

LESSON 3 - Romans 2:17-3:20: NO ONE IS RIGHTEOUS CONTINUED

I. Introduction

In this passage, Paul addresses the Jewish people and highlights the differences between outward religious observance and true inner righteousness. The passage begins by confronting the Jewish reliance on the Law, calling out their tendency to boast about their heritage while failing to meet its demands. Paul emphasizes that merely possessing the Law or following certain rituals is not enough. True righteousness comes from a heart that obeys the Law, not just outward actions.

Paul underscores that the Jews, who teach others, are equally guilty of sin, showing that no one is exempt from judgment based on their actions. The goal of Paul in this passage is to reveal a sobering truth: both Jews and Gentiles are in the same position before God. Their heritage or the Law does not automatically justify the Jews; instead, it is their faithfulness and obedience that matter. The external signs of religiosity cannot save them if their hearts are not aligned with God's will.

Paul then shifts to reveal a universal truth about humanity in Romans 3:1-20. He argues that all people, whether Jew or Gentile, are under sin, and no one is righteous in God's sight. The purpose of The Law is to expose humanity's sinful nature, but it cannot justify anyone. Paul's message is clear and significant: no one can earn salvation through works or adherence to the Law; we all need God's grace.

This passage challenges Jewish and Gentile readers to understand that righteousness comes through faith, not by religious privilege or keeping the law. It sets the stage for the message of salvation by grace, which will be revealed more fully in later chapters.

II. Study the Scriptures: Read the Passage Romans 2:17-3:20

Note your thoughts as you read:

Write down any questions that come to mind as you read:

III. Think Through the Following Questions:

1. In Romans 2:17-24, Paul uses the example of the Jewish people relying on their privileged status (as bearers of the law) but failing to live according to it. How does this idea apply to us today?
2. In Romans 2:25-29, How does Paul redefine what true circumcision is, and why is it significant for both Jews and Gentiles?
3. How does Romans 2:1-16 challenge both Jews and Gentiles in their understanding of God's judgment? In what ways does this passage remind us of God's fairness in His judgment?
4. In Romans 3:1-8, Paul discusses the advantages of being a Jew, but also the reality that both Jews and Gentiles are guilty of sin. What do we learn from Paul's argument about the faithfulness of God even when humans fail? How does this affect our understanding of God's justice?
5. Why do you think Paul uses such strong language in describing the universal condition of humanity when he says, "There is no one righteous, not even one."? Romans 3:9-18
6. Paul states (Romans 3:19-20) that through the law, we become conscious of sin. What does this teach us about the purpose of the law? How should this impact our view of salvation by grace rather than by works of the law?

IV. Lessons Learned: Are there any new things you learned from this passage today?

V. Application: How Do You think this will impact your thinking and/or actions going forward?