

REMNANT CHURCH SERMON NOTES – ROMANS 3: 9-18
PREACHED ON DECEMBER 14, 2025 BY REV. B.B. ANUM-HIGHER

9 What shall we conclude then? Do we have any advantage? Not at all! For we have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin. 10 As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; 11 there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. 12 All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." 13 "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips." 14 "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness." 15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood; 16 ruin and misery mark their ways, 17 and the way of peace they do not know." 18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

➤ **INTRODUCTION**

- The central theme of the Book of Romans is the righteousness of God. Paul took chapters 1:18 through 3:20 to illustrate to the church at Rome and Christians of all time that no human being, regardless of their background, possesses this righteousness of God. In chapter 1:18 to the end of chapter 1, Paul made the case that the pagan men and women, the immoral world, and the atheists do not possess God's righteousness.
- In chapter 2:1-16, he turns his focus to the moral, ethical man and woman, who also do not possess the righteousness of God. Then in chapter 2:17 to the end of chapter 2, Paul declares that the religious person, the man and woman who goes to church, has the Bible, has been baptized, etc., are also unrighteous before God if they relied on the external religious activities for their salvation.
- This would have been a very shocking teaching, especially to the Jews, because of what they thought of themselves as God's special people. They took pride in their heritage, especially coming from Israel. We learned from this teaching that it is dangerous for anyone to rely on their nationality for salvation. Being born in a Christian dominated nation doesn't save you; you don't automatically believe the Truth about God and are on your way to heaven. We also learned that just as circumcision does not save the Jew, relying on baptism, whether by sprinkling or immersion, whether infant or adult baptism, does not equally save anyone.
- Human history and the history of the church show that the hardest people to reach with the gospel are religious people, not the pagans, not the immoral people, but the ethically moral and religious people. The hardest people to reach with the gospel are the church going, Bible owning, Bible reading, and or seminary-trained who are unconverted. They are the hardest to get because they are pleased with themselves, self-righteous, and content with their own opinions.
- They are the hardest to repent and believe the gospel because they rely on their profession or confirmation of faith, as well as devotion to their denomination or church, for the righteousness of God. We have Saul, who became Paul, as our

example. As a religious man, a Pharisee, teacher of the Scripture, he rejected the gospel and even persecuted the Christians. It only took a miracle during his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus for him to repent and believe the gospel.

- Paul has been making a strong case to the religious people of his day, the Jews, that they needed the gospel in the same way the immoral Gentiles do. The Jews needed the righteousness of God just as any other group of people. Now that Paul has made his case to the Jews about their need for God's righteousness, he proceeds to draw his conclusion. I will carefully consider each verse with you.

➤ **VERSE 9.**

⁹What shall we conclude then? Do we have any advantage? Not at all! For we have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin.

- To his fellow Jews, Paul asked, “What is your conclusion now about my teachings? Where do you stand now after hearing about your need for God’s righteousness? Are we any better off compared to the Gentiles? Can we go on boasting about who we are and how religious we are as evidence of our salvation? Can we go on praying like this: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ Luke 18:11-12.”
- We live in the 21st century, and in our context, Paul will be asking the churchgoer, the man and woman with the Bible who was born into a Christian family, been baptized, and has made a profession of faith, serve as a church leader, missionary, etc. but are unconverted if they have any advantage over those outside of the church? Should the churchgoer become born again? Should the man and woman who have a church membership be converted?
- Paul says that there are no advantages for the religious person who remains unconverted on the Day of Judgment. Both the religious but unconverted person and the people outside of the church are under the power of sin and will all be condemned by Jesus Christ eternally on the Day of Judgment.
- Paul then makes a case from verses 10 through 18 why everyone needs to be converted and acquire the righteousness of God. To these Jews, Paul says, if you believe that your own Scriptures are the very words of God, then you must listen to what the Scriptures say to you because it is God speaking through the Scriptures. The Scriptures are the very words of God. What do their Scriptures say?
- The Scriptures make a strong case that everyone is under the power of sin and must personally be born again to receive the righteousness of God. The Bible teaches that everyone must personally repent and believe in Jesus to be saved with no exceptions. Sin is universal; sin has affected everyone.
- In our context, Paul will be saying to the religious but unconverted person, to the pastor, missionary, or evangelist who has never been regenerated, “Go to your

Bible to tell you your condition before God and what you need to do to be saved.” He will be saying, “Let your Bible tell you what to do to attain the righteousness of God.”

- However, the tragic thing is that the Jews were blinded to their own Scriptures; they read them but didn’t understand them, so they missed the point. They had become blind and deaf to their own Scriptures. They never realized the meaning and significance of the Scriptures to their situation, even though they read them almost every day, every week, and so on. This, however, is not a Jewish or ancient problem. We face a similar situation today among Christians. Many Christians have read the Old and New Testaments regularly, but have never come to understand their meaning and significance for their lives. They read Scriptures but do not apply it to their lives due to a lack of understanding.
- Some Christians have read their Scriptures thoroughly but miss the point of how God saves sinners, some ordain women as pastors even though the Scriptures forbid that, and they have the Scriptures open before them while they do that. Some even permit homosexuals to serve as pastors. Some theologians and experts in the Scriptures, are yet to discover the Truth about the Bible; they are ignorant of its teachings. At one time, Paul was ignorant of the Truth as written in Scripture, even though he was a teacher of the Scriptures.
- The problem of being religious and still unconverted or reading the Bible and not understanding it is that it results in superficial Christianity, lukewarm believers, and a false profession of faith because it is not accompanied by action. The clearer we understand that God sent Jesus to this world because of the sinful state of mankind, the greater we know how many and serious our sins are in the sight of God, and the more we will love God by our wholehearted obedience to Him. Our perception of sin and forgiveness directly influences how we relate to others and to God.
- We have the words of Jesus in Luke 7:47, which captures a moment where Jesus speaks about love and forgiveness, the relationship between the depth of our understanding of forgiveness and the love we express in response. **“Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little.”** This sinful woman has experienced significant grace, showing that those who have been forgiven much will naturally express their gratitude through deep love and devotion. Similarly, those who perceive their need for forgiveness as minor may find themselves less generous in love and appreciation.
- Paul says, **“For we have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin.”** What does it mean that both the Jews and Gentiles are under the power of sin? What does it mean that all men and women born after the Fall of Adam and Eve are under sin?
- To be under the power of sin is a picture of people being controlled and dominated by a tyrant or ruler. You must do what the tyrant tells you to do. Paul says that the natural man and woman, the unconverted man and woman, the

man and woman after Adam are under the dominion or control of sin. Every man and woman by nature is under the control of sin; we sin because we are sinners, we sin because sin tells us to act in a certain way, in rebellion against God.

- Every single individual since the Fall is born under the pollution of sin; we have the presence of sin with us. Not only are we polluted or have sin's presence with us, but we are actually guilty of sin and suffer the consequences of sin throughout our lives on earth. For some people, they will end up in hell, where they will suffer the penalty of sin eternally. The natural man, since the Fall, is also under the power of sin. Children are born with a sinful nature already in them, and it shows up in their actions a few months after birth. This is the condition of every man and woman until they are born again.
- How did Paul know this? How did he know that humans in our natural state are under the dominion of sin? Paul says, the Scriptures tell me so. Paul then proves this point by quoting from the Old Testament. Paul is telling his readers, 'Let us hear God's position on this matter to confirm that no one is righteous in their natural state.' In verses 10-18, Paul quotes several Old Testament passages to support his point. Let consider these Old Testament passages now.

➤ **OLD TESTAMENT TEACHINGS OF HOW EVERY PERSON IS A SINNER.**

- In verses 10, 11, and 12 of our text, Paul quotes from Psalm 14 and Psalm 53.
- In verse 13, he quoted from Psalm 5:9.
- In verse 14, he quoted from Psalm 10:7.
- In verses 15, 16, and 17, he quoted from Isaiah 59:7-8, and
- In verse 18, he quoted from Psalm 36:1.
- On his point that every man and woman after Adam was born in sin and under sin, Paul repeated himself several times, 8 times, to strongly make his case.

10 As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; 11 there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. 12 All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

- Paul started by saying that there is no one righteous. Secondly, he said, not even one. Thirdly, no one understands. Fourthly, no one seeks God. Then, for the fifth time, he says all have turned away. Sixthly, they have together become worthless. Then, for the seventh time, no one does good. Lastly, the eighth time, he wrote, not even one.
- Paul is not saying that all of these signs that mark the unrighteous, the natural and unconverted person can be seen in every person; instead, he is proving that the virus that leads to all of these marks is in every person after Adam. Every person was born with this potential. Every human being is depraved. The only reason some people do not exhibit the marks described in verses 10-18 is the

restraining grace of God, which prevents some people from committing certain sins.

- We will consider each of these expressions or marks of the unrighteous person, as a clearer understanding will help us grasp the gospel more clearly, as Paul taught us in Romans 1:16-17, the verses that led to the 16th-century Reformation.

➤ **VERSE 10.**

“There is no one righteous, not even one.”

- No one is righteous, and to be sure his readers understood him, he repeated, not even one. That immediately raises the question, what is righteousness? What is so difficult about it that no one can attain it, not even one person?
- Righteousness is being blameless as regards your relationship, first with God and secondly with your fellow human being. It is loving the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and also loving your neighbor as yourself.' Matthew 22: 37-40. It is being upright in heart and life. In other words, it is living as God desires man to live. This meant being righteous required absolute conformity to God's laws, perfectly keeping God's law as stated in the Ten Commandments.
- There is, however, a big problem, because since the Fall, not a single person has lived an upright, blameless, or righteous life. Men and women, even the most religious and morally upright, have failed in their desire to have a blameless relationship with God and fellow human beings. None, therefore, is righteous, no not even one, and therefore by nature we are all condemned sinners. What makes you a sinner, what makes me a sinner, what makes all people everywhere a sinner after the Fall is that we are not what God created us to be. Everybody is unrighteous, and only the gospel produces the righteousness we need.

➤ **VERSE 11.**

11 there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God.

- No one who understands can be translated as everyone has become foolish, everyone lacks wisdom. Sin is folly, or an absence of wisdom. David said in Psalm 14:1 that the fool says in his heart, “There is no God.” Paul also described the condition of the natural man and woman as a darkening of understanding. He wrote in Ephesians 4:18 that “They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.”
- The natural person lacks an understanding of spiritual truth. They may be an expert in secular understanding, such as in medicine, politics, economics, but since the Fall, every person born is dead spiritually and does not have spiritual understanding. No one born after the Fall knows how to attain God's

righteousness. Many people have tried different means to become righteous, including the worship of idols, false religions, false Christianity, etc. but failed.

- Paul also tells us that the natural man and woman do not seek God. Seeking is looking for something, but Paul tells us that the natural person does not have any desire to know God and to enjoy Him. No human being since the Fall has sought the true God. They have no desire to glorify, honor, and worship Him. They have no desire to obey God and are actually enemies of God. God must first seek men and women before anyone can seek Him. 1 John 4:19.

➤ **VERSE 12.**

All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

- Every person after Adam, in their unconverted state, rejected God and went out of the way, the actual path God has set for men and women to travel. Like sheep, they have all gone astray and are all on their way to hell, Isaiah 53:6.
- Not only have they gone astray, but they have also become worthless or unprofitable. The actual Greek word used by Paul can be translated as "sour," meaning it has an acidic taste. Paul likened the condition of the natural man to milk that had gone sour and could not be used for anything, except to be thrown away. All of the natural man's achievements and good deeds are like filthy rags before God.
- Paul also wrote that no one does things to glorify God, not even one. The unconverted man and woman are only concerned about their selfish desires, and everything they do is for their own glory. They may deceive others with their actions, but God sees their hearts and thoughts. Luke 16:15. Their charity work, religious service, etc., are all to satisfy their pride and selfish ambitions.

➤ **VERSE 13.**

13 "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." "The poison of vipers is on their lips."

- Sin has affected even the speech of the man and woman who are unconverted. In the sight of God, the throat and the words uttered by the natural person can be compared to the foul smell that comes out of the open grave with a body kept in it for some weeks. Their speech like the smell of a decomposing body after several weeks in the grave.
- Paul tells us that they also practice deceit with their tongues. They have smooth tongues, dwell on flattery to manipulate others, but their motive is to deceive. They often pretend to care and love others, but they intend to exploit them for their own selfish interests. While with them, they will smile with you, tell you how wonderful you are, and how they hold you in high esteem, but as soon as you are away, they utter nasty words, destroy your reputation, and slander you. The

natural man and woman love to gossip, say nasty words, criticize maliciously, and find faults with others except themselves.

- Some employers may not genuinely care about their employees or clients. Still, they will hire human resources and public relations staff to use deceitful means to exploit people's income in the name of customer service.
- Paul also compared the words that come out of their mouth with the poison of vipers. In the church, we have pastors with a goal to glorify themselves and not the Lord. They often preach sermons about love, suggesting that everyone in the congregation is going to heaven without the need for being born again, or superficially discuss the concept of being born again. They speak with smoothness and flattery, but this man-centered gospel is like a poison that kills the souls of their hearers and leads them to hell.
- We have educators in our schools who pour out poison to their students, disguised as education, but eventually affect the spiritual life of their students. We have politicians, judges, and organizations pouring out poison to their citizens in the name of human rights. They approve of homosexuality and so many sins.

➤ **VERSE 14.**

“Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.”

- Inside the unconverted man is the tendency to be bitter, unforgiving, and curse others when they don't have their way. In their difficulty, Job's wife asked him to curse God and die. Some people can keep this tendency under control due to the restraining grace of God, but it is in every natural man and woman.
- The unconverted person is revengeful. Politicians demonstrate this mark clearly in our society.

➤ **VERSES 15, 16, AND 17.**

15 “Their feet are swift to shed blood; 16 ruin and misery mark their ways, 17 and the way of peace they do not know.”

- Wars have always been a part of human history due to sin. The natural person loves conflict, either in deed or thought. Jesus said one of the signs of the end times, which we live in, is war and rumors of war. He said in Matthew 24:6-7, **“You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. 7 Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.”**
- The unconverted are often ignorant and foolish, and will frequently engage in activities that bring misery and ruin their lives. They abuse alcohol, drugs, their bodies, etc.
- Universities are running programs on peace and security, while the United Nations has experts in world peace; however, the world does not know what true

peace truly is. Recently, President Donald Trump said he has ended eight wars since taking office in January 2025 by being involved in peace agreements or ceasefires. However, within weeks after this announcement, the ceasefire between Israel and Palestine was broken, and the same between Thailand and Cambodia. The natural man and woman do not have an understanding of the way of peace. God Himself spoke through Isaiah, saying, **"There is no peace," says the Lord, "for the wicked."** Isaiah 48:22.

➤ **VERSE 18.**

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

- The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, according to Psalm 36:1; however, the unrighteous do not fear the Lord because they lack wisdom.
- What does it mean to fear the Lord? The fear used here is not to be afraid of God's wrath, but rather it is reverence for God, which leads to obedience.
- The fear of the Lord embodies the idea of a man or woman who loves their spouse, such that they are careful not to do anything that would hurt their spouse. In the same way, we show that we fear the Lord by watching our actions, thoughts, and deeds carefully so that we obey Him, so that we do not hurt Him.

➤ **APPLICATIONS**

- How has God spoken to you and to me this morning? Where do you see yourself in the description of sinners, the unrighteous, as listed by the great apostle Paul? Do you see yourself as a good person who doesn't need any work on your relationship with God and your fellow man? Or do you see yourself as someone under the power of sin that has enslaved you and therefore will suffer its consequences, its penalty eternally, if nothing is done about your sins?
- Remember that Paul wrote this letter to the members of the church. However, he still called on anyone among them who was relying on their external religious activities to repent and flee from that belief, because none of the things we do or will ever do can deal with the power, penalty, and presence of sin in our lives.
- Jesus Christ alone delivers us from that which we cannot rescue ourselves – sin and its eternal consequences in hell, as we repent of our sins and believe in Him. The Bible makes it abundantly clear that there is only one Savior. **"And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved"** (Acts 4:12). Every individual in the world over needs salvation from sin. Do you honestly believe this?
- If you have already repented of your sins and have believed in Jesus Christ and His work on the cross for your salvation, then one of your songs in heaven to Jesus will be "I am saved by grace through faith from the penalty, the power and the presence of sin."
- May the Lord bless His word in our lives. Let us pray!