



Romans 3:9-20

What's wrong with Being Seeker Sensitive

9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin.

10 As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one;

11 There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.

12 They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one."

13 "Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit"; "The poison of asps is under their lips";

14 "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness."

15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood;

16 Destruction and misery are in their ways;

17 And the way of peace they have not known."

18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

If you ask people today whether they agree with the assessment that we have just read of human nature and whether anyone is really good or truly seeking after God in their natural state, they'd probably say no I believe people are basically good. The CEO of Ebay for instance recently treated all Ebayers to a homepage announcement that "we still believe in our founding philosophy: people are basically good" which is an odd statement considering how many safeguards Ebay has had to build in to prevent fraudulent transactions. Incidentally, anyone who has done business using Craigslist will quickly wish that Craigslist had those same safeguards.

I went to lunch with a member of our congregation,
The waitress at our table, why would you want to do that,
Because I'm a sinner of course
She walked away mumbling Oh No, you're good
I didn't have the opportunity to continue on, but the fact is she's profoundly mistaken.

The funny thing is that Christians are often called "self-righteous" by unbelievers and yet if you ask unbelievers "are you a good person?" they will inevitably answer "yes." While the Christian would have to answer, no I'm a sinner saved by grace. If there is any good in me, it is all Christ's work. I won't be truly good through and through till the work is completed when I'm in heaven. So who really is the *self-righteous person*?

The fact is all the evidence, from the keys in your pocket, to the sales of pepper spray, speed traps, closed circuit TVs at the store, proctors during exam time, the contracts we sign and notarize when we

enter into a business deal, swearing to the truth in court, all of them are evidences that not even we believe the ridiculous idea that people are basically good.

Quite the opposite as G.K. Chesterton put it *“Certain new theologians dispute original sin”, “But it is the only part of Christian theology which can really be proved!”*

And even more important than that physical proof, is the fact that it is the universal testimony of God in the Bible regarding man in his natural fallen state.

Now Paul has been arguing that Gentiles are naturally condemned before God as sinners, and that Jews are as well, so now he essentially asks in verse 9? Is there anyone who isn't sinful? And the answer is no sinfulness is universal. It is not merely the problem of some people but not ourselves, it is the problem of all people. And this universal, problem of total depravity is this most pressing problem we have, because the consequences of this problem affect us not just during our lifetimes but for all eternity if it is not dealt with.

We are all under sin. We are all guilty of sin. What is sin?

Q14: What is sin?

A14: Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.

Or as John succinctly puts it in 1 John 3:4 “sin is lawlessness” Anomia, and we sin as Paul has shown us because we are by nature sinners, we are guilty of our own sins and we bear the guilt and sin nature of our first father Adam. As a result to quote God in Genesis 8:21 “the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth”

Each one of those sins we have committed deserves the sentence of death, because it is as RC Sproul puts it “Cosmic Treason” evil rebellion against the good laws of a good God and the longer we live in that state of guilt and rebellion, the weightier our condemnation becomes.

But surely we say there must be someone who doesn't have this problem, or at least someone who has worked their way out from under the burden of sin! Right? Well in order to annihilate those notions, Paul piles up quotations from the Old Testament. Most of them are from the Psalms, that anatomy of the soul as Calvin put it, and some from the prophet Isaiah. And they all build on one another. And support the initial thesis – **“There is none righteous, no, not one.”**

Now there is a critical lesson here for us as Christians in verse 11 where Paul states “There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.” This means as Paul put it in 1 Cor. 2:14 that “the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

Nor is the natural man seeking after God, it is only after we are born again and are converted that we can understand the things of God and begin to seek after Him, as RC Sproul puts it: **“The moment we become Christians is the moment when our quest for God begins. Prior to our conversion we were fugitives from God; we fled from him.” – RC Sproul**

My own experience of hunger for God, AFTER I became a Christian

Now that is not to say that people won't be seeking the things that can only come from a *relationship* with Jesus Christ, they will be looking for peace and for happiness, but like the people of Judah in this

morning's sermon, they want those things WITHOUT having to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. And so they never find them. They are like the blind men in Sodom groping for the door they cannot find.

Jesus said that men must "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it." (Matt. 7:13-14)

But the unconverted will not do that so instead they are willing to turn aside and go down ANY other path than the one that leads to heaven. Whether it be hedonism, atheism, Judaism, Taoism, Islam, transcendental meditation, or any other ISM. They seek, but they will not find because as Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." NO ONE. There is NO OTHER WAY. ALL the other ways are broad ways that lead to destruction.

And everything in that way is unprofitable, it does them no good in the end, it is so much sand. It is like spending your life attempting to build a bridge that goes to nowhere. It may be ornate bridge or a pathetic little one, but ultimately all of these bridges have equal value, because they all lead to nothing.

Many people become appalled at the notion that the converted person can do no good. Here we need to understand that a good deeds are only those deeds that are done in obedience to God's commands and which aim at glorifying Him. Unregenerate people certainly can and should do deeds of civic virtue, the unregenerate should help the old lady across the street, and we find that in societies where there is a lot of bible knowledge and where common grace abounds there are more of these works of Civic virtue than in those where there is none.

But we need to understand that these works done by unregenerate men are only outwardly and not really good. The Westminster Confession of Faith explains why:

Works done by unregenerate men, although for the matter of them they may be things which God commands; and of good use both to themselves and others:[23] yet, because they proceed not from an heart purified by faith:[24] nor are done in a right manner, according to the Word:[25] nor to a right end, the glory of God,[26] they are therefore sinful, and cannot please God, or make a man meet to receive grace from God:[1] and yet, their neglect of them is more sinful and displeasing unto God.[2] (WCF 16.7)

And so, Paul moves from showing what the unregenerate people don't do, and what they aren't to showing the result of not knowing God:

Verses 13 and 14 speak of the fact that their speech and their expressions are like the mouth of an open tomb, if we were to stand before it we would smell the corruption that lies within. But we don't mean they have bad breath. We mean that out "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things." (Matt. 12:34)

We see that today in the way our society is full of vulgarity (TV, Movies, my own unregenerate speech)

Then there is the violence, verse 15-18, the swiftness to shed blood – as we have become more atheistic we inevitably become more violent, not less. The actions of the Jihadis are abundantly explained by these verses and why they consider violence GOOD.

They will never know or have peace until they are reconciled to God. ***Romans 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,***

Until we are converted there is no fear of God, no reverence, no true respect, no submission, just rebellion. We are stiff necked. We will not bow the knee during this lifetime.

Application: Now we as Christians appear to have forgotten this, because we are constantly talking about making the seeker sensitive, that is catering to the desires of people who aren't Christians but who are supposedly seeking after God. But what the bible tells us that really there aren't any people in that state. So what are we really doing. Well one of my professors Darryl Hart once famously said that designing church for "seekers" is like **trying to create a coffee hour for people who don't like coffee**. What we are really doing is making church comfortable for the worldly, which is not something the church should do.

At lunch today, I was talking to someone who mentioned that someone they knew kept saying I'll come to church eventually, I said don't be surprised if they don't. Until they see and feel their need of him, they probably won't.

Willow Creek, took a survey and found to their horror that we were

Gary Gilley – "This Little Church Went To Market"

We need to structure church the way God wants it! Doesn't matter if the changes were "seeker sensitive" 3rd century or "Seeker sensitive 21st century" get the unbiblical garbage OUT!

Secondly: It requires a supernatural work of God to effect this change, effectual calling, Two people in a service, in all ways similar, but one is weeping and the other bored. We try to remove the boredom of the worldling, but also eliminate the word that normally accompanies effectual calling and the agents of sanctification. THERE SHOULD BE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO HEARTS!

Third: Two of the ways you can tell you have been converted is that you are seeking God, you have a hunger for Him, His teaching. If you aren't then you haven't been converted.

The practical changes, how do you speak, what do you love?

So is this you? IF not, flee to Christ!