

Sermon Series: Romans

Sermon Text: Romans 3:1-9 God Is Gracious, Faithful, True, and Righteous

Because God's truth abounds to His glory through the condemnation of falsehood, His grace and faithfulness call us to trust in His righteousness for our salvation from sin.

1) God is gracious: Jewish stewardship of God's Word is a benefit of God's grace (3:1-2).

- a) Background to question of 3:1: Paul argued at end of chapter 2 that "Jew" is not defined merely by ethnicity (outward and physical circumcision), but by the Spirit's work to change a person's heart (inward, heart circumcision).
- b) Question: Then what advantage has the Jew (defined ethnically)? Or what is the value of circumcision (of the flesh as a sign of God's covenant with Abraham/Israel)?
 - i) Paul's questioner suspects that Paul is disparaging the Old Testament and God's Covenant of Grace with the Jews.
 - ii) Paul's questioner suspects that Paul has put the Jews at a disadvantage.
- c) Answer: Much in every way. Chiefly that the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God.
 - i) Jews have many advantages over people of other nations (cf. Rom. 9:4-5)
 - ii) The chief and summation of their privilege is their stewardship of God's Word.
 - (1) "Entrusted" indicates not only possession but responsibility (cf. 2:18-20).
 - (2) Oracles of God includes history of redemption, laws, and promises.
- d) **Application:**
 - i) Thank God for the gift of His Word.
 - ii) Avail yourself of the gift of God's Word.
 - iii) Be a good steward of God's Word.

2) God is faithful: Jewish lack of faithfulness with God's Word does not nullify God's faithfulness to His Word (3:3-4).

- a) Implication of previous answer: The Jews were not faithful stewards of God's Word.
- b) Question: Does the faithlessness of some Jews nullify God's faithfulness to His Covenant of Grace?
- c) Answer: Even if every person were false, God would still be true.
 - i) Psalm 116:11 "I said in my alarm, 'all mankind are liars!'"
 - ii) Psalm 51:4 "Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done what is evil in Your sight, that You may be justified in Your words, and prevail when You are judged."
 - iii) In Romans 9-11 Paul will explain how the Jew's unfaithfulness serves God's purpose to incorporate every nation, including Israel, in the Covenant of Grace.
- d) **Application:**
 - i) Praise God for His covenant faithfulness.
 - ii) Confess your sins to God and trust in His faithfulness for your salvation.

3) God is righteous: God demonstrates His righteousness by judging the unrighteousness of covenant breakers (3:5-9).

- a) Implication: God's righteousness to the covenant is proven in His judgment upon the Jews for their unfaithfulness to the covenant in rejecting Jesus as the Messiah.

- b) Question: Since the Jew's unrighteousness is used by God to show His righteousness, is God unrighteous to inflict wrath on the Jews? (R. Kent Hughes calls this an irrational objection.)
 - i) After asking if God is unrighteous Paul spits as though the words had left a bad taste in his mouth: "I speak as a man."
 - ii) The questioner is abusing the doctrine of God's sovereignty and eternal decree by trying to use it as a license to sin (the meaninglessness of human moral responsibility).
- c) Answer: Of course God is righteous to judge unfaithful Jews for He is the righteous Judge of all the earth (Gen. 18:25).
- d) Question: Are we Jews any better off than the Gentiles in God's court?
- e) Answer: All, Jews and Greeks, are under sin.
- f) **Application:**
 - i) Look to God's grace and faithfulness for deliverance from the dominion of sin.
 - ii) Praise God for His saving righteousness, His wrath against the wicked, and His sovereignty in salvation and judgment.

Doxology: To Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood and made us a kingdom, priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (Revelation 1:5b-6)