



# **ROMANS**

The Gospel of God

**The Gospel of Good!**

**Romans 3:9-20**

Message #7 of 33 – S1132

**Sermon given on December 15, 2024**



Sunday Morning Service

**Pastor Rick Lancaster**

# The Gospel of Good!

## *Romans 3:9-20*

### Opening Comments

- Open your Bibles to **Romans 3**
- Today, we continue the series through the letter to the Romans – **The Gospel of God!**
- Let's open this time in our service with a word of prayer. - **Pray**

### Teaching

- **The Gospel of Good!**
- I was having a conversation this week with Pastor David.
- As a pastor, it is hard to look around at the state of the churches in the world.
- Some of these churches are practicing and endorsing things the Bible calls abominations.
- I have a hard time believing that the Holy Spirit has any presence in those churches.
- It is not surprising to me that Christianity is having so little influence in the world.
- Most of the church is walking in the flesh and not in the Spirit.
- But that doesn't mean we should throw the church out.
- Keep your finger in Romans 3 and turn to **Ephesians 5**.
- The church is not all she could be.
- She falls short in ways that break my heart.
- What I can't see is how God sees the church.
- He sees everything that is going on and it breaks His heart too, but He also sees her as she will be.
- Here is Ephesians 5, Paul is telling wives and husbands how they are to relate to each other.
- He says something about the church which fills my heart with joy and stirs me to greater love for Christ's church.
- **Ephesians 5:25-27**

- When the church stands before Christ, she will be glorious, not having a spot or wrinkle – she will be holy and without blemish – she will be perfect!
- Turn back to **Romans 3**.
- In 1980, God blessed me by bringing Kelly into my life.
- I was first attracted to her because she was cute.
- We were married in 1981. And then in 2006, we had a second wedding and renewed our vows. **Insert renewal picture.**
- Kelly is a beautiful woman, but when they opened the doors and she walked in, she took my breath away.
- She had never been more glorious than at that moment.
- When I picture my wife in my mind, that is what I see.
- **Remove renewal picture.**
- When God looks at the church, He sees her as she is and as she will be.
- The church is comprised of individual believers – each a living stone that God is using to build His church.
- When God looks at each of us, He sees us as we are and as we will be – glorious!
- This is not referring to our outward appearance.
- God cares more about the inside – the heart, than He does about the outward person.
- Paul has told the religious Jews that their religion does not make them right before God.
- He goes on to say they are no better than the Gentiles they often despised.
- **Romans 3:9**
- The Jews thought they were better than the Gentiles simply because they were Jews.
- Here, God says they are just as guilty of sin as the Gentiles.
- ‘all under sin’ – if sin were the color blue, we would all be some shade of blue.
- No one would be red or pink or yellow.

- Everyone would be blue, some darker blue – more given over to sin, and some lighter blue – striving for goodness or righteousness.
- Some humans compared to other humans are good.
- But all humans compared to God are far from God.
- Verses 10 to 18 are quotations from several places in the Old Testament.
- **Romans 3:10**
- We use relative terms for righteousness to compare ourselves to others, but the standard we should be using is God's perfection.
- Jesus described and lived how we should love God (**Matthew 22:37**). Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'
- How many people can say they have done that? I can't!
- We can't even say we have done it this morning.
- Paul continues with these thoughts of wonderful we are.
- **Romans 3:11**
- 'understands' – the attributes, character, and nature of God.
- 'seeks after God' – Even in seeking God, our flesh gets in the way.
- Only the Holy Spirit inside us will draw us toward God and His holiness.
- **Romans 3:12**
- 'become unprofitable' – A more accurate translation of unprofitable would be useless or worthless.
- God's way is the right way. Every other way is the wrong way.
- Some would like to believe that going their own way can still lead to good and prosperity.
- Any way that is not God's way does not lead to good but leads to worthlessness or uselessness.
- Even what the world describes as good falls short of the real good God does.
- **Romans 3:13-14**
- Even the words people say to one another are toxic and poisonous.
- **Romans 3:15-17**
- 'The feet' is often used as a metaphor for one's approach to life.
- We often use the word 'walk' in a similar fashion.

- It has been estimated that in the last 3,500 years there have only been about 250 years of peace.
- It is an unmistakable reality that mankind loves violence.
- Paul then uses one last quotation from the Old Testament to tell what is at the root of it all.
- **Romans 3:18**
- This is the cause that leads to everything that preceded it.
- There are two ways that we typically describe the fear of God or the fear of the Lord.
- The word ‘fear’ literally means terror.
- The second is respect or reverential awe.
- As a Christ-follower, this is the one we should be most familiar with.
- God is awesome and the better I know Him, the more I am inclined to reverence or worship Him.
- Christ-followers should not be terrified of God, but that doesn’t mean there shouldn’t be any fear.
- The most practical illustration we have of this is the police.
- As a law-abiding citizen of California and the United States there should be no reason for me to be afraid of the police (**Romans 13:3**).  
**For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same.**
- If I am breaking the law, then I should be afraid.
- That is for human authorities.
- This is multiplied greatly when it comes to the things of God.
- Right after Jesus told His disciples to tell the whole world everything He taught them, He said this about being afraid of those who might oppose their message (**Matthew 10:28**).  
**And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.**
- As Christ-followers we have no fear of judgment – Jesus took our judgment to the cross.
- But there should be some fear of breaking His laws.
- As a faithful Father, God will discipline us if we choose to sin (**Hebrews 12:7-9**).

**If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? <sup>8</sup> But if you are without chastening, of which all**

have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. <sup>9</sup> Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected *us*, and we paid *them* respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live?

- God is also patient and merciful so He might not discipline us right away.
- He will wait and see if our love for Him will lead us to repent so that He doesn't have to discipline us.
- Verse 18 is not referring to Christ-followers but to everyone else.
- Unbelievers do not have a fear of the Lord, because if they did, they wouldn't be unbelievers.
- As an unbeliever I was not afraid of God and wasn't worried about judgment.
- Once I became a believer, my eyes were opened and began to realize how ignorant I had been (**Psalm 110:10a**).

**The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom...**

- As I learned about God and His love, I also learned about the consequences of rejecting His love.
- I should have been terrified of an eternity separated from God.
- If you are an unbeliever, don't wait, repent and come to Christ for forgiveness.
- Paul then deals with the idea that your religion can make you right with God.

- **Romans 3:19-20**

- The Law, the writings of Moses, were given to teach us about the holiness of God.
- Nothing about the Law can save anyone.
- Paul will come back to this point later in this letter.
- What the Law does for us is to teach about sin and teaches us that without God's help we cannot be righteous (**Galatians 3:24-25**).

**Therefore the law was our tutor to *bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. <sup>25</sup> But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.**

- I started this message talking about how God sees the church and each of us individually.
- He sees us as we are and at the same time sees us as we will be – glorious.

- When we stand before Christ, all our weaknesses and imperfections will be gone.
- We will be perfectly holy. Let's be honest, none of us are there yet, not one of us is holy in our conduct.
- God loves us just the way we are, but He loves us too much to leave us this way, less than perfect.
- All the good we desire in this life is achieved through living a life as close to Christlikeness as is humanly possible.
- While we wait for perfection, God wants us to be working on our faith (**1 Timothy 4:7b**).

...**exercise yourself toward godliness.**

- I would like to leave you with three thoughts this morning.
- First – **God is Perfect!**
- Everything about God is perfect including His Word which teaches about His perfection.
- Second – **God wants us to be perfect!**
- No matter how good you are or think you are, you are not perfect – you are not like God, and you never will be.
- Third – **God will help you to be perfect!**
- Just as I can picture the glorious image of Kelly walking down the aisle, God sees you as you will be in heaven.
- He doesn't want you to wait until heaven to start being better.
- It is the power of God, the Holy Spirit, working in the lives of God's people that causes His glory to shine out into the world and draw the lost to God.
- It is not just about being better people, doing more good things, and serving others.
- Those things are good, but the good that really changes this world is the good that God does.
- Where the church falls short in this world is thinking they can do something good for God and make the world a better place.
- That doesn't work. If you want to be better and make the world around you better, let God the Holy Spirit do the work.
- Ask Him, He wants to help you change the world!
- **Pray! Last Song!**