God and of all that is godly. Man rejects the true God (even though he may manufacture many gods to his own liking), and he rejects everything that is designed to make him be like God.
- 2) "All . . . unrighteousness," which in this context points to his treatment of others. Man not only refuses to be what he should be before God, but he rejects the divine standards for human conduct.
- 3) Man's rejection of the truth of God. He holds it down. He suppresses it. He will not submit himself to it. He hinders it -- and all of this through continuing in that which is unrighteous before God!

From this Paul proceeds to show how God has revealed Himself. In other words, he shows the truth about God that man is determined to repress.

And then, as a result of that rejection, Paul shows in the latter part of chapter 1 how God has given man over to his sin, and we have that ugly picture of man and the depths to which the sin in his heart has taken him.

With the beginning of chapter 2 we see some of the main ways in which man tries to excuse himself -- and this applies to all men because it is not until we get into our text for this service that Paul begins to distinguish between the Jews and the Gentiles.

Man tries to to justify himself by blaming others.

But Paul will not let him get by with this since every man does the same kind of things -- things sinful in God's sight.

And then when man tries to point out how well things are going with him, Paul responds by saying that God's goodness is designed to bring man to repentance, not to make him feel that he is right with God. And, furthermore, Paul adds, the more a man resists repentance, the greater his judgment will be.

At this point Paul points out that there is one thing that counts with God: man's deeds! Those who seek for eternal life will escape judgment; those who do not, will be judged. And in this it makes no difference whether a person is a Jew or a Gentile

"for there is no respect of persons with God."

And this brings us to our text for today. Now Paul does begin to deal with Jew vs. Gentile because he anticipates that each will object to the statement that "there is no respect of persons with God."

How does the Jew object? How does he feel better than the Gentile?

Because he has the Law! And this is his reason for thinking that he will not be in the same category as the Gentile. After all, did not God's dealing with Israel, and the fact that God gave Israel the Law, not mean that He favored the Jews?

We will see Paul's answer to that in a minute.

But what about the Gentile -- why did he feel safe from judgment?

It was because he did not have the Law! Surely this would mean that God would be more lenient and forgiving toward Gentiles because Gentiles did not have the light that the Jews were given.

All of this brings us to Paul's statement of

I. THE TRUTH REGARDING JUDGMENT (Rom. 2:12).

This is the Word of God. This is the revelation which Paul had from God. It is meant to silence every excuse, and to make all men realize that there is no escape from judgment.

In the first part of the 12th verse Paul is speaking of the Gentiles; in the latter part, about the Jews.

This is a verse which forever settles the question, Are the heathen really lost? Or, to state it another way, What about the people who have never heard of Christ; are they under the wrath of God?

Now we may not like what I am about to read, and we may have questions about it, but let me reiterate, this is the Word of God, and so it is true whether we like it or not, and it is true whether we believe it or not. Some people feel that all they have to do to nullify Scripture is to say, "I don't believe it!" But that makes no difference. The truth of God's Word is not dependent upon our acceptance of it.

(Read verse 12.)

What does verse 12 teach us? It teaches us that there is no difference between the Jew and the Gentile with respect to the judgment of God -- that "there is no respect of persons

with God." That is the reason that Paul began verse 12 with the word, "For."

Those who do not have the Law "shall . . . perish," and those who "have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law." The first statement has to do with Gentiles; the latter part with the Jews.

Let me say it again: This is the Word of God, and so this is the truth. To believe anything else is to be self-deceived.

Paul is not saying that all Jews and Gentiles are lost. But he is saying that the Gentile who goes on sinning because he thinks he has a good excuse is going to find out, to his eternal loss, that he is condemned! And, likewise -- the Jew who thinks that he is going to escape the wrath of God because he is a Jew, and because he has the Law, is going to learn to his own dismay, that he will suffer the same eternal judgment which the Gentile is under.

Please do not argue with this statement in verse 12. I say again -- this is the truth of God!

But now look at this passage.

The KJV is very accurate here -- much to be preferred to the NASB, and even preferable to the NIV.

The KJ indicates that verse 13-15 are parenthetical -- that the statement of verse 12 is completed in verse 16. Verse 12 states that Gentiles and Jews are under the judgment of God, under the wrath of God; verse 16 tell us when that judgment will be executed, and who the judge will be. But in between these two verses, in verses 13-15, we have the proof of the statement which Paul has made in verse 12.

Let us examine these next three verses and learn

II. THE PROOF OF PAUL'S STATEMENT (Rom. 2:13-15).

In verse 13 he is obviously speaking of the Jews; in verses 14 and 15, of the Gentiles.

A. Concerning the Jews (v. 13).

To be "the hearers of the law" means at least two things:

- 1) That you have the Law.
- 2) That you know the Law.

And this was as far as they could go.

They might be "doers of the law" up to a point, but that

was not sufficient. To be saved by the Law a Jew's obedience had to be perfect!

Listen to James 2:10:

For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

Add to that this verse found in Ecclesiastes 7:20:

For there is not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.

Looking ahead in Romans we come to the 3rd chapter, and verse 23,

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

In Psalm 14, Psalm 53, and Romans 3:10 we read,

There is none righteous, no, not one,
or that
there is none that doeth good.

So every Jew must recognize that what Paul discovered in his own case was also true for every Jew:

And the commandment, which was ordained to life,
I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion
by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew
me.

So we must conclude that the very Law by which the Jew claimed exemption and salvation, was his condemnation! Instead of justifying him, it judged him worthy of the wrath of God! In order to be saved by the Law, he had to keep the Law perfectly. But this he could not do!

What about the Gentile?

B. Concerning the Gentiles (vv. 14, 15).

Is he excused because he does not have the Law? NO!
But why? Because, by his actions, he shows that God's Law has been written on his heart!

How does he do this?

In three ways:

- 1) Because in his religious practices he recognizes that man should worship God. He may be confused and ignorant as to who God is, but not about worship!
- 2) Because in the Gentile governments of the world, leaders:
 - a) Punish wrongdoers.
 - b) Praise and reward those who do right.

And the amazing thing is that the wrongs and rights are those taught in the Law that was given to the Jews.

Throughout the Gentile world it is wrong to lie, to steal, to commit adultery, to dishonor parents, and so on. These standards are:

- 1) "Written in their hearts."
- 2) "Their conscience also bearing witness."
- 3) And in their reasonings, their judgments, their decisions, they either accuse or excuse, depending upon whether or not the principles of God's laws have been violated.

Therefore, the Gentile has no excuse. He stands condemned along with the Jew because no Gentile has a perfect record either. All of those verse about the Law and the Jew apply equally to the Gentile.

How can we apply these statements to those of us who are here today, and to those who are listening on the radio?

We can do it like this:

- 1) Think how many people there are, both Jews and Gentiles, who think that, because they have a Bible, and because they know the Law and the Gospel, are right with God. It makes one heartsick to realize that there are going to be many people in hell who know the facts of the Gospel as well as the angels do, but have never really taken shelter in the righteousness of Christ. Oh, if you have any doubt at all in your heart concerning your relationship to God, ask God Himself to show you if you are a true believer in Christ, or just one who is trying to act the part of a Christian.

But others who are listening to this message may need a another kind of a warning:

- 2) Are you so blinded to your own need that you think that you will be accepted into heaven on the basis of your own supposedly good record?

Let me ask you just one question -- and your salvation may hinge on whether or not you answer this question truthfully. Here it is: Have you always lived up to standards which you know to be right -- your own standards, if you please? Do you know where your standards have come from? They have been written in your heart by God Himself. And failure on one point renders you GUILTY BEFORE GOD!

Let me hasten to add this: It is not your failure to abide by the Law of God that makes you guilty; it is that failure that proves you are guilty. You were born in sin, born under the judgment of God. But God has given His Law, written in tables of stone for Israel, and written also in the heart of every Jew and Gentile, to prove that God has no reason to respect any person because we are all guilty before Him!

One thing remains in our text:

III. THE TIME AND THE JUDGE (Rom. 2:16).

Two things will forever doom a sinner to eternal hell:

- 1) Death.
- 2) The arrival of "the day" of judgment.

The only thing that you and I can be sure of in connection with either of these is that they are most certainly coming.

Note what Paul says about

A. The time of the judgment.

Here he merely says, "In the day . . ."

Let me read a verse to you from Paul's sermon on Mars' hill in Athens which says just what this verse says, only it is more specific. It is Acts 17:31:

Because he (God) hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained (Christ); whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

Do you know that the day of judgment has already been set? But God has not revealed to us when that will be -- just that it has been "appointed." The same is true of your death and mine. God knows when it will be, but he hasn't told you, and He hasn't told me. But it is set. And Paul said, speaking by the Holy Spirit, that the proof that He has already appointed that day is to be seen in the resurrection of Christ.

Acts 17:31 would be a good text for Easter Sunday, wouldn't it? But people who only go to church once a year, and that on Easter Sunday, do not realize that they come to remember the event which may have sealed their doom.

One other thing:

B. The judge.

Who will he be? "God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ."

When the Lord Jesus was on earth He said this:

For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the

Father which hath sent him.
These words are found in John 5:22, 23.

But how do you honor the Son? The Lord answered that question in the next verse: John 5:24,

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation (or, judgment); but is passed from death unto life.

The Greek says so beautifully, out of death, into life!

Concl: What does this all mean?

It means what Paul said earlier in Romans 1:20, and then in 2:1: ALL MEN ARE WITHOUT EXCUSE. All are under divine judgment. The Jew cannot be accepted because he is a Jew and has the Law, because he has not kept the Law. The Gentile cannot plead ignorance of the Law because God has written it upon his heart. All, both Jews and Gentiles, are guilty before God. Nobody has an excuse that will stand up before the bar of God. And then, when God begins to "judge the secrets of men," their guilt will be more obvious than ever before.

Paul says that all of this is "according to my gospel" -- not his because he originated it, but his because he was commissioned by God to proclaim it.

Is your hope for salvation in Christ? If not, then you are trusting in a false hope. Actually you have no hope. There is no hope but in Christ. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). He died for sinners. He was raised from the dead and is now seated at the right hand of God as proof that His work has satisfied God.

May you be able to say, as Paul said in Galatians 2:16,
Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

May God be pleased to save any who hear my voice today, any who are not saved, but turning them in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST
in the Book of Romans

Scripture Reading: Luke 24:1-12; John 20:19-29.

Text: Selected passages from Romans.

Intro: It is a great privilege to be able to speak to you about the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our only hope for salvation is founded upon the doctrines of the death and resurrection of Christ.

It is going to simply my message considerably to be able to speak to you about the resurrection of Christ from the book of Romans. I say that because it is a doctrine which runs through the New Testament, in one way or another related to all of the NT books, and taught specifically in many of them.

The resurrection of the coming Messiah is also taught in the OT in such passages as Psalm 16:9, 10.

So to limit myself to one portion of the Word of God is really a necessity, and that portion for today will be the book of Romans!

But I want, at the outset, to make it clear that I am speaking of an actual, historical event -- the physical, bodily resurrection of our Lord.

I am not saying, as many preachers do when they speak of Christ's resurrection, of some sentimental way in which He lives in the hearts, or in the memories, of His followers. Nor am I speaking of a Christ Who did not really die, and Who later was revived. I am not speaking of any of the many ways in which men try to explain away the actual resurrection of Christ in history. The Bible makes it very clear that Jesus Christ really died, and that He was really raised again from the dead! No other interpretation of Scripture does justice to the Word of God.

But I want to say another thing about the actual resurrection of Christ before we begin to examine the passages in Romans which speak of His resurrection -- although this also is taken from Romans. It is this: The resurrection of Jesus Christ was different from all other resurrections that preceded His, and of all the others that are recorded in the NT after He was raised from the dead. And here is the verse which teaches us what the difference was: Romans 6:9,

Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

The widow's son whom Elijah raised from the dead, died again (1 Kings 17:17-24). Elisha raised the son of the Shunammite, but he died again (2 Kings 4:18-37). The dead man who was raised when he was put into Elisha's sepulchre, died again (2 Kings 13:20, 21). In the NT it is recorded that the Lord raised three

from the dead: the son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11-18), Jairus' daughter (Matt. 9:18, 19, 23-26), and Lazarus (John 11:1-46). But they all died again. When the Lord died on the cross, many were raised from the dead (Matt. 17:50-53). But they died again. Peter raised Dorcas from the dead (Acts 9:36-43), but she died again. It may have been that Paul died at Lystra when he was stoned by the Jews (Acts 14:1, 20), but he certainly died again. And Eutychus was raised by Paul (Acts 20:6-12), but he died again also.

How do we know?

For two reasons:

- 1) Because Christ is "the firstborn from the dead" (Col. 1:18), "the firstfruits" (1 Cor. 15:23). No one could have been raised, never to die again, before He was raised. But, you say, what about Dorcas, and Eutychus, and possibly Paul, who were raised after He was raised?

My answer to that question also is found in 1 Cor. 15:23, But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.

Since Christ has not yet come, no one has been raised as He was raised.

So I want you to keep these two things in mind: When I speak of the resurrection of Christ, I am speaking of:

- 1) An historical fact: the actual physical resurrection of Christ.
- 2) A unique fact: He was raised never to die again!

But now let us turn to Romans to see at least some of the things that we are taught about the resurrection of Christ, that is, some of the other great truths that are bound up in the fact that Christ was raised from the dead. It would also follow that, if Christ were not raised from the dead, then we do not have any assurance at all of the things I am about to mention.

I. CHRIST'S RESURRECTION CONFIRMS HIS DEITY (Rom. 1:4).

(Read Rom. 1:1, 3, 4.)

This is why a lot of people do not want to admit that He was really raised from the dead: They do not want to have to admit that He was more than a man -- that He was, and is, the Son of God.

When Peter was preaching on the Day of Pentecost, recorded for us in Acts 2, he said that it was not possible that Christ would have been held by death because David prophesied in Psalm 16 that He would be raised -- and the Scriptures cannot be wrong! But Paul gives us another reason: He could

not remain in the grave because He was the Son of God! And His resurrection gives us the greatest of all proofs of that eternal truth!

II. CHRIST'S RESURRECTION ASSURES OUR JUSTIFICATION (Rom. 4: 24, 25).

What if we had no evidence that Christ had been raised from the dead?

We would have no evidence that God was satisfied with the work of His Son, and that Christ had actually provided salvation for us. For all we would know, the death of Christ would have meant no more for our salvation than the death of John the Baptist.

But He was raised, and we do have that assurance.

The Lord was touching on this very truth in the Upper Room Discourse (although it was spoken on the way to Gethsemane), when He said,

And when he (the Spirit) is come, he will reprove the world . . . of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more (John 16:8a, 10).

The fact that Jesus Christ was raised is proof that our Lord actually put away sin, that God was satisfied, and so He was raised because everything necessary for our justification had been completed.

And notice that Paul says here, "was raised again," indicating that the emphasis here is that He was raised by God. (See Rom. 4:25; 8:11).

III. CHRIST'S RESURRECTION TEACHES US THREE IMPORTANT TRUTHS RELATED TO OUR SALVATION.

It teaches us actually more than three, and there are more than three in Romans, but I want to group three under this heading.

- A. The resurrection of Christ teaches us that, as believers, we are to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4, 5).

This is because of our union with Christ in His death and in His resurrection. It is inconceivable that we should be so vitally connected with Christ, and then live as we did before He became our Saviour!

- B. The resurrection of Christ teaches us that our salvation is eternal (Rom. 6:8-10).

If we "live with him," how long will we live? As long as

He lives!

Thus, it is important to see that, according to the book of Romans, Jesus Christ will never die again!

- C. The resurrection of Christ teaches us that our bodies will be raised, too, and glorified (Rom. 8:11).

See also Rom. 8:18-23.

Cf. Phil. 3:20, 21.

The last two points also have to do with our salvation, but I want to deal with them separately.

- IV. CHRIST'S RESURRECTION MADE POSSIBLE HIS PRESENT MINISTRY IN HEAVEN (Rom. 8:34).

There is more to this verse than at first we might realize.

But it means that, if Christ has not been raised, there would have been no ascension. He would not now be seated at the Father's right hand. We would not have His intercessory work in heaven. The book of Hebrews could not have been written. We would have no Forerunner there. We would be without hope. And, finally, the words of John 14:1-3 could never have been spoken.

You would have to give up Heb. 7:25.

But, thank God, He was raised. And He is in heaven. We do have an Intercessor. He is our Forerunner, and our Hope. And He is preparing a place for us, and He is coming again so that we can be with Him in our glorified bodies. All of these are blessed realities for the believer because Christ was raised from the dead.

One more thing:

- V. CHRIST'S RESURRECTION GAVE HIM THE POSITION OF LORD OVER HIS PEOPLE (Rom. 14:9).

You and I as believers may have to come to the place where we submit ourselves to the Lordship of Christ, but, remember, we do not give that to Him; that right is His because of His death and resurrection.

This means, in the case of the book of Romans, that chapters 12 through 15 especially will be the pattern for your life. There may be many people who will call Him, Lord, but they do not do what He says. The true believer will recognize that He is Lord, and will, by God's grace, do what He says to do in His Word!

Concl: More could be said about THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST, even from Romans, but, after I have said one more thing in conclusion, I am going to stop.

I cannot close without saying that faith in the bodily resurrection of Christ is absolutely essential to salvation. Show me a person who denies the bodily resurrection of Christ, even if he is a preacher or a theologian, and I will show you a person who is as lost in sin and as far from God as the worst reprobate in the world! No person can be a true Christian who does not believe in the resurrection of Christ, and believe in it as it is taught in Scripture.

Cf. Rom. 10:9, 10.

Do you believe? Do you believe that He died for the reasons stated in Scripture? Do you believe that God raised Him from the dead as evidence both of His Deity, and that His work had been accepted by God? Do you believe that this is the only way to become righteous in God's sight — through Christ's death? Do you believe that Christ will never die again? Do you believe He is a living Lord in heaven at this very moment? Do you believe John 14:6?

Faith in the death and resurrection of Christ on behalf of sinners is the only true evidence that a person is really a child of God.

May God move upon your heart, and may you respond by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is the only Saviour, and you will die in your sins if you are not trusting Him for your salvation.

THE UNTAUGHT TEACHER
Romans 2:17-29

Intro: We are in the opening section of the book of Romans in which Paul is showing that all men are under divine condemnation -- and this includes both Jews and Gentiles.

He had hinted at this in Romans 1:16 because, if the Gospel is for the Jew and the Gentile, then they must both be in the same need.

He does not mention Jews and Gentiles as such from the time he leaves 1:16 until he gets to 2:10, and follows that up with v. 11. But from that point on into chapter 3 he begins to concentrate more and more upon the Jew because he knows how much the Jew hated to be placed in the same category with Gentiles.

He does this first by referring to the Law in 2:12-15.

But then, in the passage that we have before us in this service, he specifically singles out the "Jew."

As he goes on to the end of chapter 2, he does three things:

- 1) He states THE JEWISH CLAIMS -- in vv. 17-20.
- 2) He asks some searching questions, questions that are directed at the Jews -- in vv. 21-23.
- 3) Finally, he sets forth THE TRUE SITUATION -- not as the Jews thought it was, but as it was in the sight of God, vv. 24-29.

All of this is designed to bring the Jews to see that they, too, are under the wrath of God IF they are without Christ.

And you can tell how well he has made his point because, when he gets to 3:1, he anticipates that he has the Jew asking, "What advantage then hath the Jew?"

But let us look now at

I. THE JEWISH CLAIMS (Rom. 2:17-20).

There are six claims -- and the last one is expressed in a fourfold way.

We have the first 5 in verses 17 and 18; the last one is stated in verse 19 and 20.

"Behold" would probably be better translated, "But if . . ."
Or, it might even be better to translate it, "But since . . ."
There is no question about what he is going to say about the Jews; they know, and he knows, that this is the way they felt about themselves.

Let us look at each claim briefly.

- A. "But since thou art called a Jew (Rom. 2:17).

The word Jews was first used in Scripture in 2 Kings 16:6. Its origin is not really known, but it does come from the name, Judah, the Messianic tribe. It came into use some time after the nation Israel was divided. It eventually was used for the whole nation, and served to distinguish them from the Gentiles. It was a term which was used by Gentiles as well as Jews, and it reflected the fact that they were the chosen nation, and that to them were given spiritual blessings that no other nation, as such, enjoyed.

But the point that Paul was making here is that this had become a matter of pride to the Jews. They did not look upon this as an act of grace on God's part, but that He had chosen them, and had given them the promises, because they were better than any other nation.

For the sake of argument, the Apostle Paul is willing to leave the point right there for the moment.

- B. "And retest in the law" (Rom. 1:17).

To rest means to trust, to rely upon something.

The point that Paul is making here is that they were trusting in their possession of the Law, but not trusting in God, or in Christ.

It was the Law that made them different from the Gentiles -- that is, the fact that they had had the Law given to them, but it had not been given to the Gentiles.

Paul is following up now on what he had said in verse 13.

- C. "And makest thy boast in God" (Rom. 1:17).

The Lord had told them to do this in Jer. 9:23, 24, Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.

But the Jews were not humbled by what God had done with them; they were proud! And they gave the impression that God belonged to them, but not to anybody else!

- D. "And knowest his will" (Rom. 2:18).

This was also true, and it made the Jews even more responsible to God. There is no greater knowledge unless it be the knowledge of God Himself.

This knowledge would include not only the ministry of Moses, but also the ministries of all of the other OT writers. It was true that the Jews has been given "the oracles of God," as Paul will say in Rom. 3:2.

But this, too, had become a matter of national pride!

- E. "And approvest the things that are more excellent (Rom. 2:18).

And this was because they had been "instructed out of the law" (v. 18).

This was the very thing that Paul prayed that the Philippians would be able to do. See Phil. 1:10,

That ye may approve things that are excellent, which means to be able to distinguish between right and wrong, and to choose that which was right.

Some feel that the expression, "And knowest his will," speaks of their knowledge of the doctrine, while this expression, "and approvest the things that are more excellent," is practical.

Anyway, this made them feel that they could pass judgment on the behavior of others, but the next part of this passage shows that they did not apply the Word to themselves!

Now, because they had all that we have just seen, they felt that they were qualified to instruct others. And so our sixth point is this:

- F. "And art confident that thou thyself art . . .

1. "A guide to the blind" (Rom. 2:19).

"Confident" means that they were fully persuaded that this was the case.

"The blind" were the Gentiles. "A guide" is one who shows others the way. In this sense it would mean the way to God, which is the way of salvation.

2. "A light of them which are in darkness" (Rom. 2:19).

The Lord had said of His people, "Ye are the light of the world" (Matt. 5:14). Anyone who has the light

is supposed to be the light. The Jews thought that they were, but there was something wrong, as we shall see in a moment.

- the
3. "An instructor of ^{the} foolish" (Rom. 2:20).

"Foolish" is a very strong term which reflects how the Jews felt about everyone else -- which practically means that they felt the Gentiles were incapable of learning.

4. "A teacher of babes" (Rom. 2:20).

"Having the form of knowledge A babe is one who is untaught. and of the truth

in the law" These four expressions for teaching shows how wise the means that Jews felt, and how ignorant the Gentiles were. It also the outward indicates that they felt that, if the Gentiles were to resemblance learn anything, they would have to learn it from the of true Jews.

knowledge in the Law. You can see how little they thought of God, or reckoned But the on God being able to do anything without them! expression

implies These six were well-known Jewish claims. If the Jews did not that know what Paul was doing, they would have been very pleased and very flattered by such an array of claims.

there is But now look at what comes next! more

to II. THE APOSTLE'S QUESTIONS (Rom. 2:21-23).

the truth Actually every claim that the Jews made for themselves could than just have been made by a Jew who knew nothing of salvation. The knowledge. claims were empty unless they were backed up by one thing: the lives of those who felt that they were qualified to teach others.

This is where the Apostle Paul's questions are so devastating!

The first qualification of a true teacher is that he embodies the truth that he teaches. And so Paul asks:

- A. "Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" (Rom. 2:21).

And then he is going to follow that question with other questions to show that they had not done their homework! The truth had not changed their lives, and, therefore, their claims really meant nothing.

How many people there are in the Church today who are

just like the Jews in Paul's day -- they think that a knowledge of the truth is the equivalent of salvation. But they are wrong!

Listen to the next question:

- B. "Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?" (Rom. 2:21).

There has to be a story behind this question -- perhaps many stories which everyone knew!

Question #3:

- C. "Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery?" (Rom. 2:22).

Do you remember what the Lord said to the Scribes and Pharisees who brought the woman who had been "taken in adultery"? Let me remind you:

He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her (John 8:7).

What did that statement mean if it did not mean that adulterers have no right to accuse an adulteress?

I was reminded of a man the other day who was having an affair with another man's wife at the very time he was memorizing the book of Romans -- and that man was a professing Christian! Something is very wrong in a situation like that!

- D. "Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege," that is, do you rob temples?

Jews would not go into temples to worship idols, but they would go into heathen temples and rob idols and ornaments of gold and silver in order to have the wealth!

They apparently had forgotten that the Law, which they wanted to teach, said this:

The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire: thou shalt not desire the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it unto thee, lest thou be snared therein: for it is an abomination to the Lord thy God (Deut. 7:25).

The Jews in Paul's day evidently did this. The townclerk in Ephesus cleared the Apostle Paul of wrongdoing when he said,

For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches (meaning, temples), nor yet blasphemers of your goddess (Acts 19:37).

But now the last question:

- E. "Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?" (Rom. 2:23).

This is actually what all of the preceding questions were designed to bring out!

And this is what Paul concentrates on in the rest of the chapter.

Notice: The boasted in God (v. 17), and they boasted in the Law (v. 23). It means to glory in, to exult in. But by the disobedience of their lives they were actually treating God with contempt! That is what "dishonourest thou God" means.

In the last six verses Paul states, or teaches,

III. THE TRUTH OF GOD (Rom. 2:23-29).

- A. Instead of glorifying God, and serving God, they were blaspheming God -- "as it is written" (Rom. 2:24).

This means that the Jews were doing the very same thing in the OT, and that the situation had not changed!

Paul could have been referring to several passages, but one of them for sure was Ezek. 36:20, speaking of Israel at the time of the exile:

And when they entered unto the heathen, whither they went, they profaned my holy name, when they said to them, These are the people of the Lord, and are gone out of his land.

This is what the heathen, the Gentiles, said about them!

- B. The truth about circumcision (Rom. 2:2⁵~~4~~-29).

The rest of the passage deals with this important subject because it was circumcision that the Jews claimed made them Jews! But Paul brings out two things that these UNTAUGHT TEACHERS apparently did not know.

This first was this:

1. Circumcision does not mean anything unless it is accompanied by obedience to the Law (Rom. 2:25-27).

If a Jew breaks the Law, then he is no better off than if he were uncircumcised. This is the point in v. 25.

And then in v. 26 he suggests a hypothetical case to

show what is really important: IF a Gentile should "keep the righteousness of the law," it would make no difference that it he was uncircumcised!

And then in v. 27 -- if this should be, it is the Gentile who would be the judge of the Jew!

ALL OF THIS MEANS THAT IT IS NOT CIRCUMCISION THAT GIVES A MAN A RIGHTEOUS STANDING WITH GOD, BUT OBEDIENCE TO THE LAW.

Since the Jew has failed here, he is no better off than the Gentile. Both stand in need of salvation because they are both under the wrath of God.

But there is one more point: It has always been the case that

2. True circumcision is a matter of the heart, not just of a ceremony administered to a man's body (Rom. 2: 28, 29).

Paul is using the word, "Jew," as the Jews used it, and as the Gentiles used it (see v. 17) -- to depict a child of God!

It is not because of what he is "outwardly," that is, that he is a natural descendant of Abraham, nor that he has been circumcised "in the flesh," but it is that an inner change has taken place, and "whose praise is not of men, but of God."

"Praise" is the meaning of Judah, and Jew comes from Judah -- and so there is an obvious reference to this by the last statement of the chapter. The important thing in salvation is not that we approve of ourselves, nor that others approve of us, but that God does!

Concl: Do you know that the problem that Paul is discussing in this passage is one of the greatest problems in the Church today? And this applies now as much to Gentiles as it does to Jews! People think that because they know a little about the Bible, or because they go to church, or because they had parents who were Christians, or because they were baptized and joined a church, that they are saved. BUT NONE OF THESE THINGS WILL MAKE YOU A CHRISTIAN BECAUSE THEY CAN ALL BE ONLY SKIN DEEP. What we need is something, or Someone, who can change our hearts. All we can do for ourselves is external. God is the only One Who can change our hearts -- and He does it through Christ. That brings us again this week to such verses as Rom. 1:16 and Rom. 10:9, 10. Only Christ can save us. To trust anyone else, or anything else is to remain under the judgment of God.

THREE OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

Romans 3:1-8

Intro: We here at Trinity Bible Church believe that the Lord has raised up this work to follow the pattern established long ago by the Apostle Paul, "to declare . . . all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). This means all of the Word of God. We are firmly convinced that the Church has no right to neglect any part of God's Word -- that when Paul said, "Preach the word," he meant all of it, all of the Old and New Testaments.

We also believe that the Church of today has been negligent in doing this. There is currently a tendency to preach truths which we think will be more acceptable to men, and to leave the others alone! Consequently there are whole areas of truth that some church-going people never hear, and yet they are in everybody's Bible. I am referring especially to truths that have to do with the sovereign grace of God. While our desire here is to proclaim God's Word and not to be locked in to any man's system of teaching, yet we do not hesitate at all in saying that we believe the doctrines of grace which have come to be known in the Church as Calvinism. In order to help us to remember them, someone a long time ago set them in the form of an acrostic using the word, tulip, as the key. This is what they are:

- 1) T -- Total Depravity.
- 2) U -- Unconditional Election.
- 3) L -- Limited Atonement.
- 4) I -- Irresistible Grace.
- 5) P -- Perseverance of the Saints.

We believe these doctrines not because they are Calvinistic (although we certainly do not object to that term) -- but we believe them because we know they are the teaching of Scripture.

The first of these is Total Depravity. This is the doctrine that we are concerned with in the opening chapters of the book of Romans. Total Depravity speaks of the effect that sin has had upon man -- that it has rendered him totally incapable of doing anything toward his salvation. Sin has affected man's whole being in a bad way. Sin has enslaved man. Sin has rendered him incapable of seeking God, has even made him an enemy of God. In short, the Bible traces all of man's problems ultimately to sin -- a problem which man cannot solve, does not want to solve, and, in most instances, does not believe that it is a problem.

We are ready to begin the third chapter of Romans today, and we have been learning in these opening chapters that man is under the wrath of God, under the judgment of God, because he is a sinner -- that is, because he is totally depraved!

Now one who reads the book of Romans carefully will detect that Paul is teaching us about the total depravity of man in two ways:

1) By carefully setting before us the teaching of Scripture.

When I say "the teaching of Scripture" I not only mean the teaching of the OT, but I want you to realize as well that what Paul wrote was also Scripture. So what he wrote under the direction of the Holy Spirit here in this book of Romans plus the arguments he gives us from the OT combine to prove beyond any doubt that man is depraved, "under sin," and subject to divine wrath!

But there is another way that Paul teaches us, indirectly, the same truth:

2) By indicating how man responds to the truth.

What can you learn about man's reaction from the way Paul has written this book?

You can tell this in two ways:

- a) He either misuses what God has revealed, as, for example, he does in connection with circumcision,
- or
- b) He resists the truth by presenting all kinds of arguments.

This is evidence of man's total depravity. Perhaps you can remember how you resisted the truth before you became a child of God. And, if you have tried to explain the Gospel to someone else, you will know by experience all of the resistance that people can raise against the simply Gospel message of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our text for today gives us three objections which Paul has incorporated into this book. Undoubtedly he had faced them in his ministry many times. They are objections which show man's reluctance to believe the truth about his sin, and also his reluctance to believe the truth about the remedy for his sin. I want to examine these with you, but, as I do, I want you to hear the objections as a clear testimony to man's depravity.

In the latter part of Romans 2 and the beginning of Romans 3 Paul is dealing with the Jew. In the latter part of Romans 2 he has shown that the Jew is no different from the Gentile where sin is concerned. The Gentile is depraved, but so is the Jew.

Jews did not like this. They felt that because of the way God had seen fit to deal with their nation, that they were better off than Gentiles simply because they were Jews. Paul has proved that that is not the case. And so now he hears from them!

I. THE FIRST OBJECTION (Rom. 3:1, 2). (Read.)

It must have seemed to many Jews that Paul had turned traitor to his people, and that he was closing his mind to all of their rich history. Did the Jews not have any pluses? Was there no way in which they were superior to the Gentiles?

The answer is, YES!

But now let me ask you a question: IF YOU WERE TO SINGLE OUT THE BLESSING WHICH STOOD OUT ABOVE ALL OTHER BLESSINGS WHICH WERE GIVEN TO ISRAEL, WHICH WOULD YOU NAME?

Paul said there was a first ("chiefly"), and he does not mention a second -- although if you want to see some more, then read Romans 9:4, 5.

The plus, the advantage, which the Jews had was that to them "were committed the oracles of God."

- 1) "Committed" to them for their keeping and for their use.
- 2) "The oracles of God," referring to the Scriptures, but referring to them as that which was spoken by the very mouth of God.

No nation had such an advantage. This was the greatest honor that could be conferred upon any nation -- to be the recipients and the guardians of the truth of God! They had Abraham, and Moses, and David, and Isaiah, and a host of others -- men to whom God spoke, giving them His very Word -- and the reference here has to do with His Word concerning salvation!

This was greater than God's revelation in creation, which all men have. This was greater than God's revelation in man's conscience, which all men have. This was greater than God's revelation in providence, which all men have. This was the greatest of all -- God speaking to men, making His will known concerning the most important subject ever to confront men: the doctrine of man's salvation from sin!

Oh, what a priceless privilege -- to have the very Word of God, so that there is no need for guess-work where man in his need, and God in His provision, are concerned!

Use: Have you ever stopped to consider what a priceless treasure that is for you and me? We have the Bible. We can read it, and we can learn about God and His salvation. We don't have to be in doubt; we have the truth of God between the pages of this wonderful book, the Bible. Oh, how blessed we are that we have the Bible, the very Word of God.

But, going back to the Jew, the first thing that Paul points them to is the Word of God, the Scriptures. It was given to the world through them, Israel. What greater advantage could any nation want?

But this is followed with another objection.

II. THE SECOND OBJECTION (Rom. 3:3, 4). (Read.)

The word "some" indicates also that there were some who did believe -- "some" did not, but others did!

However, the point is this: What if people do not believe? The question in Greek could read like this: Their unbelief shall not make the faithfulness of God without effect, will it? Obviously a negative answer is implied.

Now behind this question is this idea which is very prominent even among some church people today -- the idea that where salvation is concerned, man is sovereign, but God isn't! It is the idea that man can successfully resist God because he is supposed to have a free will which is capable of nullifying what God wants to do.

In the first place let me say that man does not have a will that will allow him on his own to turn to Christ. His will is in bondage to a depraved nature, and to Satan, the god of this world.

But let me ask you, in the second place, do you really think that man is greater than God? Do you think that if God has planned to save sinners, that men could nullify the whole plan? Would you go on record as saying that God wants to save certain men, but He cannot because those men will not let him save them?

What did Paul say?

He said in effect that such a question manifests a very inadequate, a very deficient, understanding of God. If we begin thinking about salvation from God's perspective, and from the standpoint of who God is, then we will say what Paul said, without any hesitation: "Let God be true, but every man a liar."

Paul is going to teach us in this Epistle that God has appointed His elect for salvation, and that no man is able to nullify that plan! The elect will be saved, and God will be faithful, will be true, to His eternal purpose.

David was brought to realize the sovereignty of God when he spoke the words which are written in Psalm 51:4, and which Paul quoted at the end of Romans 3:4.

So the second problem which some Jews had was the problem that many have in the professing church today -- their understanding of God was deficient!

We will never fully understand the need for salvation until we learn about God, and we will not understand the certainty of salvation until we see that God is absolutely sovereign and absolutely faithful to His promises.

And then we come to the third objection.

III. THE THIRD OBJECTION (Rom. 3:5-8). (Read.)

Note the lengths to which unregenerate man will go in his refusal to bow in repentance before God, confessing that he is a sinner!

The argument is this, stated in verse 5, and then repeated in verse 7:

If a sinners unrighteousness gives God an opportunity to display His righteousness, and thus brings glory to Him, why is a sinner judged when he can bring glory to God by his sin?

Did you note the parenthesis -- "(I speak as a man)"? This means as a sinful man, as an ignorant man, ignorant of God and His Word, ignorant also of my great need.

Note also the parenthesis in verse 8 -- "(as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come." It ought to encourage us somewhat to see that even Paul, when he preached the doctrines of the sovereign grace of God was blasphemously accused of teaching things that he never taught! That is because God and His grace and the ways of God are so foreign to the minds of men.

The question in verse 5 could be translated, God is not unrighteous who taketh vengeance, is He?

Twice Paul says in this passage, "God forbid," which would be better translated, Let it not be, or, It could not be.

How could we do greater dishonor to God than to suggest that we can glorify Him by our sin, and so that means He would be wrong if He judged us?

You see, man not only argues with God against the doctrine of divine wrath and judgment, but he turns the whole blame on God because He would dare to judge man. Do you need any greater proof that man is a sinner, a totally depraved sinner? Paul said at the end of our text that such an attitude proves that their "damnation is just." Obviously such thinking will not hold off the judgment of God.

Concl: But now let me apply this to all of us who are here today, and to those who are listening on the radio.

Do you see how good God has been to give us His Word? He has not left us to wonder if salvation is necessary, nor need we wonder what salvation is. He has shown Himself to be faithful to His

Word, and righteous in all that He is and in all that He does. He has declared that all are guilty because of their sin -- that they are sinners by nature and sinners by choice. And He has declared His intention to judge sinners, to judge them with eternal suffering, UNLESS they take shelter in the provision which God has made for us in the death of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

We go back again to Romans 1:16, 17 for the way of salvation. If you believe in Christ, you are saved; if you do not, there is no other hope.

May God grant you mercy in turning you to Christ today. No objection will stand before Him. Come to Him today, and He will save you.

THE GUILT OF THE WORLD
Romans 3:9-20

Intro: Today we come to the close of the first section of Romans -- the section in which Paul has established the condemnation of all men before God.

Repeatedly I have said that Paul has written like a prosecuting attorney. In this passage he closed his case. We can even say that what we have in chapter 3, verses 9-20, is actually a summary of all that has gone before.

Let us see how he did it.

I. THE CHARGE (Rom. 3:9).

This is not the first time that he has stated it, but he condensed here in a way that he has not done before.

The question, "What then?", suggests a change from what he had just been saying. After exposing the sin of the Jew in the latter part of chapter 2, he showed the advantage that the Jew had over the Gentile in the first part of chapter 3. So this leads to the question, "Are we better than they?"

(Some MSS read, "Are they better than we?" Whichever reading is the correct one, the answer remains the same.)

To be "better" means to have a shelter where one can be protected. The point is: Do we, or do they, have some protection against the wrath of God? Will one of us be acquitted?

"No, in no wise" is the equivalent of saying, "Absolutely not!"

So this leads us to ask,

A. To whom did the charge apply?

Listen to the answer carefully: "For we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin."

The word "proved" speaks of a charge, an accusation. And this charge has been directed against "both Jews and Gentiles," i.e., all Jews and Gentiles. No one escapes the charge. All men without exception have been included in what Paul has said about sinners and sin. So neither the Jew nor the Gentile is better off. All are in the same plight.

B. What was the charge?

It is contained in these words: "that they are all under sin."

Now we have talked a lot about sin as we have gone through the first part of Romans, but this is actually the first time we have had the word, "sin." The problem has been discussed, but now it is given a name: "sin."

The word "sin" is used almost 50 times in Romans (Barnhouse says, 49 -- p. 195 of Vol. 2).

In the two languages of the Bible there are a total of 12 different words used for "sin."

But the word Paul used here is the most common word in the Greek, the word which is commonly translated as missing the mark.

The figure of speech which is behind this word has to do with someone with a bow and arrow who is shooting at a target -- and he misses the mark! The target we could name, the glory of God, or, pleasing God. The preceding verses have shown us that man

-- does not please God,

-- does not want to please God,

and, in fact,

-- cannot please God.

And the reason is now made perfectly clear by Paul's charge: Man is "under sin."

What does it mean that all Jews and Gentiles are "under sin"?

Well, it means that they are subject to sin, under the tyranny of sin. But it also means that they are under the consequences of the sin. They are under the penalty of sin, which is divine wrath culminating in eternal judgment. It means that man is a sinner by nature and a sinner by choice, under divine condemnation, and unable to do anything about it. He is "under sin" in the most absolute and most complete sense of the words.

But let us make sure that we all understand. These two words describe every person in the world today, Jew and Gentile, who is without Christ! This is the major problem of the human race, and it always has been. And, humanly speaking, it is a hopeless problem. No medicine can correct it. No amount of counselling, or self-reformation can correct it. It is equally true of all people in every nation on the earth that they are "under sin"!

That is THE CHARGE!

Now let us look secondly at

II. THE CONFIRMATION -- THE PROOF -- OF THE CHARGE (Rom. 3:10-18)

How can we prove this?

Well, I could say, "Just look at yourself." Or I could say, "Look around you at other people. Look at what is going on in the world today."

Why do you think we have so much trouble, so much crime, so many broken homes, so many ruined lives, so much despair and frustration, so many problems. Why is there so much dishonesty? Why do we have war?

There is but one answer: Men and women and children are "under sin."

All of us could cite example after example to show that this statement is true: "both Jews and Gentiles . . . are all under sin."

But I want you to note that Paul does not parade a lot of personal experiences before us -- even though he could have done that, even from his own experience! But he did not do that.

Instead, he quoted from six passages of Scripture! Five of them are taken from the Psalms; one from the prophecy of Isaiah.

This is the only way to prove any truth that has to do with God and our relationship to Him.

Verses 10 through 12 are taken from two Psalms: Psa. 14:1-3; Psa. 53:1-3.

The first part of verse 13 is taken from the latter part of Psa. 5:9. The second part of verse 13 is taken from the latter part of Psa. 140:3.

Verse 14 is taken from the first part of Psa. 10:7.

Verses 15 through 17 is taken from the first and last parts of Isa. 59:7, and the first part of Isa. 59:8.

Verse 18 is taken from the second part of Psa. 36:1.

What a testimony Paul has given us here of the authority of the Word of God!

Do you want to know the absolute truth concerning God and

man, and their relationship to each other? Then go to the Bible. Whatever you find there, you can believe without any hesitation. If you cannot find it there, then don't believe it. It cannot be true if it is not in the Word of God.

And to prove something from the Word of God is far more influential on your own heart than to see it in your own experience, or in the experiences of others. It is through being exposed to the Word of God that faith comes.

Notice how comprehensive these verses are:

- 1) Vv. 10-12 show you what man is in his relationship to God. It is stated first because it is basic. Man cannot be right in other directions as long as he is wrong with God!
- 2) Vv. 13, 14 have to do with man's mouth.
Just listen to men talk (and women, too) if you want proof that they are "under sin."
- 3) Vv. 15-17 have to do with man's feet -- that is, the way he lives.
- 4) Finally, in v. 18, Paul returned to God where he started. And it has to do with what men see -- with their eyes, often used in Scripture of man's understanding.

(Read through the passage briefly explaining each part.)

This is what sin has done to man, and to human life. What a tragic picture! And yet this is a true picture, and proves beyond any doubt that man is "under sin," under judgment, awaiting the execution of the wrath of God.

Our text makes one more point.

III. THE CONCLUSION (Rom. 3:19, 20).

By this we mean, the verdict.

A. What is it?

"Guilty before God."

This means that he is justly chargeable, that he is responsible "before God" for his sin.

B. To whom does it apply?

"All the world." No one is acquitted. All are "guilty." All are liable for punishment.

C. Who is the judge?

"God" is! Paul was making the charge, but he was making

it on behalf of God. Men are guilty "before God," in His presence, in His sight.

D. What about an appeal?

Will you notice the statement, "that every mouth may be stopped"? This means that no new evidence can be produced to the contrary. Man has no response to make that will stand "before God." He can make no protest. There are no excuses which he can make.

E. What hope does man have for getting the decision changed?

NONE -- none at all!

The Law cannot help. What the Law had to say it said "to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."

Who were "under the law"? The Jew. But what happened to him was a message to the Gentile as well because he would have done no better than the Jew!

(Read and explain v. 20.)

Concl: Where does this leave us?

Just one place -- at the mercy of God! If God is not pleased to help us, then there is no help -- only the awful certainty of eternal judgment.

What will it require?

It will require that someone who is not in the same plight we are in might take our place.

Thank God, that is exactly what has happened. God has extended His mercy to sinners by sending none other than His only Son, Jesus Christ, to save sinners.

Listen to the way Paul stated it in 1 Tim. 1:15,
This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance,
that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;
of whom I am chief.

Peter said in 1 Pet. 3:18,
For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just
for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, . . .

Do you believe in Christ? If not, will you -- will you now?
Christ is the sinner's only hope. He is my hope, and He is the only hope you have. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL

Romans 3:21-24

Intro: We have completed the section of Romans in which Paul has conclusively proved that all men are "guilty before God" (Rom. 3:19). He has shown that this applies just as much to Jews as it does to Gentiles. All are sinners!

In this same section he has shown that, because men are "guilty," they are also under "the wrath of God" (Rom. 1:18).

A third thing that Paul has proved is that, if man would remedy the situation, he must render perfect obedience to the Law. But this is not possible for anyone -- whether he be Jew or Gentile.

A fourth and final thing that I would point out from this section which we have just completed is that the heart of man is so constituted that he does not want to have anything to do with God. We see that in the latter part of chapter 1.

So there is really only one hope: If man is to be delivered, God must bring about his salvation!

With all of this we must not forget five times (up to this point in Romans) Paul has mentioned "the gospel." See Rom. 1:1, 9, 15, 16; 2:16.

Sometimes Paul, in the above passages, has used a noun; sometimes a verb. But in each case the words have the same root, and they all point to good news. "The gospel" is good news. To "preach the gospel" is to preach good news.

This is what we come to in our message today: GOOD NEWS! It is the best news ever to reach the hearts of men.

Think of how good you would feel to hear today that

- the battle over the Falkland Islands was over, or that
- inflation was over, and that
 - there were jobs for everyone,
 - interest rates were down to 6%,
 - gas would only be 30 cents a gallon;

or that

- our leaders had decided that crime was going to have to be punished so that people would know what would happen to them if they did any of the criminal things that are being done today which really go unpunished.

I could add many other things which would be good news. But, listen to me: There is no good news comparable to the good news like the good news of the Gospel! "The gospel" has the "promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:8b).

All of this brings me to my first point in the text. We have:

I. A GREAT CONTRAST (Rom. 3:21a).

It is to be seen in the words, "But now . . ."

It is really in contrast with Rom. 1:18. (Read the two together.)

This kind of writing is characteristic of the Apostle Paul. He delights to set the glorious Gospel before men against the dark background of man's sin. Note the following passages:

- 1) 1 Cor. 6:9-11.
- 2) Gal. 1:13-16a.
- 3) Gal. 4:3-5.
- 4) Eph. 2:1-4 ff.
- 5) Tit. 3:3-7.

However, in our text Paul not only said, "But . . .," but he said, "But now . . ." The epistle to the Romans was written just a few years after the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Consequently he was indicating that "now" he was able to say things, to preach things, to write things, that had never been as clear as they had become since Christ died!

What was it?

This leads me to my second point:

II. A GREAT SUBJECT: "the righteousness of God" (Rom. 3:21).

Notice what he had written about "the righteousness of God" back in Rom. 1:16, 17.

This is a term which includes all of the perfections of God. This is the righteousness that belongs to Him, and only to the Members of the Godhead. It does not belong to any man apart from God.

This is the term which describes the condition which is acceptable to God. It is a term which indicates that God must reject and condemn all who do not measure up to this absolute standard of perfection -- and no man does!

It is "the righteousness of God" with which the Gospel is concerned. As I have said repeatedly, we do not understand sin, and the sinfulness of sin, until we understand something of "the righteousness of God." This is why the Law was given to Israel, "that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful" (Rom. 7:13b).

Now all of this would not be good news IF I could not go on to point out a third fact from our text:

III. A GREAT ACT: "the righteousness of God . . . is manifested."

Before I point out the meaning of the verb, "is manifested," let me say that this statement indicates not only that God is righteous, but that He has provided that very righteousness for sinful men. The point is that God has done something to meet the sinful condition of men.

But now to bring out the meaning, let me call your attention to two words which are used in Rom. 1:17, 18, and 19. They are the words,

1) "Revealed." See Rom. 1:17, 18.

2) "Manifest." See Rom. 1:19.

The second word is the one we have in Rom. 3:21, but the two are related to each other.

They both speak of God making something known which otherwise could not be known. This what a revelation is.

This is what Paul was talking about in 1 Cor. 2:9, 10.

This is where the Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ gets its name. It is a revelation, God making known that which would otherwise be unknowable.

But there is an idea added to the revelation when we say that something has been manifested -- that "the righteousness of God . . . is manifested." Here we mean that it has been made absolutely clear, that what had been promised has now been provided. It is now something which is no longer looked for; it is here. And it is now possible to speak of it with details that were not known previously.

It is no wonder that Paul said what he did in Rom. 1:15, 16, and that he indicated that he could hardly wait to set before the Romans the truths of the Gospel. No one had ever been able to speak with such clarity and detail about the Gospel before. It is here.

Illus: It perhaps would be comparable to a king who sought a young lady in marriage, and who had provided a new, magnificent estate for her, but would not let her even see it until after they were married -- and then she could see it, and could realize that it was far more wonderful than any description the king had ever given her. She would be like the Queen of Sheba after she had seen all of Solomon's wealth. She said

It was a true report that I heard in my own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceeded the fame which I heard (1 Kings 10:6,7).

That is the way the Gospel is. You cannot really believe it until you see it, and then it seems to be too good to be true!

This leads me to my fourth point:

IV. A GREAT STATEMENT (Rom. 3:21-24).

In fact, it might be more accurate to say, THE GREATEST STATEMENT.

Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones has written,

It is no exaggeration to say of this section that it is one of the greatest and most important sections in the whole of Scripture (Atonement and Justification, p. 31).

He said this about the whole passage from Rom. 1:21 to 31.

Dr. Lloyd-Jones also points out that this section proves that if you are going to be saved, you have to get interested in theology, in doctrine. This passage sets the limits for the one who is going to preach the Gospel. Nothing here can be left out, nor can we dare to add anything that is not here. This is "the gospel" which "is the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16).

Let me point out the six things which Paul wrote here about the Gospel, about what it means that God has "manifested" His "righteousness" for the salvation of "guilty" sinners!

A. First, it is "without the law" (v. 21).

Lit. he was saying that it is without such a thing as a law. The word "the" is not in the Greek. It excludes any kind of a law, the Law, or any other kind, because this is not a righteousness that man earns, or that he can merit in any way!

Cf. Tit. 3:5. The NT has many such statements.

B. Second, it is "witnessed by the law and the prophets" (v. 21).

This means that the Gospel was not new with Paul, nor was it something that God kept until this Epistle was written. By "the law and the prophets" Paul was referring to all of the OT. He was saying that you find it all through the OT Scriptures, from beginning to end. The promise was first given in Genesis 3:15, and Malachi wrote of "the Sun of righteousness . . . with healing in his wings" (Mal. 3:2).

Think also of Gen. 15:6; Psa. 22; Isa. 53; and a host of

other scriptures.

The salvation of the OT is the same as the salvation of the NT. You will find more detail in the NT, but you will not find anything in the NT about salvation that contradicts what was written in the OT!

- C. Thirdly, this righteousness is "by faith of Jesus Christ" (v. 22).

We could translated this as it is found in the NASB, "through faith in Jesus Christ."

So becoming what we should be before God is not a matter of doing, but of trusting; trusting not ourselves, but trusting Jesus Christ because of what He has done for the salvation of sinners.

And we are going to learn from Rom. 10:17 that even this faith does not come from us, but it also comes from God. Cf. Eph. 2:8, 9; Heb. 12:2.

In order to have saving faith, we have to

- 1) Know Who the Lord is, and what He has done,
- 2) Believe that what He did was sufficient to satisfy God, and to meet our needs.
- 3) Put our hope for salvation in Christ -- trust Him, and Him alone.

- D. Fourthly, those who were the objects of Christ's work: "unto all and upon all them that believe" (v. 22).

"Upon all" is not in some MSS, but that does not change the meaning of the statement.

Salvation is only for those who believe. If you do not believe, it will make no difference for you that Christ died on the cross. Do you want to know that He died for you? Then believe in Him!

This is the only provision for man's salvation, and it is for Jew and Gentile alike, "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

- E. Fifthly, this "righteousness of God" comes to the believing sinner "freely by his grace" (v. 24).

This means that you do not have to look at yourself to see if you deserve it. All you need to realize is that you need it. It is a gift. It is given without any idea of merit on the sinner's part. It is given in the full understanding of his demerit! So there is no reason for

anyone to stay away.

We will learn more about the grace of God as we go on in Romans.

- F. Sixth and finally, it is "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (v. 24).

What does the word "redemption" mean?

It means that, although salvation comes to us without a price on it, free, yet its cost was very, very great. We cannot have the gift of righteousness unless somebody pays for it.

What was the cost? DEATH! Every animal sacrifice of the OT taught that. God, because He is righteous, could not overlook our sin. He had to deal with it righteously. And so somebody had to die!

This is why Jesus Christ came, and this is why Jesus Christ died!

Peter showed his agreement with Paul when he wrote,
 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest (there is our word again, "manifest") in these last times for you, who by him do believe in God (faith is not of ourselves), that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God (1 Pet. 1:18-21).

Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "For ye are bought with a price . . ." (1 Cor. 6:20).

Concl: Sinner, you are "guilty" and hopeless in yourself. None of your friends can help you. Only Christ can save you and clothe you with divine righteousness. 2 Cor. 5:21 says, "For he (God) hath made him (Christ) to be sin for us . . ."

God's word to you is, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, . . ." (Acts 16:31). May God give you no rest nor peace until you find your peace in Him!

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

Romans 3:21-24

Intro: Last week I did not get as far as I had intended to get.

However, this is a passage that we must not rush over because here in the latter part of Romans 3 Paul has given us a very comprehensive statement of the doctrine of JUSTIFICATION. It is an extremely important section. We could even say that, if a person does not understand what is here, he is going to be at a loss to appreciate as he should the things that Paul has to say from chapter 4 on to the end of the Epistle.

Before we get started again on verses 21 through 24 (which is as far as I want to go today, let me take a few minutes to review.

For the past several weeks we have been going through the first two and one-half chapters of Romans in which we have been concerned with the subject, CONDEMNATION, or THE WRATH OF GOD.

Actually that subject was introduced in Rom. 1:18 and was concluded in Rom. 3:19, 20.

Before that, Paul had introduced the whole subject of our salvation, ending with what we might call, THE THEME OF THE EPISTLE, in chapter 1, verses 16 and 17.

By the time we finished 3:20 we should have been able to see that all men, both Jews and Gentiles, are under divine judgment because of sin, plus the awful fact that there is not a single thing that any man can do to remedy the situation.

It is apparent that God is the only One Who can deliver any sinner from the CONDEMNATION which all justly deserve.

It would be wrong to say that everything relative to SALVATION is found in this latter part of Romans 3, but we do have the basic truths which the Apostle Paul will explain as he goes on. But, before I get to what I was referring to last Sunday as A GREAT STATEMENT, I want to point out the general significance of the whole passage which is before us in Rom. 3:21-31.

After establishing MAN'S GUILT BEFORE GOD, and MAN'S INABILITY TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT, the big question is, CAN MAN BE SAVED FROM THE WRATH OF GOD? Or, to state it another way, SINCE MAN CANNOT SAVE HIMSELF, AND ONLY GOD CAN, WILL GOD DO IT?

Paul has not left us entirely in the dark as to the answer to this question (as we can see in Rom. 1:1-16 where he has referred to "the gospel" several times, but let me just mention some important truths which are evident in the passage that is before us today.

From Rom. 3:21 on, we learn the following important facts:

- 1) God has determined to save sinners. And, as we go along in this Epistle, we will learn that He made this decision even before man was created. This is good news!
- 2) We also learn from this passage that God has made known His plan for saving sinners. It has not only been "revealed," but it has been "manifested."
- 3) This is it!
- 4) There is only one way. Any idea of salvation that does not agree with what we have here, cannot be the right way.
- 5) An examination of these verses will show not only that God has provided it, but that it is entirely dependent upon Him! This latter part of Romans 3 as well as the rest of the Epistle will firmly establish the fact that salvation is a work of God for man, not a work of man for himself and for God!

Now we are ready to look at our text. We want to see what this GREAT STATEMENT is. We want the answer to the question, WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

Remember that it all has to do with what it means to be "righteous." And remember also that "righteousness" does not mean that anything happens to us. To be justified means that God declares something about us, something which is both negative and positive. He declares that:

- 1) Our sins are forgiven.
- 2) We are covered with divine righteousness, thus becoming acceptable to God.

So to be declared righteous, or justified, means that something has been removed (our sins), and something else has been added (the righteousness of God Himself).

So, to explain this in a preliminary way, Paul has given us a series of statements in verses 21 through 24 which I want to point out just now. The first one is negative; the rest are positive -- and there are seven in all.

I. THE NEGATIVE POINT: "without the law" (Rom. 3:21).

Let me say two things about this phrase which will bring out the meaning of the text:

- 1) In the original text "without the law" comes before "the righteousness of God," so that it should read, But now without the law the righteousness of God has been manifested.

- 2) This emphasizes the statement, "without the law." There is not word for "the" in this verse down to the comma. So it would read, But now without a law a righteousness of God has been manifested.

This means that this justification is without any kind of a law, apart from anything like that, whether it is God's law, or any other law, whatever it may be!

All of this brings out one important fact at the beginning: Salvation is not a human work. Therefore, any teaching which makes salvation even in part a work of man is not salvation at all.

Cf. Tit. 3:5; Eph. 2:8, 9.

II. STATEMENT NUMBER TWO -- THE FIRST OF SIX POSITIVE STATEMENTS: "being witnessed by the law and the prophets" (Rom. 3:21).

Now this is important for two reasons:

- 1) It indicates that this was not just Paul's idea of salvation. He had the testimony of the whole OT behind him, supporting him, in his teaching.
- 2) It indicates that God's plan was not some kind of a face-saving afterthought!

Where do you find it in the OT?

Especially in Gen. 15:6. But before that in Gen. 3:15. And after that in the Levitical sacrifices, in Psalm 22, in Isaiah 53, in Malachi 3:2 -- and many, many other places!

Paul was giving the Roman church a completed statement of what God had been speaking about for at least 4,000 years!

III. STATEMENT NUMBER THREE -- "which is by faith of Jesus Christ" (Rom. 3:22).

We could actually make two points out of this, but I will come back at the end to speak of the Lord. Right now let us think of "faith."

This statement could and should be translated, by faith in Jesus Christ."

"Faith" is not a work. "Faith" does not originate with man. "Faith" is a word that is introduced here to show us that, if we are to be saved, our hope has to be placed outside of ourselves, and IN Jesus Christ!

Let me anticipate Paul's statement in Rom. 10:17. Faith comes to man; it does not originate within man. It comes to man from God through the Word.

And many have recognized that faith requires:

- 1) Knowledge. This is why we teach the Word.
- 2) Belief.
- 3) Trust.

If salvation were by works in any way, it would be in contradiction of what we have been taught in Rom. 1:18-3:20. See

again Rom. 3:20.

So, if you want to be saved, you need to be concerned, not with what you should do, but with the One you should trust.

— But let us go on.

IV. STATEMENT NUMBER FOUR -- "unto all and upon all them that believe" (Rom. 3:22).

In some of the Greek MSS the words "upon all" are not found. But their omission does not change the meaning of the verse in any way.

This salvation is the same for all, and it is only for those who "believe."

We have a lot of different groups today who teach about salvation -- Bible churches, Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Catholics, Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and many others. And if you were to go around to attend their meetings, you would find a lot of different things taught.

But Paul wanted us to know that there is only one salvation for any man, for all men, and that is the salvation that is the result of believing in Christ. Any other doctrine is heresy. No other doctrine will save.

All Jews and all Gentiles are under divine condemnation, and there is only one salvation for any Jew or any Gentile who wants to be saved -- and that is by faith in Jesus Christ! Let us be perfectly clear about this. It is not true that we are all going to heaven, but we are just going in different ways. "All" must go by faith in Christ, or they will not go!

And the reason that this is the case is because "there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." There is no difference in the need, and so there is no difference in the remedy.

Romans 3:23 anticipates what is to come. is to come in chapter 5, but let me point out briefly what is taught here.

— The first verb is in the aorist; the second is in the present. The first part tells us where our trouble comes from (Adam); the second part shows what the present effect of that past sin is. This shows conclusively why we cannot save ourselves -- because we have no power at all to achieve the glory of God for ourselves.

V. STATEMENT NUMBER FIVE -- "Being justified" (Rom. 3:24).

Again I am forced to point out two things from this one statement:

- 1) "Being justified" is a passive expression which adds to the evidence that salvation is not something that I do for myself. God acts upon me for my salvation. That is the meaning of the passive.
- 2) The verb is a present tense which means that Paul was talking about a JUSTIFICATION that is realized when a person believes.

Here again the teaching of Scripture runs contrary to what so many are saying today -- that you can never really know until you stand before God whether you are saved or not. Paul taught salvation in the present tense, and that is the only kind that there is!

VI. STATEMENT NUMBER SIX -- "freely by his grace" (Rom. 3:24).

Paul used two expressions here to convey the same idea, but this point is so important that he did not want us to miss it.

"Freely" means without a cause. Cf. John 15:25 for the very same expression.

It means that, since the things in Rom. 1:18-3:20 are true, there is absolutely no reason in man as to why God should save him. And that is the reason that you must not stay away from Christ because you think that your sins are too great -- that they would disqualify you.

We are not qualified because we deserve it; we are qualified by God's "grace"!

And that brings me to the second expression: "grace."

This word means:

- 1) That God does not give me what He ought to give me: eternal damnation.
- 2) That God does give me what I could never deserve: eternal salvation.

Finally,

VII. STATEMENT NUMBER SEVEN -- "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24).

Here we come back to the Lord.

Why does Paul keep coming back to the Lord?

It is because our salvation is dependent upon Him, and upon Him alone -- Who He is, and what He has done!

You see, salvation is offered freely to us, but it cost our Lord a terrible price. God cannot justify anyone who is not redeemed. He cannot just declare everyone forgiven. His righteousness has to be satisfied, the righteousness which He revealed in His Law. The Law of God demanded death, and Jesus Christ died as the sinner's Substitute. We had to be delivered, but that deliverance cost our Lord His very life!

So the only way that any sinner can be justified is through faith in Jesus Christ who died to provide salvation for those who would believe!

Concl: Is your hope for salvation in Christ Jesus? Are you trusting in Him, and not in yourself? If so, then you are declared righteous; you are justified.

But if you are not trusting Christ, it makes no difference what other good things you might be doing, you are just as lost and under the judgment of God as the person is who is not trying to do anything to please God.

Christ is the sinner's only hope. Salvation is a work of God, not something that we do for ourselves. Only those who believe in Christ are saved. May God grant His mercy and grace to you today that you may believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved.

SALVATION ON GOD'S TERMS
Romans 3:24-31

Intro: The person who comes to the realization that salvation has to be on God's terms is a person who has made great progress in his understanding of the most important subject ever to concern the heart of man.

There has also ways been much confusion on this among people.

Adam and Eve were confused about this -- and so they covered themselves with fig leaves.

Cain was confused about this -- so he did not bring the required sacrifice.

Idolatry, so widespread among the nations of the earth, is proof that men everywhere are confused about this.

As amazing as it may seem, the Jews, throughout their history, have been confused by this. They misinterpreted God's purpose in giving them the Law, and treated it as the way of salvation.

This same confusion is evident today with the hundreds upon hundreds of different groups that proclaim as many different ways of salvation.

The attitude of man toward salvation throughout history has been stated twice in the book of Proverbs, with God's evaluation stated also. Listen to it:

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

(See Prov. 14:12; 16:25.)

The book of Proverbs also teaches us,

The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.

(See Prov. 12:15.)

"A fool," as that verse indicates, is a person without "counsel," a person who is ignorant, who does not know what he thinks he knows. And all men are fools by nature. That is the reason, or one reason, that God has given us His Word. And that is one reason the Lord established His Church, that the Word of God might be taught so that men would not be fools concerning salvation.

But it does not follow that all who hear the truth will accept the truth. That is where we are dependent upon the Lord to use His Word as He sees fit. Our job is to preach the Word; it is up to the Lord to determine how that Word is going to be used.

Our text for today brings out those TERMS in a clear, unmistak-

able, way. I want to point out what they are. Before I do that, however, I want to point out that this is THE WAY, and then after we look at the terms, I want to call attention to the three questions with which is chapter closes.

So, first of all, I want you to notice a point that I have mentioned before, and it should always be stressed so that no one would miss it. When we speak of salvation, the only salvation which God approves, we must realize that there is

I. ONLY ONE WAY.

Here I am going to anticipate a couple of things that I will be dealing with this morning.

When I say that there is ONLY ONE WAY I mean that God does not have

- 1) One way of saving Jews, and another way of saving Gentiles.
- 2) One way of saving people before Christ came, and another way of saving people after Christ came.
- 3) One way of saving men, and another way of saving women.
- 4) One way of saving adults, and another way of saving children.
- 5) One way of saving educated people, and another way of saving the uneducated.
- 6) One way of saving the rich, and another way of saving those who are not rich.
- 7) One way of saving this religious group, but other ways of saving other groups.
- 8) One way of saving people of one group, and a different way of saving people of other racial groups.

Whatever contrast you make (and there are thousands of them), when we are talking about salvation, salvation from sin, salvation from hell, salvation from divine condemnation and the wrath of God, there is ONLY ONE WAY.

The book of Romans makes that crystal-clear! Paul was a Jew writing to Romans who had been raised under different teachings altogether, but he leaves no doubt but that there is only one way for any of them!

The Lord Jesus Christ said there was ONLY ONE WAY. Cf. John 14:6.

The Apostle Peter said there was ONLY ONE WAY. Cf. Acts 4:12.

The writer of Hebrews said that there was ONLY ONE WAY. See Heb. 10:26.

For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.

The ONLY WAY is God's way.

So let us look now at

II. GOD'S TERMS.

By this is mean, GOD'S TERMS FOR SALVATION.

Our text gives us two expressions that I want you to note before we see just what those TERMS are. The two expressions are used in verses 25 and 26 -- the second one is used two times:

- 1) The first is, "Whom God hath set forth . . ."
- 2) The second is, "declare" -- found in both verse 25 and **verse 26.**

They both have one idea in common, and the first word has an additional idea that I want you to see.

The idea that they both convey to us is that God has done something publicly. He has not concealed the fact that there is ONLY ONE WAY; He has revealed it!

The Lord gave expression to this in His words to the high priest just before He died. See them in John 18:20:

I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing.

"Set forth" in verse 25 gives this added idea: that this whole plan of salvation was something which God determined beforehand, long before Christ ever came!

Peter taught this, too! See 1 Peter 1:18-20.

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you.

So:

- 1) God determined to save men.
- 2) God determined that before creation.
- 3) God determined how He would save men.

This last fact brings us to the terms that are mentioned in our text.

A. God determined, purposed, planned, to save sinners only through Christ.

See verse 25, "Whom God hath set forth . . ."

Surely the passage leaves not doubt about this!

Notice the three different ways the name of the Lord Jesus Christ is given in verses 22, 24, and 26. Nothing could be clearer. If your hope of salvation is not based on Christ, then you have no hope -- only a delusion!

But, why Christ?

1. Because God has said so!

That will be enough for any person who is truly concerned about salvation.

2. Because of His death in which His blood was offered sacrificially.

Sinners are not saved by the perfect life of Christ; they are saved by His death. His perfect life proved that He was qualified to be our Saviour, but His life, His example, saved no one. As Paul will tell us in Rom. 5:10, " . . . we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, . . ."

3. Because, by His death, there is "propitiation."

This means that the righteousness of God has been satisfied, and this has made possible God's public declaration in verse 26.

This is what no man-made system of salvation can promise you. A way of salvation is only as good as it is in the sight of God, only as it is able to satisfy the absolute righteousness of God.

Christ has done what no one else has done or ever could do! And so this is the basic term upon which salvation can become available to sinners.

But let me show you the second term.

- B. Salvation is only "by faith."

"Faith" is not the means of our salvation. If it were, it would be our contribution to salvation. Faith is the instrument by which salvation becomes ours, but Christ is the means of our salvation.

The fact that "faith" is the instrument is brought out in verses 22, 25, and 26.

This means that it is not the result of any kind of

works on our part, but solely because of Christ.

Remember the three essentials of saving faith which we have discussed before:

- 1) Knowledge.
- 2) Belief.
- 3) Trust.

And remember that faith always come through the Word, and only through the Word. Cf. Rom. 10:17.

The last term mentioned here:

- C. Salvation was the same before Christ came that it has been since.

See verse 25b.

This all leads us, last of all, to

III. THE THREE QUESTIONS (Rom. 3:27-31).

- A. The first question and its answer (Rom. 3:27, 28).

Salvation leaves nothing for man to glory in as though he were in any way responsible for it.

- B. The second question and its answer (Rom. 3:29, 30).

Just as there is ONLY ONE WAY for those who lived before Christ and for those who lived after Christ, so there is ONLY ONE WAY for the Jew and for the Gentile.

Any Jew who wants to be saved must come to Christ by faith; any Gentile who wants to be saved must come to Christ by faith.

Griffith Thomas brings out the difference between "by faith" (ἐκ) and "through faith" (διὰ) in verse 30 in this way:

God is the one Who will justify the Jews from the starting point of faith, not of works; and will justify the Gentiles through the instrumentality of faith, not by the yoke of the Law (p. 122).

- C. The third question and its answer (Rom. 3:31).

Paul was not saying that the Law had no purpose. He was saying that the Jews were seeking to use it in the wrong way. But he was also saying that the truth of salvation by faith upholds the Law, sustains its authority, and makes it stand for the reason that God gave it. See Rom. 3:19-20.

Concl: There we have it! Nothing could be clearer.

What a tragedy it would be if someone were to be reading the book of Romans over and over, hearing it taught, and still not really believe in Christ! That could happen even to people who attend — Trinity Bible Church. Your attendance here is no guarantee that you are going to be saved. I wish it were, but it isn't!

Salvation is only through Christ. Is that where your hope is -- in HIM? Is it in Christ alone -- not in Christ plus who you are, nor in some of the good things things that you are doing, but in Christ alone? Do you see yourself as undeserving of salvation as the worst of sinners, and do you believe that anyone, regardless of how deeply he may have fallen in sin, can be saved IF he will believe on the Lord Jesus Christ?

May God make this clear to all of us. May He make us wise in teaching our children, and wise in looking for the changes that accompany true faith, not satisfied with just words of profession either from them, or from ourselves!

John 3:36 teaches us this:

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life;
and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life;
but the wrath of God abideth on him.