

Romans, pt.6, 3.21–31, 10.8.06

The Road To God

Introduction

1. Story of returning from Franklin, TN and being lost in Dallas.
2. Paul has laid out all the bad news about mankind...read selected verses...review last week's message.
3. "but now" – the rest of the story from trip back to TN...Paul shows us how to move out of our lostness and on to the road to God.. Paul's moving from judgment to justification.
4. Read text in NLT.
5. This is the John 3.16 of Paul's letter and some consider it the most important passage in all the Bible. Martin Luther said, "the chief point and very central place of the whole Bible." Others say, "the most important Bible passage penned."... "the very heart of the Bible."

The Road To Right Standing With God Is Through Faith In Jesus – 3.21–23

- "But Now" – everything changes with these words. It's like 2 Cor.5.17. You may be under the load of sin & guilt & judgement & conviction..."but now"...
- "a righteousness from God" (NIV); "being right in his sight" (NLT) – righteous means I am completely right in the sight of God; it isn't suggesting I am completely right in all my actions, but from a legal standing I am perfect in God's sight.
- "not by obeying the law" – so contrary to our lives, b/c this is how you are known as a good student, employee & citizen. Paul's saying, "You aren't made right with God by obeying the rules."
- V.22 is key. You are made right by putting your complete trust in Jesus to take away your sin. **THERE IS NO MORE IMPORTANT VERSE IN THE BIBLE**
 - i. He reemphasizes it – 3.25b, 26, 27, 28, 30b

- ii. “Faith” or “trust” – means a complete confidence; strong belief; it’s more than mental assent, but rather wholehearted rest in Jesus.
 - iii. Estella’s word: That which we have allowed be to settled in our hearts will be the result of what we believe. Me: If I believe in Jesus, my heart is settled/peaceful.
- This (belief, faith, trust) is the key divergence between Christianity and all other world religions...among the monotheistic religions
 - i. The Muslims follow the 5 Pillars
 - ii. Jews observe the Law
 - iii. Christians place their faith in Christ.
- V.22b–23. The road can be walked by everyone – “we all can be saved in this same way, no matter who we are or what we’ve done.” Can God save the worst sinner on his death bed? You better believe it. But the road to God can only be walked by those who know they are a failure according to God’s standard. If you think you’re okay, then you won’t walk down this road. The “American good life” is actually the “the American great lie.” God’s standard is 100% righteousness, 100% of the time. No one met God’s perfect standard. Morally speaking, whether you find yourself at the bottom of the Dead Sea or at the top of Mt.Everest, neither one can touch the stars. God’s standard is too high/great.
 - i. “sinned” – archery term which means “to miss the mark”. Missed the bull’s eye
 - ii. “fall short” – athletic term means to fall behind in a race. We’re dragging up the rear unable to stay up with God’s standard.
- The road to God is only through faith in Jesus.

The Road Was Laid By The Father’s Kindness & Paved By The Son’s Blood – 3.24–25a

- These verses are critical in understanding salvation and are gorged with theological significance
- Key concepts are: God's Grace, justification, redemption & propitiation/atonement.
- God's grace –
 - The key to understanding how salvation occurred is the phrase, "by his grace". NLT: "his gracious kindness". Often, people have a positive view of Jesus, but aren't sure how to take His father. We aren't quite sure if he's for us or against us. Jesus has all the personality and the father is cold and distant, yet this is untrue. Jesus said, "You see the father, when you see me." The same tenderness & compassion for mankind that was seen in the ministry of Jesus is expressed by the Father today.
 - **Grace is God's showing us favor when we didn't deserve it.** It isn't overlooking the wrong, but rather it's experiencing the wrong & then blessing & being kind to the person.
 - Shutting Kna-Knaws fingers in the car door. She was so patient and responded with so much kindness.
 - We sin against God's standard; he sees it; he blesses us.
 - It was given to us "freely" – as a gift...you didn't earn it.
- Justification – "justified freely by his grace" – **It is the legal action of God whereby he declares sinners completely innocent in his sight.**
 - My conversion experience. I felt deep conviction of sin, but when I asked God to forgive me I felt a burden lift from me and a freshness fill my heart (each person's experience is different). This burden lifting from me was the weight of my sin being forgiven and the declaration of "Innocent" being spoken over me.
- Redemption – is a marketplace term. **It was the term used of buying a slave and then setting the slave free.** In Mk10.45, Js said he came "to give his life as a ransom for many." We are held bound by sin. We are incapable of delivering ourselves but Jesus' blood has set me free.

- Some of you may be thinking, “I’ll never get victory over this sin in my life.” Jesus has already set you free...don’t listen to the voices of the past or your enemy, listen to the truth, “You are set free.” **A slave’s life doesn’t change overnight but his status does.** It will take him some time to begin to fully enjoy the benefits of his freedom. His mindset and standard of living takes time to catch up with his status. It may be the same for you,
- Atonement or propitiation. The Father presented Son as the one who would turn aside His wrath against sin. The Old Covenant sacrificial system. They presented an offering to God for their sin and the offering was consumed in the fire. The fire illustrates two things. First, God completely doing away with our sin. Second, God pouring out his righteous anger against sin.
 - Some people don’t like this idea, b/c it sounds like we’re appeasing vengeful God, but God has put w/in us these same feelings about injustice. When we see a blatant sin, we think something ought to be done about it.
 - Example of a guy driving too fast – you hope he gets caught by the police...get punished
 - Example of people running a scam against the elderly – you hope they go to jail.
 - Example of the man who killed the children in the Amish school house – if he were still alive you would want him to be punished.
 - In all three cases, you wouldn’t say, “It’s okay...no big deal...let the crook go...the murderer was mentally unstable so give him probation.
 - Application: The sense that sin must be punished was placed in us by God, in part to give us understanding why His Son had to be punished for our sins. Jesus experienced my punishment. My sins carry the penalty of death and Jesus experienced my punishment. He experienced my punishment and shielded me from God’s wrath. In the end, you will either

let Jesus be your propitiation or you will experience God's full anger against sin.

We Must Walk The Road To God In Humility & Gratitude – 3.25b–31

- V.25bf. – Paul is saying God wasn't unjust in letting the sins of former generations go unpunished (Acts 14.16; 17.30). Rather, there was a fullness of time in which he dealt with mankind's sin through the death of His Son.
- V.27f: The Key Thought is that there is no longer any boasting. Neither the law abiders nor the morally pure can approach God & say, "Accept me b/c I'm so faithful to your law...so obedient to your ways...so good to others. No..."
- Only those who acknowledge they are sinners and can't be made right in God's sight will receive forgiveness/justification.
- There is no room for pride on the road to right standing with God. If you think you are closer to God than others b/c of your knowledge, position, or experience, you are on the opposite end of the spectrum. Only those who agree with God about their condition and ability will ever receive forgiveness.
 - Stuart Briscoe's story of the fellow marine he had to carry many miles due to his feet that had blistered so badly they became like pieces of raw meat. He resisted, but finally came to the point he realized he couldn't make to the end of the assignment w/o wholly trusting in Stuart to carry him. It was hard from him to admit he couldn't make it w/o being carried. As it is with many people when it comes to a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.
 - You must admit you can't make it on your own...

Lord's Supper preparation

- This meal is open to all who have confessed their sins and placed their trust in Jesus...followed the Lord in baptism.
- General instructions

- As you take the cup, admit to him you couldn't make into His presence w/o the broken body & shed blood of Jesus.
- Grace, Redemption, Justification & Propitiation are