Sermon Growth Guide

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The Human Condition | Romans 3:5-20

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Key Verse: "Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin." (Romans 3:20)

Big Idea: We are all depraved due to our sinful human condition – only God is good.

Foundations

This week we continue through Romans but start a new series, Like Him We Rise, which will take us to Easter.

Paul is wanting to hammer home the concepts of law, our depravity, and that not one of us is considered righteous. We've seen him consistently mention these same topics in the last chapters. In chapter two, Paul calls out the Jews for their faulty thinking (failing to recognize they've committed the same sins that they were judging). At the beginning of our passage, Paul again names the faulty logic they have (they're doing God a favor by sinning, for that means His grace abounds more). Then he moves to address their wrong thinking again by recognizing that they were operating like they were righteous, because of their knowledge of and adherence to the law.

Paul quotes multiple verses his audience would have been familiar with that show the law is not the final judge as to one's righteousness. Rather, all of humanity has turned away and become depraved. Paul holds up a mirror to remind the Romans that their righteousness is as filthy rags – they aren't better than anyone else. Only God knows our hearts. And as Paul points out, our hearts are filled with wretchedness and we have "… no fear of God before their eyes," as in Psalm 36:1.

Understanding God's Word

Together, read Romans 3:5-20.

Paul quotes three Psalms and Isaiah. Why do you think he does so here?

Paul addresses both Jews and Gentiles, making sure no one is excluded. Do you tend to see yourself as individual/separate, or do you lump yourself in with all humanity?

Applying God's Word

Our culture often encourages us to think highly of ourselves. This passage instead implores us to not put ourselves on a pedestal. How would it change your perspective to see yourself as depraved, but loved infinitely?

How does it change your perspective to see all others as depraved, but loved infinitely?

Witnessing God's Word

A wise man once said, "Remember the sinful nature of mankind. It explains a lot." How does using the human condition as a lens affect your thinking about others?

As you go about your week, watch people. Watch yourself. What do you tend towards?

Do you see God differently when you think of His love and grace poured over you?