

**Monday, September 19, 2022 ◻ Romans 3:9–18**

*Questions from the Scripture text: What does v9 ask about those with right doctrine, by comparison to the self-righteous and antinomians whom v5–8 have been referencing? What is the answer? Why? Where else has this been seen (v10)? How many righteous are there (cf. Ps 14:1)? How many are there who understand (v11, cf. Ps 14:2)? Who seek God? How many have done what two things in v12 (cf. Ps 14:3)? How many have done what third thing? What three parts of them offer no remedy (v13 (cf. Ps 5:9, 140:3)? What else can't help; with what is it full (v14, cf. Ps 10:7)? What can't make up for this (v15, cf. Isa 59:7)? Where do they end up when they try (v16)? What can't they know/find (v17, cf. Isa 59:8)? What can't/won't they even see (v18, cf. Ps 36:1)?*

**What should the believer be willing to admit about himself, apart from Christ?** Romans 3:9–18 looks forward to the sermon in the midweek prayer meeting. In these ten verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **even those who do not make the errors represented in vv5–8 are, in themselves, so pervasively sinful that there can be no remedy for their sin in anything they think, say, or do.**

There are “Christian” radio stations that like to bill their music as “positive and encouraging,” and certainly a Jew who didn’t pay close enough attention might have thought that the Psalter was that way toward him. But the one who “teaches himself” (cf. 2:21) from the Scripture ought not indulge in such delusions.

Coming out of 3:5–8, our remaining fleshliness might tempt us to think that we are better than those who argue against the fairness of God to judge unbelievers in the church, or those who argue that the gospel of grace is a good excuse to sin. But the idea of our superiority would also be a delusion. The apostle stops us in our tracks with one question and answer: “Are we better than they? Not at all!” (v9). Instead, he quotes extensively from at least six of God’s songs to remind us that what comes from us is all wicked and unprofitable; the good that can remedy our sin can come only from Christ, not from ourselves.

**Better theology or intentions cannot remedy our sin, v11–12.** Quoting from the opening section of Psalm 14, the apostle reminds us that if there is any good/better theology in us, it certainly wasn’t from us that it came. We are wicked in Adam (v10b, cf. 5:12–21), and this affects both our understanding (v11a) and our intentions (v12b). From/in ourselves, we can’t even rightly say that we “mean well”!

In fact, we are so opposite our original/holy nature (v12a) that all the benefit that we could all produce, taken together, adds up to zero (v12b)! This is because there isn’t a single one of us that has a single thought, intention, or deed on the “good” side of the ledger (v12c). If our hope was to get our doctrine good enough, or our resolve sincere enough, that we could make a beginning of remedying our sin and guilt, then we have no hope at all.

**Better speech or worship cannot remedy our sin, v13–14.** Now, the apostle quotes from Psalm 5, 140, and 10. If we thought that perhaps there was some form of good speech—prayers, apologies, worship, etc.—that could remedy our sin, we would be greatly mistaken. Life cannot come from us; opening our throat is opening a place of death (v13a). The best words that can be on our tongue simply expose how opposite our nature they actually are (v13b). That which comes from our lips is so far from being able to heal that it only causes further harm and death (v13c). Our mouths produce not blessing but cursing, not health but bitterness (v14).

So, just as there was no remedy for our sin in our thoughts or wills, there certainly is not any remedy from our speech. Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks (cf. Matt 12:34), which in light of v10–12 is why the tongue is untamable and full of deadly poison (cf. Ja 3:8). Any attempt to bless God with the tongue is belied by our use of it at other times (cf. Ja 3:9–12). No, if any genuinely good speech comes out of us, it will not come from us in order to remedy our sin. Rather, the Lord must remedy our sin if any true good will ever be spoken by us.

**Better deeds cannot remedy our sin, v15–18.** If we are not able to muster proper thoughts or words, what about deeds? Surely there must be some penance, some restitution, some atoning service we can perform? Now, the apostle shifts to applying Isaiah 59:7–8.

Alas, our feet are no better off than the rest of us; they are “swift to shed blood” (v15). Our “ways” (v16–17) are no better than our words. Why? Because it is not the reverential fear of God that drives our actions (v18). Whatever does not proceed from faith is sin (Rom 14:23), but there are none who fear God (cf. Ps 36:1).

By the time we finish v18, we may have forgotten where we began in v9. Are “we” any better than they? The apostle, and those who are with him in avoiding the errors of others, are in the same position with respect to atonement and righteousness. If by God’s grace, we are with the apostle, it is still true of us: nothing we think, nothing we say, and nothing we do can remedy our sin or be our righteousness. We need a remedy and atonement that comes from outside us. And that is exactly what the apostle is proclaiming in the gospel: the righteousness of God that is for us by faith from start to finish!

Whom are you tempted to consider yourself better than? When you have a sense of your sin, what does your flesh tempt you to think that you can do to fix it, or make it up to God? From where, then, can there be any forgiveness for you? From where can there be help for you?

*Sample prayer: Lord, we thank You for Your marvelous patience with such sinners as we are. Forgive us for the folly of thinking that we are deserving of such patience or have some good in us by which we can remedy our own condition. Grant that Your Spirit would bless Your Word to us, so that we would see and accept the totality of our depravity. And grant that Your Spirit would bless Your Word to us, so that we would see Your righteousness for us in Yourself, in Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. In Him, forgive us and help us, for we ask it in His Name, AMEN!*

Suggested songs: ARP32AB “What Blessedness” or TPH433 “Amazing Grace”

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Romans chapter 3 verses 9 through 18. These are God's words. What then are we better than they? Not at all for we have previously charged but Jews and Greeks that they are all understand as it is written. There is none righteous? No, not one. There is none who understands There is.

None. There's seeks. After God and have all turned aside, they have together become unprofitable. There is none. Who does good? No, not one. The throat is an open tomb with their tongues. They have practiced deceit. The poison of asps is under their lips. His mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.

Their feet are swift to shed blood destruction and misery are in their ways. And the way of peace, they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.

So far the reading of God's inspired and inherent work.

Who could be so wicked? As those who in verse 5 said, God is unjust to inflict wrath or to correct. As in verse 7, God for judging us as sinners since he gets glory out of it. After all, or to take the fact that God gets glory out of judging sinners and says, see, We should sin to evil that.

Good. May come as in verse 8, whose condemnation at the end of verse 8 is just as righteous, who could be. So Wicked. As they Well, the answer in verse 9 as we are plot. Then are we better than day? Not at all. For we have previously charged, both Jews and Greeks that they are all understand.

Which means that from ourselves, we too are under sin, getting your theology right.

Getting the formula or formula of how theology works. Correct. Does not deliver you from sin Speaking right things and right sounding things. Even speaking worshiping things. Or sorry. Sounding things does not save you from sin. It's not make up for sin. Doesn't take away your guilt. Does not make your sinfulness less.

There are no acts of restitution or tournament that we can perform to make up for sin. And so less. We read up to this point from Romans 1, verse 18, through Romans 3, verse 8 and think, whoo, thank goodness. We're not as bad as those Greeks or those Jews or those Greeks who thought and said and did all those things because we think differently and we speak differently and we do differently.

We are reminded here that there is no good thing that can come out of a sinner. And of course, that's setting us up for the last portion of chapter 3 in, which he's going to return to that wonderful declaration of the Gospel, where can righteousness be revealed. Remember, ever.

Ever, since verse 18 of chapter 1. We've been hearing that the wrath of God is revealed and install unrighteousness and ungodliness of man, but he's excited to go to Rome to preach the gospel. Why? Because in the gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed for sinners. The righteousness. That is from faith and forfeit and so that we might be well prepared to rejoice over the righteousness of God.

That is revealed for us. We must be convinced that there is no righteousness from ourselves, except that, which is in God, which is from God and more to the point is real C. As we move on towards the end of the chapter, There is no righteousness for us, except that, which is in Jesus.

If you have Jesus, then you have His righteousness. And if you don't have Jesus, you have no righteousness at all. Even if you have good theology about Jesus, you may still not have Jesus, and have no righteousness at all. Even if you speak, lots of words about Jesus and two Jesus, you still might not have Jesus and you have no righteousness at all.

Even if you do a lot of actions that you say are taught by Jesus and say our four Jesus, you might still not have Jesus at all. You have no righteousness and so the apostle here is quoting from all over the Psalter. And Isaiah very familiar, passages the Salter, which that Jesus in particular would have sung Isaiah.

And the servant song at the end, would have been a favorite part of scripture for them as well. And he's demonstrating that nothing we think or feel and nothing we speak and nothing. We do can remedy sin. In fact, it does the opposite. They begins in verses 11 and 12 quoting from Psalm 14.

He says there is none righteous? No, not one, there's none, who understands there's none, who seeks after God. They have all turned aside. They have together become unprofitable. There is none. Who does good? No, not one. And so here quoting from Psalm 14 versus one through three. He is saying that nothing we think or intend or feel our minds are emotions are wills or choices.

None of those things are ever good unless it comes from God himself. There are none. Who is righteous? There is none. Who understands whatever? They think they understand, they don't know it in a right way. There's none who seeks after God. Whatever it is that they sincerely desire. It is not God himself that.

They sincerely desire. This is why it's so insane. That the latter part of the 20th century, they're arose, something called seeker sensitive, or secret friendly worship or church, in which they meant the wicked. Not the Lord. They didn't mean that the father is seeking worshipers the way, the Lord Jesus told the woman at the well and John chapter 4, they meant those sincere people who are groping after the Drew got But they're not, If they are seeking after the true God, then that has come from God by regeneration and they will find Him in God's ways, not in his way, not in their ways.

So you don't try to make church a comfortable place for them. You make church a place that stores us, the Lord himself says, so that he may bring them comfort by his gospel in Jesus Christ.

They're not seeking after God, they have turned aside, they in themselves and all of them put together are unprofitable. The total cumulative amount of spiritual good. That all of humanity can produce apart from, Jesus is zero. There is none. Who does good? No, not one better, theology, or better a intentions cannot remedy our sin.

Because that which comes out of a man apart from Jesus. Even is theology and his intentions and his sincerity all that, this wicked and profitable. The good that can remedy sin can come only from Christ and not from any mere man. If our hope is that we will get our doctrine good enough that we will be okay with God or that.

Our new resolve will be sincere enough that we can make a beginning of fixing our sin or our guilt. If that is our hope, then we have no hope at all. There's no hope at all in your theology or in your intentions. The hope is in Christ, and if you had good theology, that's what it would tell you.

Then in verses 13 and 14. He turns from our nature, and our thinking, and our seeking, our intentions, He turns from the heart. And the mind to the mouth. Perhaps

there's some form of good speech, some sort of prayer that you can say, or right way of apologizing to God or worship that you can offer, that can remedy your sin.

Well, if you think that way, then you're greatly mistaken. We often feel that way. I think we have a sense of our sin and we come to God and we search after the right words so that we can produce words that are sincere enough for Sorion off or worshipping enough, but what comes out of our mouths, cannot help us.

The right words are the ones that say Lord, Jesus alone. Is my help. Even my speaking and calling him. My help is not my help but only Jesus. What do we find you? Open your mouth. And what what's coming out of your throat? It's pretty nasty picture. You don't want to open a tomb, right?

When Jesus says to open the tomb where Lazarus was in there and Martha whose hoping that Lazarus would be raised from the dead.

And but she says, it's been in there four days. Lord, he stinks. Well, that's the picture At the beginning of verse 13. We think we're gonna open our mouths and out of them are going to come. All these beautiful flowery words in this beautiful smelling adoration and worship and sorryness for our sin.

But when a center opens his mouth, what comes out is the putrescent foul. Stench of his corrupted decayed. Decomposed soul. Their throat is an open tomb or an open grave. It's according here in verses, 13 and 14 first, now from Psalm 5. And then from Psalm 140 and then from Psalm 10, what about the tongue?

What does the tongue do? Well, even the even if the tongue says a right thing, it is belonging a wrong heart to just practicing deceit. Well, what about our lips? Well, our lips do not produce healing. But death, the poison of asps is under their lips. The mouth should have been full of blessing and worship and sometimes it appears to be.

But remember what James says in chapter 3 verses 9 through 12 out of our mouth, we bless the Lord. And out of our mouth, we curse our brother. The tongue is untamed. Untameable source of deadly, poison, the poison, the masks, under the lips in verse 13. It. Anyone who could tame it would be a perfect man.

No man. Contained at all And so because our mouth is full of cursing and bitterness, it makes even our right worship the right sounding worship offensive because of the inconsistency between it and what we are than ourselves. Remember, this is us apart from Christ Christ, alone can be our goodness other.

There's nothing that can come out of our mouths. No form of speech. No form of worship that can atone for us or fix our said, no, if any genuinely good speech does come out of us. It doesn't come from us. In order to remedy our sin, it comes because the Lord who remedied our sin is now producing.

Good in us. Well, what about our actions? And that's covered in versus 15 through 18. Their feet are swift to shed blood destruction and misery are in their ways. And the way of peace, they have not known. Our ways are no better than our works. Why? Because whatever does not proceed from faith is sin apart from being made alive by the spirit and trusting in Jesus Christ.

And Christ's righteousness being worked out in us. Everything we do increases our guilt. It's not just neutral, it doesn't just fail to atone The produces more guilt. That needs atoning because it's not done out of the fear of God. It's not done. Not of love for him. That's not done.

Not of a desire to know him and to make him known he and his glory would be praised and displayed. Now, the fear of God is not, what is before their eyes, something else is the chief desire of a heart that has not been made right just through faith in Jesus Christ.

And if something else is the desire, then the feet are not running to that, which is good. If something else is desired the desire, then there can be no restitution or making up for what we've done or penance the spiritual good or forgiveness that is attained. Unment or any You can't do anything for God.

Mix up for that. What? God, produces an us and of course, the believer knows all those things. And the believer knows what Paul's about to say about Jesus, being our only righteousness and only the, the only good that can be a man. That's in a man is what is from Christ and the only good that can count for a man is that which Christ himself has done, not even the good that Christ produce us in the man, but we're believed we, as believers sometimes.

Forget, we see the way these Jews over here, think or these Gentiles over here, think.

And we think oh well I thank you, God, that I am not like other men like that. Pharisee. And in the synagogue and Paul says, no, there's no room for that kind of thinking among Christians, because a Christian is one whose mouth has been stopped. As we'll see, and a couple of verses actually, in the next verse after this week verse 19.

No for Christians. We say nothing. I thought or intended could be the remedy for my sin. Nothing like speak. Not even in worship, or prayer can remedy my sin. Nothing. I do can remedy my sin. I am no better in myself than any of those of whom I say.

Their condemnation is just and as Christ who is my righteousness Christ alone. It's an important that we know that about ourselves and that we maintain that humility. So that we won't just say as a theological formula, Are we any better than they not at all? But that we will feel it in ourselves.

Are we any better than that? Not at all as Christ. Who is good and any good that is in me. This Christ from him and through them and the union with him, That's right.

Our Father in heaven, help us for. We are tempted to think that we are better than they. We often have and that since rising up in us, especially the compared to those who have such horrible theology and say, such wicked thing thinking that they are being theologically clever. So we our tended to think that we are better than they are or at least feel it.

Have a sense of it. O Lord, have mercy change. Our thoughts form them according to the portions of your word that the Apostle quotes here, according to this portion of your word, which you wrote by the Apostle, we pray that by forming our thoughts. According to these words, you would remove from us.

That's stupid sense of superiority and give us a sense of humility before you and gratitude that those who could not think or speak or do a single thing that was good. Could be the receivers, the recipients of such grace such love that Christ died for us. But his righteousness is counted for us that we have this union with him and fellowship with him.

That your spirit gives us from which we can begin to lift help us O. Lord to see that Christ is all of the good that is counted for us. And that any of the good that we find coming from us is not from us, but from him in us and awesome, man, help us O, Lord, drive these things home to our hearts, we ask in Jesus name, amen.