

March 7, 2021 - Teddy Tash

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Preacher: Ted Tash

[0:00] We welcome you to the media ministry of Bethel Community Church, knowing Jesus, making Jesus known. Good morning. Yeah, thanks. Now that our skiing group has joined us, we can begin. Thank you guys for getting here.

If you will turn with me to Romans chapter three. I don't see Mike Carey, so I guess he's still on the mountain. He was the one I would think wouldn't make it, so that makes sense.

If you'll turn to Romans chapter three, we'll get a handout handed out here, and I would encourage you to take one of those. We will go off it quite a bit. So we're going to be in Romans chapter three today. We got the first 20 verses of the chapter.

And I'll tell you, there's really two main parts to this whole message. So I'll kind of introduce those and then we'll get into it. But the first point here is that the whole world is guilty.

All men are sinful. You could call it total depravity, whatever you want to say. But the whole world is guilty. That has been the theme of Romans up until this point.

[1:20] And it is the theme of Romans three. That really is the main point or whatever you want to call it of this passage.

So the whole world is guilty. That's point number one. Point number two is we're going to start transitioning from this thought of guilty, guilty, guilty to justification by faith.

Actually, if you'd look in your Bibles after verse 20, which is the end of our passage today, between verse 20 and verse 21 in my Bible, between those two verses, there's something that the publisher has added in.

And it's the Roman numeral two, and then it says justification by faith in Christ. Now, that's how Schofield, you know, broke it up.

Warren Wearsby, whose commentary we're kind of loosely following here at Bethel, he breaks the book of Romans down into 13 sections, and he too breaks Roman numeral two after Romans three, verse 20.

[2:24] So all this time from Romans chapter one until the end of our passage today, the theme is that the whole world is guilty. And then we transition after today. Really, the transition starts in verse 20 into something else.

And that something else is justification by faith. On the handout, I put in parentheses there, righteousness. The commentary by Wearsby that, again, we're kind of loosely following is titled Be Right.

How to Be Right with God, Yourself, and Others. And so be right. That word justification or justified means to be declared righteous or to become righteous.

And so we're going to see that the righteousness of God is revealed by faith, that our justification comes by faith. And so the point of today is to really just establish the point that the whole world is guilty and then just start making that transition into justification or righteousness revealed by faith.

And Dave Baumgartner will run with that starting next week. But with that in mind, let's go ahead and pray, and then we'll get into it. God, we just love you, and we thank you. And thank you that we can get together today, Lord, freely in this country.

[3:35] And thank you for your word. And as we're going to see here in just a little bit, Lord, thank you for seeking us, even while we are sinners, not only seeking us, Lord, but providing a way for salvation through faith in Christ.

And so we just thank you for all these things. Pray you bless our time in Jesus' name. The passage today, we're going to be dealing with Jews mostly.

And so I do want to start with a little bit of a joke that contains Jews. It's not a Jew joke, but it is a joke that contains Jews. And so a priest and a minister and a rabbi go out on this trip out into the West.

And before going into the wilderness, they meet at the local saloon there. And they say, you know, we're going to spend a week out in the wilderness. We'll see if we can make any converts while we're out there.

You never know, you know, who or what we'll run into. And so they go out there. And sure enough, a week later, they meet back at the same saloon. And there they are, the priest and this minister and the rabbi.

[4:42] And sure enough, the priest, well, I'll be darned, he's got a grizzly bear sitting there next to him at the saloon. And they say, well, what happened? And he said, I came across this grizzly bear in the wilderness.

And I read to him from the catechism. And I sprinkled him with some holy water. And sure enough, he's a Catholic now. And they go to the minister. And I'll be darned, there's a grizzly bear next to him, too. And they say, minister, what happened?

He said, well, I was, you know, I was walking by the stream. And this bear came along. And I asked if he wanted to be baptized. And so here he is, a Baptist convert. And they get to the rabbi, and he's in a complete body cast.

And what you can see from his head is just a little bit of bandage with his, you know, eyes poking out. And they say, rabbi, what happened? So, well, looking back, I probably shouldn't have started with a circumcision.

So, there you go. So, with that in mind, Romans 3. Verse 1, you'll see it's in there. Romans 3, 1 and 2. It says, what advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of the circumcision?

[5:51] Much in every way, chiefly because to them were committed the oracles, or the word, or the law of God. Now, verses 1 through 8 are pretty confusing.

And we're going to get into those in a second. But I just want to introduce the law there. Paul brings that up. What advantage did the Jew have? They had the written word of God. They had the law. So, like I said, at the start of chapter 1, all the way to 3.20, the theme is that the whole world is guilty.

And in chapter 1, we see that the Gentiles are guilty by creation. And chapter 1, verse 18 to 21 or so says that the wrath of God is revealed against all men because God has shown himself to all men through creation.

And it says specifically his divine nature or his deity, and then also his eternal power. Those two things can be clearly seen in creation.

And not only does it say that he showed men this, it says that all men understand this when they see creation. That's what it says there in chapter 1. So, through creation, all men see and understand that God is God and that God is eternally powerful.

[7:09] And yet it says they were not thankful, and they hardened their hearts, and they did not glorify him. And the whole spiral starts, and it ends, you know, with God's judgment. And so, by creation, the Gentile is guilty.

You go to chapter 2, verses 14 and 15. It says that when the Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, and their conscience also bearing witness between themselves, their thoughts accusing them in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ.

And so he says, look, the Gentiles don't have the law, but they have the idea of the law written in their hearts. They're guilty by their conscience. You know, when Daisy, my one-year-old, comes into the room crying, and she's hitting herself in the head, and we go to Lily and say, hey, Lily, why is your sister crying?

She says, I don't know. You say, well, did you hit her? No. Did you hit her in the head? Because she's telling us that you clearly hit her in the head. Well, you know, maybe. Why does a

three-year-old feel the need to lie about that, to cover her sin?

Why does she feel the need to lie about that? Well, her conscience is bearing witness against her. And that's what David said. You look at, when he had chapter two, you look at any culture around the world, and there's this idea of right and wrong that is written in the heart of man.

[8:42] And that's God-given. And so not only does creation testify against the Gentile, but the conscience also will testify against the Gentile. So then you get to chapter three, and we start talking about the Jews, and he says that they had the written word of God.

They had the oracles of God. They had the law of God. And so in verses one through eight of our passage, you have about ten different rhetorical questions.

And so it gets really confusing. And if you read through it, I'd probably lose you. But the best way to think about it is almost this back-and-forth interrogation. Paul is speaking almost in the third person to himself, almost through like the eyes of a doubter or an accuser, someone who would be like a Jewish defender.

And then Paul is answering this defender, giving the account. But he's answering questions with questions, and it's real confusing.

Verses one through eight, like I said, there's ten different questions in there. But the gist of it is what I have on the sheet there. And it starts with, what advantage then has the Jew? What advantage is it to be Jewish? And Paul's answer is that the Jews were given the word of God.

[9:59] But unfortunately, the Jewish response to that has largely been unbelief. Now, obviously, there are believers, you know, in the Old Testament and early part of the New Testament, Jewish believers.

But on the whole, in large part, the Jewish response to God's word was largely unbelief. So, yes, the Jews were God's chosen people. However, the Jews still, despite being chosen, still rejected God.

So then the question is, well, if the Jews were God's chosen people and they have not believed, does that mean that God is going to go back on his promises? Yes, he chose them. Yes, they didn't believe.

Does that mean that God's going to just forget about them and go back on his word? And then you get to verse 4, and Paul says, Certainly not indeed let God be true, but every man a liar.

So he says, man, if there's ever a question of who's going to go back on their promises or ever a question of who's right and who's wrong, God will always be found to be true, but man will be found to be a liar. And so the accuser then has almost a logical question here.

[11:04] He says, well, if that's the case, then how could God judge? How could God condemn? If the Jews were God's chosen people and then they rejected that and God is still going to maintain his promises and keep his promises to them, isn't their unrighteousness causing the righteousness of God to increase?

And if that's the case, then shouldn't they just keep on sinning that grace may abound? It's what you get into later in Romans. You know, if Jewish unbelief causes the promises of God to be established, isn't that to God's glory?

Shouldn't they just keep on in unbelief? And while that might be logical, you can clearly see the error there, right? We do not continue in sin so that grace may abound.

And that's finally the question that comes up in verse 8. Isn't the logical conclusion to keep on sinning that more good may come? And Paul's answer to that is, of course, certainly not.

Anyone who would say something like that or believe something like that, you know, they're going to be under condemnation and their condemnation is just. That is such an illogical argument that, you know, our unbelief establishes God's promises, so therefore let's keep on believing.

[12:20] So like I said, I know it's a confusing section there, but that's kind of this back and forth interrogation that Paul has. But then you get to verse 9 in the conclusion of it. If you boil all that down, the conclusion is, what then?

Are we Jews better than they? Not at all. So yes, the Jews had the written word of God. Yes, they had the law. But does that make them better than the Gentiles?

Not at all. We have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. So there you have that point.

The whole world is guilty. Jews by the law, Gentiles by creation and by conscience, but all men are under sin.

So that's sort of the first nine verses. Verses 10 to 18, Paul's going to go back to the law. He's going to go back to the Old Testament and lay out the case against the Jews and really against all mankind.

[13:22] It says, you want to see what the written word of God says? I'll tell you what it says. And it's a very damning section here in verses 10 through 18. You know, in Christianity and the Christian religion, there's a lot of debate over various doctrines.

You know, election people debate all the time. End times is something that people debate. And certainly for some of these things, there is a degree of ambiguity. End times, for example, I think, you know, there's some ambiguity there.

But the one thing I think everybody agrees on is that we're all sinners, right? The total depravity of man is how some people would put it.

And my definition of that would be that the entirety of mankind is entirely sinful. The entirety of mankind is entirely sinful. And Paul lays out the case here, quoting from the Old Testament, in these next eight verses or so.

So let's read those, starting in verse 10. And again, this is with the mindset that the whole world is guilty. Both Jews and Greeks, they are all under sin. As it is written, verse 10, there is none righteous.

[14:34] No, not one. There is none who understands. There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside. They have together become unprofitable.

There is none who does good. No, not one. Their throat is an open tomb. With their tongues, they have practiced deceit.

The poison of asps is under their lips. Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways. In the way of peace, they have not known.

There is no fear of God before their eyes. Paul's saying, man, I hope I didn't make myself clear. You know, they're all under sin. And here's why.

There's none righteous. None who understands. None who seeks after God. They've all turned aside. None who does good. No, not one. You know, man, he lays it out there. The first part of verse 10 there comes from Psalm 14.

[15:32] In the first verse of Psalm 14 is, The fool has said in his heart, there is no God. I mean, that's where it all starts. It's just a total rejection of God.

The total depravity of man. You know, in nursing or medicine, you do what's called like a head-to-toe assessment.

So there's a few nurses in the room and you do a head-to-toe assessment. And that's kind of the first thing they'll teach you in nursing school is how to do this head-to-toe assessment. And the idea is you start at the top of the head and you work your way down to the toes.

It's pretty straightforward. And you just examine every body system along the way. So there's this term that you'll see in any medical chart. It's all capital letters and it's PERL or PERLA.

And you start with the eyeballs, you shine a little flashlight in there. And what happens when you shine a light in the eyes, right? Your pupil is supposed to constrict. And then when you take the light away, it should dilate back out.

[16:32] Well, if you have a brain injury or you had a stroke or there's something wrong, something seriously wrong, when you shine that light in there, it will stay dilated. It won't constrict or maybe one eye will and one eye won't.

It's a very serious thing. And so at the top of any head-to-toe assessment, you'll see this thing PERL. PERL is the pupils are equally round and reactive to light. And so obviously on just about everybody, that's the case.

So that is shorthanded PERL, boom, it's at the top. But it's this head-to-toe assessment. The idea is by the time you move your way all the way down, you know, listen to the heart, listen to the lungs, listen to the stomach, you know, examine the legs.

By the time you go from head to toe, you have a pretty good idea of what's wrong with somebody, right? You have a pretty thorough assessment. You've done a very thorough evaluation that should lead you to a pretty accurate diagnosis.

So Paul sort of does that here. You know, he goes through all the different body systems. He says their throat is an open tomb. With their tongues, they have practiced deceit.

[17:35] Not good so far. It says the poison of asps is under their lips. I don't even know what that means, but it sounds bad. The poison of asps is under their lips.

It says, you know, what about their mouth? It's full of cursing and bitterness. Yeah, that's right. You work in the shop, right? Yeah. Full of cursing and bitterness.

It says their feet are swift to shed blood. You know, we read this, and for me, it's easy to project that onto, yeah, he's talking about sinners, you know. He's not talking about me. He's talking about sinners.

But shoot, I mean, that is everyone in here. We are all under sin. Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Feet are swift to shed blood. What else? It says, talking about their eyes.

There is no fear of God before their eyes. There's no reverence, no respect for God at all in man's eyes. Wiersbe, he kind of takes, you know, Paul takes the anatomical approach there.

[18:33] Wiersbe boils it down to this. He says man's thoughts, man's will, man's actions, and man's ways are entirely sinful. You know, what else is left? If your thoughts are bad, if your will is bad, your intent is bad, if your actions are bad, and your ways are bad, what else is there?

I mean, it's all bad. It is entirely sinful. The entirety of man, entirely sinful. Total depravity. And so you boil all that down, and you get to verse 19, and it says, Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and that what? That all the world may become guilty before God. There it is again. The whole world is guilty. The entirety of man is entirely sinful. That every mouth may be stopped.

And so then you get to verse 20, and it says, Therefore, by the deeds of the law, no flesh will be justified.

Now, I do want you to turn back a page to chapter 2, verse 13. And it says that not the hearers, this is chapter 2, verse 13, because there's seemingly a discrepancy here.

[19:50] It says, For not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified. The doers of the law will be justified.

Well, then back in 3.20, it says that by the deeds of the law, no flesh will be justified. So do you see the discrepancy there? There's almost like a paradox. Chapter 2 says the doers of the law will be justified.

Here it says by the deeds of the law, no flesh will be justified. So how do we reconcile that? Well, I would say that if you could do the whole law, you would be just.

If you could keep the whole law, you would be justified. But you can't. I mean, does that make sense? You can't. The law is a picture of God's absolute righteousness, his absolutely perfect standard that no one can live up to.

Why? Because the entirety of man is entirely sinful. You know, what does James write? He writes that if you keep the whole law, even if you were to keep the whole law, and yet stumble at one point, one point, it's like you broke them all.

[21:00] It's like you're guilty of all. So yes, if you could keep the whole law, you would be justified, but you can't. So therefore, by the deeds of the law, no flesh will be justified in his sight.

And so a good question is then, well, why the law? What purpose does the law serve if there's no justification that can come through it?

We'll finish the rest of the verse here. It says, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. You know, the law was never given to give life.

That was never the intent of the law. The intent of the law was to reveal to us the knowledge of our sin. Keep your finger in Romans 3 and turn with me to Galatians 3.

Galatians 3, Paul gives a very similar response here. In fact, in verse 19, well, actually, let me read 18.

[22:11] He says, for if the inheritance, and he's talking about the inheritance of Abraham, if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise that God gave it to Abraham by promise.

So he's saying the inheritance, the salvation is never going to come by the law. And so in 19, it's again that logical question, well, what purpose then does the law serve?

It was added because of transgressions. The law was there just to reveal sin. Verse 21, is the law then against the promises of God?

Certainly not. For if there had been a law given, which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. You know, to me, when it says, if there had been a law given, which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law.

To me, that just screams, there's no way the law could have given life. If there was any way that the law could have given life, then that law would have been given. But there's no way. The law could never have given life.

[23:23] So what was the purpose? Well, it was not to give life. It was added because of transgressions. Verse 22 in Galatians 3 says that the scripture, the law has confined all under sin.

And here's that transition. That the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

So the law was given to reveal the knowledge of sin, to show our transgressions, not to give life, to confine all under sin, that the promise of God by faith might be given to those who believe.

Verse 23, before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith, which would afterward be revealed. And here's the key verse. What purpose does the law serve?

The key verse. Therefore, the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. It was our guide.

[24:24] It was our tutor. It was our teacher, our instructor to say, look, the entirety of man is entirely sinful. You need a savior. You know, when you climb a mountain like Mount Everest or something, we just watched a little documentary on Mount Everest.

And first of all, you've got to have kind of a screw loose to want to take something on like that. But two, it's not like you just show up and walk up the mountain.

You know, obviously you train and you buy all the gear. And even with the right training and in the right gear, you still don't just show up and walk up the mountain. You hire these Sherpas, right?

Which the Sherpas definitely have some screws loose. And they basically drag your sorry butt up the mountain and drag you back down before you die. You know, they work for tips.

But that's the picture that I like to think. That the law, you know, is our Sherpa. It drug us to Christ. You know, here we are sinful.

[25:23] And nothing we could do on our own. And yet that's the law. It's the tutor. It's the instructor to bring us to Christ. So does justification then come by the law?

No. Absolutely not. So by law, sin is revealed. But justification or righteousness will come by faith in Christ.

I think we need to read 21 and 22. I know that's for next week. Verses 21 and 22 of Romans 3, back in Romans. It says this.

But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed. It's witnessed by the law and the prophets. But it's apart from the law.

Even the righteousness of God through what? Through faith in Jesus Christ to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference. So here, you know, kind of in a closing part of the first section of Romans, we have the whole world is guilty.

[26:29] The whole world is guilty. The whole world is guilty. Gentiles by creation. Gentiles by conscience. Jews also by creation and by the law. The whole world is guilty. The law can never save.

So what could? Faith. Faith in Christ. And so the first section kind of comes to a close and we're going to move on to the next section, which is justification and righteousness by faith. And Dave, if you want to come up, I got two last points. You know, what can we apply to our lives from this passage? And the first one is, man, you think about how guilty we are. You think about that head to toe assessment of just how every thought of man is wicked. And then you read a verse in Psalms where it says that God is angry with the wicked every day. And then you think that there's none who seeks after God. You know, so we as sinners are not seeking after God. Well, what does that tell you? It tells you that God is seeking sinners. [27:30] I mean, that doesn't even make sense, you know, to our earthly brains that why on earth would God want to seek after us? And not only then does he seek after us as sinners, even when we are entirely sinful against him.

But not only that, he doesn't just say, okay, you're a sinner. I still want to draw you to myself. Go and be self-righteous. Go and keep the law. Go and do these things. He provides the way of salvation. He provides his righteousness. That's what it says. It says his righteousness is revealed. The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ to all and on all who believe.

So there's my application is praise God that he seeks sinners. Because we certainly don't seek after him. And then two, praise God that he provided a way. He provided a way to his righteousness through faith in Christ.

So we are 100% entirely dependent on him for every part of the salvation process. I mean, the faith is a gift from God. We're drawn to him. Those whom he called, he justified in the end.

[28:36] So just praise God for that. Let's pray. Father God, just thank you for loving us. Thank you that you provided a way, Lord. We're going to get in this next section of Romans to 5.8.

That even while we were sinners, you demonstrated your love for us by sending Christ to die, Lord. That doesn't make sense to us. We don't know why you would do that. But Lord, we thank you for that.

It reveals just a little piece of your character towards us, God. And we don't love you enough. So, Father, thank you. Thank you for your time. Thank you for your word. Cheers. Cheers. Cheers.