



All in the Same Sinking Ship

Recap: Romans 3:9-20

In this message from Romans 3:9-20, we find ourselves facing a stark and uncomfortable truth about humanity's spiritual condition. Paul, addressing both Jewish and Gentile believers, underscores that everyone—regardless of their background—is under the power of sin. He pulls no punches, using a string of Old Testament scriptures to highlight the depth of human depravity, emphasizing that there is no one righteous, no one who understands, and no one who seeks God. It's a hard truth, like a spiritual "cat scan" that reveals the disease of sin in every heart. In a sense, we're all on the same sinking ship, caught in a state of brokenness, with no way to fix ourselves.

Paul's sharp diagnosis is clear: we cannot rely on the law or our own moral efforts to be made right with God. The law, while good, only serves to show us how far we fall short of God's perfect standard. Like guardrails on a road, it helps us avoid some dangers but can't fix the damage of the crash we've already caused. Humanity, in all its various forms—whether religious or irreligious—is equally guilty. There is no distinction. We're all "crooked lines" when compared to God's perfect holiness, unable to save ourselves or justify our own innocence before God.

Yet, this bleak picture isn't the end of the story. As Paul points out, acknowledging our need for a savior is the first step toward salvation. This is why the message of Jesus is so vital—He is the cure. When we recognize the depth of our sin and come to Jesus in faith, we are freed from guilt and condemnation. It's not about striving to be righteous through our own efforts, but about trusting in the righteousness that Jesus offers.

Study: Read 3:9-20 (45 Min)

Icebreaker: Have you ever broken a bone or had an x-ray taken? Describe, or share, your experience.

1. What role does vulnerability play in your relationship with God? Are you able to be honest with God about your struggles and weaknesses?

2. How do you typically respond when you're confronted with the truth of your own sin? Do you try to justify, ignore, or confront it?

3. How does understanding the "crooked line" analogy help you understand your own shortcomings and your need for grace?

4. Is there a lie that you are tempted to believe about yourself that hinders your understanding of your new identity in Christ - forgiven and free?

5. How does the truth that we are all “in the same sinking ship” affect the way you interact with others who don’t yet know Jesus?

6. Has there been a time when you’ve tried to fix yourself through your own efforts rather than through faith in Christ? What did you do? How did it go?

7. What areas of your life still feel “crooked” and in need of God’s straightening out? How can your group pray for you in these areas?

8. Is there an area in your life where you’ve been holding onto guilt or shame that Jesus wants to free you from? What’s stopping you from letting it go?

9. How has experiencing God’s grace and forgiveness transformed the way you extend grace and forgiveness to others?

SUPPORT/PRAYER (15 min)

Take some time to thank God for His mercy and grace displayed in Jesus. Recognize that apart from Him, we are all in the same sinking ship but with Christ, we are redeemed and free from guilt.

Lastly, pray for one another that God would deepen your understanding and experience of His love. Pray that you would live out of your new identity in Christ, forgiven, free and empowered by the Holy Spirit to share God's love with others.