

XVI. Romans in Biblical Perspective  
*The Gospel of God*  
“Unmistakable Lessons on Evangelism from the Apostle Paul”  
Romans 3:1–9  
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June 27, 2021 • Sunday Morning Sermon

We are back in the text we were in from the last study for a different reason. So let's look at Romans 3:1–8 which says [1] *Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision?* [2] *Much in every way. To begin with, the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God.* [3] *What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God?* [4] *By no means! Let God be true though every one were a liar, as it is written, “That you may be justified in your words, and prevail when you are judged.”* [5] *But if our unrighteousness serves to show the righteousness of God, what shall we say? That God is unrighteous to inflict wrath on us? (I speak in a human way.)* [6] *By no means! For then how could God judge the world?* [7] *But if through my lie God's truth abounds to His glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner?* [8] *And why not do evil that good may come?—as some people slanderously charge us with saying. Their condemnation is just.*

[9] *What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin.*

The grass withers, the flower fades, God's Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

One of the great challenges of the evangelical church is to hold to the fundamental evangelical doctrine, even more importantly the functional foundational doctrine of the Reformation. Over hundreds of years ago the church for many years had become shrouded with darkness – clouded ritual, superstition, immorality, corruption at all levels – then God gloriously answered the prayers of His people as the breakthrough in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, starting in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, of what today we call the Reformation, the reclamation of the apostolic Gospel to be preached again and the glories of it. The issues begin to revolve early on the nailing of the 95 Theses against the castle door in Wittenberg, Germany, by Martin Luther dealing with the issue of justification. How can sinners be saved – by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

Over the next couple of years, through the various debates and publications it became abundantly clear that issue was is the church infallible or is God's Word infallible? It became clear that every Christian life was to be built on the foundation of sola Scriptura – the Scriptures alone is our only rule of faith and practice. We're saved by the truth, built by the truth and built up with the truth by the Spirit of God who works with the truth. God's Word does not contain or become truth but it is truth. We have been given God's Word to read but it was designed to be preached. Therefore, Paul says to preach the Word which is absolutely crucial and Jesus tells us to be careful who to listen to. As the Word is preached, resting in the power of the Spirit of God the truth is being given.

As a preacher, you're basically a waiter for you are coming from the kitchen with the truth of God's Word that He has prepared and you get it to the table as courteously, appropriately and quickly as you can that it may be enjoyed. You are not coming up with truth but coming out with the truth that God has revealed to us. To understand God's Word when you study it there are two things I always encourage people to look at. The first is, what is God saying by proposition, by precept – what doctrine is He communicating? The Apostle Paul has been doing

this for us. Paul's desire is for us to know the truth of Gospel of God and the truths that emanate from the truth of the Gospel of God.

Paul reveals the exposition of the Gospel of God in Romans 1:16–17 which says *[16] For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the **power** of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. [17] For in it the **righteousness of God** is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."* Why is the power and righteousness of God in the Gospel of God, Good News for us? Paul is communicating to us from Romans 1 all the way to Romans 3 the indictment and bringing to us the clarity that we are under sin. In other words, he is telling us that there has been no one born who is not in need of salvation by grace through the power and righteousness of God. Furthermore, all are helpless under sin. You're not sin sick, you're sin dead. You are at the bottom of the ocean of sin with a ten-million-pound rock on top of you. You are also hopeless and that's why we don't have the power to save ourselves.

Paul has also made the point that nothing else can save you in this world – irreligion, false religion or true religion or anyone else, but Christ. True religion isn't there to save you for it is there to point you to Jesus who is the only One who can save you. True religion is also there to tell you how to serve Jesus when you get saved but it can't save you. I pray you can give out ten thousand tracks about the Gospel of Jesus to others, but that won't save you. You don't get saved by baptism, the Lord's Supper, by sharing the Gospel or by attending church and worshipping with God's people. All of those things are gloriously wonderful gifts from the Lord, but they were not designed to save you. They are there to send you to the Savior and then out for the Savior, becoming more like the Savior.

Paul is also warning us about a Day that is coming, where all will come before the Judgment Seat. On that Day you will not be able to stand unless you are in Christ and Christ is in you. Paul has bringing to us the first order truth of the Gospel. On the Day of Judgment God will render to every man according to his works, according to His Gospel. The One that sits in Judgment you have to have as your Defense Attorney because we don't have any other defense so Paul has been dismantling every false hope and false defense and now we get to the indictment. Romans 3:9 says all are under sin.

God's Word is gloriously sufficient and inerrant. God's Word not only gives us truth by propositional statement and precepts but we also get to see truth through practice. We not only learn by mentoring – propositional truth that instructs us – but by imitation, modeling. There is something I want you to see from this text today where Paul is doing something in Romans 1 through 3 and it comes to a crescendo in Romans 3:1–9, that Jesus did, that you can do and you should do. If we are going to be instruments for others to hear the Good News of the Gospel, we have to learn the content that starts with the bad news – we need a Savior that brings the power of God because we're dead in our sins. We need a Savior that has a perfect righteousness because our righteousness is like filthy rags. This Savior cleanses us by His blood and clothes us with His righteousness because we are helpless, hopeless and dead in our sins. Jesus bore the unmixed cup of the wrath of God against us on the cross because of our sin and for all of our sins – in thought, word and deed. He took our place and we need Him as our Advocate/Defense Attorney in order to be in the place He is preparing for you forever. On that Day, that is your only Hope.

We not only want to respond to this but we want to share this with other people. This past week I had the chance to hear three testimonies of people who had come to Christ through individuals through part of what God did in their life here at Briarwood. Each one of them had

something in common. Not only did they confess they were sinners and needed a Savior, but each one had mentioned that multiple people had talked with them and those people kept asking them questions that made them think about what they didn't want to do (or think, called denial) or made public what they were thinking. So, let's look back at the text in Romans 3.

Romans 3:1–8 which says [1] ***Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision?*** [2] *Much in every way. To begin with, the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God.* [3] ***What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God?*** [4] *By no means! Let God be true though every one were a liar, as it is written, "That you may be justified in your words, and prevail when you are judged."* [5] ***But if our unrighteousness serves to show the righteousness of God, what shall we say? That God is unrighteous to inflict wrath on us? (I speak in a human way.)*** [6] *By no means! For then how could God judge the world?* [7] ***But if through my lie God's truth abounds to His glory, why am I still being condemned as a sinner?*** [8] ***And why not do evil that good may come?—as some people slanderously charge us with saying. Their condemnation is just.***

[9] ***What then? Are we Jews any better off?*** *No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin.*

What do you see from the text in bold? You see continual, thoughtful, penetrating questions. Unless the Lord intervenes and changes someone's heart by giving them eyes to see and ears to hear, what we now call Good News, is not Good News. It's a scandal and we hate it for three reasons in and of ourselves. Everybody needs it, nobody wants it, because of those three things. One, you're a sinner and you need a Savior. Two, it is saying you can't save yourself and religion can't save you. We don't want to be told we are incompetent, incapable and impotent to save ourselves. Thirdly, there is only One who can save you, who brings the power of God and the righteousness of God and that's Jesus. There is only One Savior. All of that is a scandal to us. With the power of God you can be born again and with the righteousness of God you can be made right with God and that's what we need therefore we need God to save us. That is the Son of God for by Man came death and by a Man comes the resurrection of the dead.

So as people see the Gospel as a scandal how is that I can share with them so that people can come to Christ? How do I not let their intimidation, indifference or however they respond to me, not silence me but that I like Paul can relentlessly bring to them the indictment so that they can see the only solution? I have had the great privilege to disciple a man who is in the ministry now and God is doing wonderful things through him and I had the privilege recently to listen to one of his sermons. He asked me what I thought of it and my response was 'I'm not saying this to patronize you and I'm only saying this because it's the truth; God has called you, God's hand is on you and God is going to use you. I don't know to what extent He will use you, but God has called you, gifted you, you love Him and I believe He is going to use you.' Then he said 'why do I feel like there is a 'but' to follow...'

I brought him mainly back to one statement he made in his sermon. He said 'God loves to save sinners and God desires you to be saved, but God has a problem' and then he went on to share the Gospel. I told him he was right and he was wrong with that statement. The thing he got wrong was that God doesn't have a problem, God has the solution and we're the problem. I have the problem – this isn't God's problem. I'm the one who is a sinner. I am born wanting to exalt myself and to deny God as Lord. I am born as a traitor to the One who gives me breath, in opposition and rebellion against Him. I'm helpless, hopeless, and under the dominion and power of the chains of sin, in the future direction of hell itself. Now I have Good News for God has the

solution to my problem and His grace is greater than my sin. John 3:16 says *[16] For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.*

How do I communicate that to others? Jesus, Paul and many others realize the strategy to take the Gospel to the world and I call it the five E's – Everyone Evangelizing Everybody Everywhere Every day. This is what ought to be happening. If that's our strategy, then what's our tactic? Please learn the value of questions. In nine verses from Romans 3:1–9 there were 12 questions, that went off like machine guns. This was a strategy of Jesus for many times you will see in the Gospels how Jesus would say 'I'll answer you if you answer this...' People have objections to the Gospel, so what do questions do? Questions anticipate and draw out their objection. Let's get it on the table. You're not afraid of their objection, are you? No, because the answers are in God's Word. You may not have it at the tip of your tongue, but you can go find it and come back. Sometimes questions push out the objections through the force of the questions.

I was watching a YouTube report recently from a city I used to live in about these storm drains. It is legendary about how many dogs perish in those storm drains. This story I saw was about a dog who had gotten stuck in one of these storm drains and they kept trying to pull it out, to draw it out and they couldn't get the dog out. The head was out but the body was bigger than the head and that part wasn't coming out. So, this fireman puts a pipe in the other end and cranks up the water where the dog gets pushed out on the other side. Everybody cheers. That's evangelism. Questions get things out on the table so we can talk about it. God is not afraid of man's objections and doubts.

I remember growing up how my mother decorated our family room where it felt so inviting. Whenever I would finish the list my mom had for me to do then I could watch a television show and my parents would pick one that we could watch each night. On Thursday nights, the television program would be Perry Mason and I still watch that show whenever I can for you can still find it playing somewhere on cable. I remember the efficient, marvelous, highly attractive and unbelievably intelligent assistant, Della Street. There was another character named Paul Drake on that show that had the best sports coat with the best head of hair who would always knock on the door at the back of the courtroom at the end of the program and come in with a piece of paper that he had discovered as a detective and would hand it to Perry Mason who would decimate whoever was on the witness chair. Then there was the prosecuting attorney Hamilton Burger and how he kept his job is a mystery to me because he lost every single case that he ever tried with Perry Mason. Burger's assistant was Lt. Tragg.

I remember all of the characters on Perry Mason but here is what I remember most as I listened to the court cases. You would hear at least ten times 'I object, leading the witness.' In other words, they were not allowed to use leading questions. This is basically what Paul has been doing from Romans 1 to Romans 3. Paul is using leading questions for them to know their condition, what they are going to face at the Judgment Seat and why the Gospel is Good News. He is leading them to Christ. Paul isn't doing this to beat them down, but he is doing this to bring them down and bring them to Christ who alone can bring them up to everlasting life.

Paul does what Jesus does and for us to do what Paul does I want to give you five things that will help you do this. There are five things for a Christian to take the time and care that is necessary to ask questions, designed to faithfully and persuasively to share the Gospel of God with others for His glory and their salvation. It takes thoughtfulness, care and time and you will not give thought, care or time unless you love Jesus and you don't want people to spend eternity in

hell. This includes family, friends, neighbors, co-workers for all are born headed to hell, helpless and hopeless and you have the message to bring to them. The first thing you need to help them see in the Gospel is the bad news of our indictment and their need of a Savior who can overcome their helplessness with the power of God and their hopelessness with the blessed Hope of His sure righteousness.

So, the first thing is you have to have a commitment to Christ as Lord and Savior manifested by obedience to the Great Commandment – love the Lord with all your heart, soul, and mind – and the Great Commission – go and make disciples of all the nations. This needs to be done in a vital relationship with Christ. You will not be an effective communicator of the Gospel to people, if you are operating as a lone ranger in Christianity. I'm not talking about someone who says they go to church every time it works into their schedule or drive by church. No, I'm talking about a relationship with Christ where you are being equipped, encouraged and connected to others because they not only need you to come into their lives but you need them. Sometimes your planting, sometimes your watering, sometimes your harvesting and I have never yet prayed with someone who gave their life to Jesus where I was the first and only one to talk with them. So, we want to be connected to the body of Christ. Evangelism is a process and conversion is an event. In the process God uses His people to encourage and equip one another and function together as a team to win others to Christ.

Secondly, you need to have a concern and care for people to know the Lord now and for eternity. The people you meet are headed to a Christ less eternity and they are living an empty life. I don't care how much money they have, how much diversion or what it is but I promise you, it's empty. Those who are in the jobs that make the greatest money are usually those that spend the most on money on therapy, because the things in this world don't give life so you want others to know the Lord for now so they don't have the emptiness of vanity of life under the sun apart from Christ and to know Christ that they may be with Him for eternity, not under the torments of hell. When you have a concern for people you're ready to plead, you're praying, you're persuading, you're presenting, you're pondering about those you're talking with – who am I talking to, how do I put the question to them, how many questions do I ask them.

As Paul was speaking before Festus and King Agrippa, after asking much questions and giving much rational this is what he says in Acts 26:24–29, [24] *And as he was saying these things in his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, “Paul, you are out of your mind; your great learning is driving you out of your mind.”* [25] *But Paul said, “I am not out of my mind, most excellent Festus, but I am speaking true and rational words. [26] For the king knows about these things, and to him I speak boldly. For I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this has not been done in a corner. [27] King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe.”* [28] *And Agrippa said to Paul, “In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?”* [29] *And Paul said, “Whether short or long, I would to God that not only you but also all who hear me this day might become such as I am—except for these chains.”* I know I can't persuade anyone to be a Christian for only the Holy Spirit can do that but I can show the heart of God by seeking to persuade them.

Number three, have confidence in the sufficiency and inerrancy of God's Word. Questions will draw out objections but every objection is met in the Word of God. II Timothy 3:16–17 says [16] *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, [17] that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.* God's Word is inspired, inerrant, infallible and sufficient for everything in life, all matters of faith and doctrine. You don't have to cower, just draw the

questions out. If they say something that stumps you then ask them this question; ‘Your question is so important, would you allow me to get back to you on the answer? That is why you are connected to a church to get help on these things and give them a time you will get back with them on the answer to their question. We may not know everything in the Word of God but everything I need to know is in the Word of God.

Job cries out the question of all questions. Job says in Job 5:6–7, *[6] For affliction does not come from the dust, nor does trouble sprout from the ground, [7] but man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward.* Then he asks several times, how can a man be right with God (Job 4:17, 9:1–2, 25:4)? That is a great question and the Gospel is the answer. God makes us right with Him through His Son, Jesus, who came to bear our shame and wear our sin at the cross.

Number four, you need power in the promises, presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus tells us in John 14:16 that the Holy Spirit will never leave us. You are not in this by yourself. Luke 12:12 says *[12] for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.* The Spirit of God will let you know just how to deal with this person. Is this the person that needs to touch of the whisper of the Gospel when Jesus will not bruise the broken reed or snuff out the flickering candle or is this the time where the hammer breaks the rock because of the insolence and arrogance that is being marshalled against God? But we know how to answer by the Spirit of God – with boldness and humility, with conviction and compassion, with care and courage. The Holy Spirit leads us in this.

Number five, it is through confidence in Christ as your Lord and Savior. There is no one you talk to that Jesus cannot save. No one is so far away or so deep in sin that they cannot be saved by God’s sovereign grace. God is sovereign but no one is beyond His reach. No one has a sin He can’t deal with so you go to those to whom you speak. Go to them with hope and encouragement. I think Evangelism Explosion (EE) is a wonderful way to share the Gospel. I think the greatest asset from EE was the pin you received after you were trained in it for the pin had two questions on it. The first one goes something like this; if you were to die tonight, do you know where you would spend eternity? The second one, when you stand before the Lord (not if), if God were to ask you ‘why should I let you into heaven,’ what would you say?

I love questions because it pulls out objections. It surfaces them. It anticipates them. We get them on the table and the Spirit of God can use you with the Word of God to answer them. My favorite ‘fishing pool’ to talk with people is on a plane that has turbulence. When this happens, I look at the person next to me and say ‘do you think there’s a heaven?’ Then my next question is, ‘how do you think you get there?’ Jesus after He is raised goes to two men who are downcast – their minds, hearts and everything was down. Jesus walks up to them and asks them three questions.

Luke 24:13:32 says *[13] That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, [14] and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. [15] While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. [16] But their eyes were kept from recognizing Him. [17] And He said to them, “**What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?**” And they stood still, looking sad. [18] Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?” [19] And He said to them, “**What things?**” And they said to Him, “Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a Man who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, [20] and how our chief priests and rulers delivered Him up to be condemned*

to death, and crucified Him. [21] But we had hoped that He was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. [22] Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, [23] and when they did not find His body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that He was alive. [24] Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see.” [25] And He said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! [26] **Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory?**” [27] And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

[28] So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if He were going farther, [29] but they urged Him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.” So He went in to stay with them. [30] When He was at table with them, He took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. [31] And their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him. And He vanished from their sight. [32] They said to each other, “**Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked to us on the road, while He opened to us the Scriptures?**”

We cannot open minds, eyes or hearts, but we can open the Scriptures with the right questions and watch what God does. I have a question for you today. If you are reading this and you don't yet know Christ, is there any reason why you should not receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior? I would love to hear it. I will tell you what I became convinced of – there are no worldly sand castles on the beach of time that would make rejecting Jesus rational. There are no momentary pleasures of sin that would make the horrors of hell palatable. If I could give you the whole world, is that worth the loss of your soul? What would you exchange for your soul and Christ for eternity? Why would you die?

For those of you who know Jesus, why not think about ways to ask questions so that we can share the Good News with people who are under the indictment, but the Judge can be their Savior? Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together in Your Word and the blessing of rejoicing in You today. Thank You that Jesus saves and that You're our living Hope. Thank You that we can be ready to give an account of the Hope that is within us, with gentleness and honoring Christ as Lord. So, Father we give You praise and thanksgiving that You saved us. For those reading this that have not yet answered the call of Christ with 'yes, I surrender, I believe and confess my sins,' would You please move with them in abundance today or at least move them to respond to my question and come to me to share what reason that would prevent them from coming to You? You can reach me at Briarwood at (205) 776-5200. Father, for those who know You please send us out everyday evangelizing everybody everywhere and we can even begin with a question. I pray this Father, in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Power Point

Life Takeaway

Five things are crucial for a Christian to take the time and care necessary to ask questions designed to faithfully and persuasively share the Gospel of God with others for His glory and their salvation...

1. Commitment to Christ, the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.

2. Concern and care for people to know the Lord now and for eternity.
3. Confidence in the Supremacy, Inerrancy and Sufficiency of God's Word.
4. Confidence in the Power, Presence and Promises of the Holy Spirit.
5. Confidence in Christ as Lord and Savior who alone can save us from our sins.