

The Verdict is Read

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[0 : 00] Good morning, everyone. Please turn with me in your Bibles to Romans chapter 3.

! Romans chapter 3. If you are new or visiting the beautiful area of Squamish, welcome.! My name is BK. I have the joy of serving as one of the pastors here.

Before I get into today's sermon, I kind of wanted to provide you with a short pastoral talk on church life.

Often when a pastor has to talk about some of these issues, some of our blessings can be a double-edged sword, so to speak, that there's multiple areas.

One of our primary focuses is the authority of God's Word. Amen? That's what I come here to preach. This is the Bible that we preach, and this is indeed God's Word.

[1 : 00] So a couple things. If you noticed this morning, the music team started to play the music, which was meant to let us know that we are coming to worship Jesus Christ.

Amen? That's who we're worshiping. So we kind of need your full attention. So we're going to start asking that when you start to hear that music playing, you come in. And this is the double-edged sword.

We're enjoying fellowship, right? We're enjoying that time together, getting caught up with our friends and family after a busy week. But we're hoping that that... Here's the thing.

There's coffee after the service, too. So we want to encourage you to fellowship after. But during that time, we kind of want to set that tone of worship that we have.

So we encourage you. And that also means for you people who are like 10-05, 10-10 type people, maybe set your clocks ahead.

[1 : 55] Ten minutes to kind of fool your brain. Maybe get here on time just so you can get that full experience. Because the greatest challenge for our worship team is when they're engaging us with the music that they're praying over, thinking about choosing, kind of on that first song, and people just kind of aren't there.

They're left asking the question, what do I do with this? And it's the same thing for the preaching. We've got this blessing of many kids. As you all know, we've got a moms, dads, and tots section over there for your blessing.

We're also going to be setting up speakers outside, eventually, Lord willing, out in the foyer. So if there's any noise or anything, we please ask you to police that noise just so there's not a distraction to anything else.

And it's not because I believe you're distracting from my great preaching. It's distracting from the great book that I get the pleasure of preaching. And we want to make sure that message is heard by each and every one of us.

So great blessings comes great responsibility, right? I'm quoting Spider-Man's uncle there. So that's a really good thing. So let me just pray before we get into this incredible passage of Romans 3.

[3 : 11] Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, God, we just thank you for the blessings that you've given us. Hospitality, children, life, family. I love the fact that we want to engage. We need to engage with one another.

Father, we need this community. We need to be loved. We need to be cared for. We need to be heard. We need to be listened to. We need to hear. Father, I pray just as a leadership, you give us wisdom to navigate these challenges of growth.

And Father, we take this responsibility of shepherding the souls that you have given us very seriously. Our org chart begins with Jesus Christ at the top.

And it's really at the bottom. You are the suffering servant. And we have the joy of shepherding this church. So I just ask that we would continue to pray for our leadership and those that give their time

and volunteer.

Our pastors that are here that work diligently to make sure that every soul is heard. And Lord willing, we want every soul to be known. We want these friendships to cut deep.

[4 : 27] To share life with. So Father, I just pray as we move closer to a greater understanding of you. May our love for one another increase as our love for you increases.

So we ask these things in your most holy and precious name. Amen. So here we are. We are in the book of Romans. We've been studying it now for the last couple of weeks after being away for a year.

And this morning, we are getting into one of the most pivotal passages in understanding the topic of salvation in the entire Bible.

Although John 3.16 stands out at the face of the gospel, today's passage answers the most important question as to why.

John 3.16 explains how to be saved. But this passage, Romans 3.9-20 explains why we need salvation.

[5 : 31] This passage, more than any other, gives us the reason why we need Jesus. So this morning, we step back into God's court.

It's a courtroom. If you are new, we've been moving through this text as if it were a courtroom scenario. Charges have been laid. Defenses have been uttered.

We've heard the charges. We've heard the objections. We've heard the cross-examination. And the prosecutor, the apostle Paul, speaking on behalf of the judge, the almighty God has made his case. Gentiles on one side of the room and Jews on the other. We began this journey in Romans 1.18 where Paul declared that the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.

First, he called the irreligious. The pagans, the idol worshipers, the Gentiles, if it were. Their sin was loud, public, and unashamed.

[6 : 46] They denied the truth. They distorted the creator and they dishonored their bodies. Paul clearly states there without excuse.

The judge's gavel has fallen. Guilty was the verdict. Then in chapter 2, the spotlight moves to the religious elite, as it were, the Jews, the ones who had the law, who had the covenants, who had the heritage.

They even had a sign, a body mark that taught others, but they didn't teach themselves. They boasted in a law that they broke.

And Paul shattered their confidence with, you think your rituals will save you. You think your lineage makes you safe. Wrong.

The gavel fell and guilty was the verdict. Now, if we were in that actual courtroom, there would be shock.

[7 : 49] Shock from both Jew and Gentile. Shock from the religious outsider and the religious insider. Shock from those who really wanted to make religion work for them.

And for those who said, well, if I don't have a religion, maybe I won't be held accountable. Paul clearly stated how the wrong they were.

This passage, Romans 3, 9 to 20, is the part of the passage where after the verdict has been declared. Paul, the attorney, now explains the quote-unquote legal speak.

He's going to explain why they have been found guilty. Let's be honest. We see this in courts all the time. We see people, if you ever watch any type of show or live document or follow the news, some are declared guilty and they really don't know why.

Perhaps some were ignorant of the law. Some did not understand the law. Some believed they were following the law and this is life.

[9 : 04] They're still found guilty even though they had no intention of running against the law. So an explanation is needed.

The apostle Paul today wants to make sure every single person in this courtroom understands the judge's decision. So over the next three weeks, we're going to walk through this chain of verses.

And I've divided it into three separate sections. And I'm following on a structure brought out by the great Welsh preacher, Martin Lloyd-Jones.

And it's going to be divided into three parts. The first part is today, which is verses 9 to 12. And in this section, this explains the state of man in his sin.

What that means is what we are by nature. Who is the natural man? Next week, we're going to look at verses 13 and 17.

[10:07] And we're going to see the evidence which is drawn out by the natural man. The evidence of sin in action. It's essentially we live by who we are.

And in verse 18, we're going to look at the call of it, the cause of it all in the final sermon. Ultimately comes down to we just don't fear God.

So today we begin with the first part, the condition of man. This isn't about what you've done. It's about who we are apart from Jesus Christ.

So I want you to turn in your text with me to verse 9 of Romans 3. So this verse, verse 9, kind of acts as a summary of what has happened so far.

And it's a logical question. What then? Are we Jews any better off? Now I want to break this down.

[11:16] What then? Are we Jews any better? You can almost hear the objection rising from the gallery. The questions would have been asked. Are you sure?

We're not any better? We've had you since the time of Abraham. You spoke to our forefather Moses. We must be better off. We've got laws, covenants. We've got this great history.

We have circumcision. Are you trying to tell me there is no spiritual advantage? What we heard last week is that he doesn't deny they have privileges.

But when it comes to their standing before God, they're guilty. They're under sin. The grand finale of the prosecution's case is everyone, absolutely everyone is under sin.

It is a universal charge. All are under sin. Notice it says not those that are sinful, not those who are mistaken, not just simply those that are broken, but everyone is under sin.

[12:31] Now that term under sin is an interesting term. What Paul is stating is that you live in the domain of sin, the country of sin.

If you were to have a passport that dictated who your citizenship is, it doesn't matter. You're not just Canadians. Every passport has one thing in common.

Only one country is represented in that passport. You may have two passports, but in the one passport that you have to enter God's kingdom, it says you are under the kingdom of sin.

That means you are under its power, its penalty, its authority. That is where your citizenship is.

It states that you are not free. You are not neutral. The Bible clearly says that actually to be under sin's domain means you are enslaved.

[13:37] You are condemned. You are condemned. You are spiritually dead. You see, there's only two domains.

We're either under the domain of sin or the domain of grace. There is no third domain. There is no domain of neutrality.

But also with that term under sin, R.C. Sproul makes this wonderful point. He says, think of that idea of being under sin.

It's to have this weight of sin which is above us. It pushes down on us. And this sin pushes down and it pushes down on everything we do.

And it creates guilt. It creates shame. It creates rebellion. It creates frustration. And you know you're under this weight and you want to do something to get out from under it.

[14:40] But that weight is everywhere. And some people will make their whole life's goal to escape that weight. And that is why we have today's passage which explains to us how to escape that weight.

Now let's continue with Paul's legal analysis. Let's look at observation number one. I've divided this sermon into several observations. Observation one.

It says, none is righteous, not even one. Now notice Paul says, as it is written. This isn't Paul actually being poetic.

This is actually Paul. If you did not know, verses 10 to 19 are all verses from the Old Testament. So Paul is not bringing in a new law that shows that you are guilty.

This is the old law. This is the law that has always existed. Your people have had this law. So there's no excuse. So in this specific passage, Paul is drawing from Psalm 14 and Psalm 53.

[15:55] There are two Psalms which are almost identical. And they simply says, the fool says in his heart, there is no God.

They're corrupt, doing abominable iniquity. There is none who does good. You see, this is who this is about.

Those who live without fear of God, without repentance, without righteousness. As Martin Lloyd-Jones would call this man, this man is called natural man.

And for those in the him, he category, you know I'm talking about men and women. Now note, it doesn't say some.

It doesn't say many fall short. It doesn't say most aren't trying enough. It says none.

[17:00] None. None. Paul is not providing statistics. Paul is giving a verdict of truth. This is a legal verdict.

This is a divine verdict. This is the final verdict. And just in case you think there may be a clause, a loophole, some exception that will render you free from this verdict, Paul adds three words to crush your hopes.

No, not one. No, not one. You can translate it as there is absolutely no one righteous, not a single one.

Now the question that we should have is what does this word righteous means? What does righteous mean? What does righteous mean? Or what does it mean to be righteous?

Righteous. Simple definition is it refers to someone who is right or just in the eyes of God. And I'm not referring to human morality, what you and I may consider as good or bad.

[18:10] But what Paul's talking here is about God's perfect standard. And this word righteous means here in this context means three separate things.

The first one, it means your legal standing before God. Righteous refers to someone who stands in right relationship with God, particularly in a forensic or legal sense.

That means to be in a courtroom. It means to be either acquitted, not guilty, or approved before God. You with me on that? So it's a legal sense.

It's a legal sense of who you are. Are you righteous? The second area, it means moral purity and conformity to God's law.

Now this carries the sense of one whose thoughts, words, and actions are always fully aligned with God's law. It's not an external behavior simply, but it includes the internal condition of the heart and motives.

[19:28] To say it in another way, it's to love what God loves. It's to hate what God hates. And to do all that God commands from the heart.

All the time for God's glory. Now when I say from the heart, I'm not talking about that emotional spongy, ooey, gooey thing that makes us cry watching movies.

Those kind of heart. What he's talking about in the Jewish sense of the heart is the CPU. It's the controlling processing unit of your being. It is what makes you who you are.

And there's the third way to be righteous. And it's the Old Testament echo that Paul, as we see, is quoting from Psalm 14, where David declares the universal sinfulness of mankind.

In the Hebrew context, righteous means one who lives in covenant faithfulness to God all the time.

[20:31] And his ways are always walking in integrity. Now Paul applies it universally. He simply states no one meets the standard.

Now let me explain something to you. If you are familiar with Calvinism, Calvinism is a theological structure that helps people understand how God's sovereignty works in our lives.

There's a God's sovereignty. And then Jacob Arminius talked about that we had free will to choose God. Now the first acronym that they use to help us understand.

And the word is TULIP. But the T of TULIP means total depravity. And this is what verses 3, 10 to 12 tells us. That men are totally depraved.

That there is no righteousness in them. Now what Paul is not saying is that no one has ever done a good thing in a human sense. But he's saying is that no one is inherently righteous by God's holy standard.

[21:43] You with me on that one? It's that no one is inherently righteous by God's holy standard. Paul is not saying that everyone is as evil as they could be.

But when it comes to meeting the legal requirement of righteousness, everyone falls short. So to sum up, to be righteous means to be perfectly just, morally pure, and in full conformity to God's holy standard.

Both inwardly and outwardly. And therefore totally approved by God. You with me on that one? That's big.

Now what does this mean for us? This in fact destroys every religious resume. You were baptized.

Guess what? You're not righteous. You serve in ministry. Guess what? You're not righteous. You tithe faithfully. Guess what? You're not righteous. You've avoided major sinful scandals in your life. [22 : 57] Congratulations. You're not righteous. You love your kids. You're not righteous. See, there's not a single person who, apart from the righteousness of Jesus Christ, can stand before God and say, I belong here.

I belong here. I belong here. God, I belong here. Now I want you to think about that for a second. I know many people debate the theological assumptions that are going on behind these verses. But it all comes down to this term, and I think if you really think about it, God, I belong here.

To believe that one of us can go on our own before a perfect, holy, and just God, and say, Yoo-hoo, God, I belong here.

Now some people read this, and they immediately start reaching for the exceptions. What about children? What about people who haven't heard the gospel?

[24 : 13] What about grandma? Surely Paul doesn't mean literally everyone, right? Oh, yes, he does.

This verse is universal on purpose. What Paul is doing, he's wiping the slate clean of every human claim to moral sufficiency.

I'll state that again. Paul is wiping the slate clean of every human claim to moral sufficiency. You see, it doesn't matter how you compare to others.

It doesn't matter if you've avoided the big sins. It doesn't matter if even your conscience feels clean. The fact of the matter is God is not grading on a curve.

He simply says, There is none righteous. No, not one. Martin Lloyd-Jones explains, The most moral man, the most noble, the most self-sacrificing.

[25 : 20] Even he is not righteous before God. The best of men are not only unfit, they are unworthy.

So the question you need to ask yourself is, why does this matter? And I'll tell you why. It's because you might be tempted to say, Okay, I get it. Nobody's perfect.

Nobody's perfect. But that's not the point Paul is making here. Paul is not saying that we make mistakes. Paul is saying that you and I are rebels.

That we are flawed and that we are condemned. And righteousness is what God requires to enter into his presence.

We have this passport. I want that passport that gets me to be with God. How do I do it?

[26 : 18] Because without it, I cannot enter into his kingdom. What Paul is simply saying here is, You cannot be saved. You don't need self-improvement.

You don't need more therapy. You do not need better vibes in your life. You need righteousness. Guess what?

We don't have it. You don't have it. In case you're wondering, I don't have it either. So some of you are still going to argue with God in your mind.

You are going to say, I'm not that bad. And you may be comparing yourself to your neighbor. You might be comparing yourself to the culture.

Perhaps you're even comparing yourself of a version of yourself from 10 years ago. Maybe you're looking over at your spouse. Maybe you're thinking about your brother and your sister.

[27 : 25] Or more often than not, you would not believe how many people will say, I'm better than my parents. I'm here to tell you that there's only one standard. And that standard is Jesus Christ.

So when you start thinking about that, I want you to read the verse again. None is righteous. No, not one. And why he's telling you this is because he wants us to understand that salvation by works, it's not just difficult, it's impossible.

You are not good. You are not clean. You are not righteous. But there is one who is righteous. His name is Jesus.

And our biggest issue is we cannot resist defending ourselves when we should be depending on Jesus.

Because when we depend on Jesus, He gives us His righteousness. So the second observation I want to call your attention to is the term no one understands or seeks for God.

[28 : 46] God is what this means is this natural man has no spiritual perception. That men and women may be brilliant intellectually.

They may have a high social IQ. They may be successful professionally. But when it comes to knowing God, they are blind. They can't see. The way I say it's like being a vampire looking in a mirror and you don't see anything. You can't tell. You don't know. And here's the thing when we tell people, they just don't get it. And not only that, they don't want to get it. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2.14, it says, The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand that. Notice, he's not able. It doesn't say he's not smart enough. He's not good enough. He's not good looking enough. He's not able to. And the issue is, this isn't a knowledge issue. [30 : 00] It is a heart issue. It's not that they're spiritually uninformed. It's that they're spiritually dead. They know there's a God, but they suppress that truth.

They see his power in creation, but they refuse to glorify him. Ephesians 4.18 says, they're darkened in their understanding, and they're alienated from the life of God. This is why, when we preach the gospel, it's never a matter of a clever argument or a slick presentation. Evangelism begins by asking the Holy Spirit to open blind eyes. You can't debate someone into the kingdom. You can't guilt someone into the kingdom, and let me tell you, I know a lot of people have tried. My mom will hate me, but I remember when I was younger, she locked me in her room, and I couldn't come out until I was saved. She was pretty new at the time at being a believer. [31 : 18] You see, if the Spirit doesn't give understanding, the gospel sounds like absolute nonsense. That's why Paul prays in Ephesians 1.18, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened that you may know.

The fact of the matter is, no one understands unless God makes them understand, and until He does, they will remain in the dark. Now I want us to look at the third observation. No one seeks God. This is the will in rebellion. This is a big one. Now we're into the will, the desires, the drive of the human heart. So why does Paul say, no one seeks God? Wait, wait, what? The question that comes up, aren't there seekers? Aren't people on a spiritual journey all the time? Well, not according to this verse. Maybe today you are here, and you're like, hey, I'm a seeker. I'm seeking, right? That's why I'm at church. [32 : 25] I want to know. I want to understand. Does that make me a seeker? Let's be clear. People seek blessings.

People seek peace. People seek meaning. But no one on their own seeks God himself. Lloyd-Jones said, there's a vast difference between seeking relief and seeking God. The natural man wants relief from pain, perhaps a guilty conscience, but never repentance from sin. The natural man wants heaven, but not holiness. The natural man wants blessings, but not the blessed one. That's a direct allusion to the question John Piper asks. If you could go to heaven and be with everyone you loved, and if Jesus was not there, would you still be happy? [33 : 34] Would you still be happy? Jesus said it this way in John 6, 44. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.

People don't just wake up one day and decide to pursue God. People don't climb their way up to heaven through self-discovery or spiritual experimentation. The only reason anyone ever truly seeks God is because God sought them first. Amen? You see, God is against the credit for one's salvation, not man. Let me dig down more on this because there are plenty of objections to this verse. Our world is full of spiritual seekers. Hey, if Squamish isn't the primary place or the Mecca of spiritual seekers, I don't know what is. Going to any library, bookshelves overflow with titles such as The God Within You, The Journey to the Divine, The Finding God in the Everyday. [34 : 50] But let's be honest, it's tempting to, even as a church, to rebrand ourselves as seeker-sensitive. Let's give people what they're seeking. That would mean we would be bending our church, not what God wants, but what people want.

That's like us sending out a survey to the whole neighborhood. What would it take for get you guys to all come to church? Top 10 answer, keg of beer instead of coffee, right? Whatever it is.

And then we would feel we'd give it to them, but that's their curiosity. That's not God drawing them. We don't appeal to their curiosity.

We don't make faith more comfortable because the problem is, Paul says there are no seekers.

Jesus says there are no seekers. Seekers.

Not without God's prior pursuit. If you believe people are seeking, you're not going to want them to scare them away, so you're going to adjust yourselves.

[35 : 56] You're going to play more secular, hopeful music. As for the topic of sin, hell, in this very subject, the wrath of God about being found guilty, don't do it.

John Stott puts it like this. Our seeking is always a response to God seeking us. We would never seek him unless he had first sought us.

So when someone says, I found God, that's technically incorrect. God found you. God drew you. God revealed himself to you.

What makes one more thankful? The fact that God did this for you or you went and did it for yourself? When you understand this, you'll understand why we function as a church.

You see, this verse offends the pride of men and women like few others because we like to believe deep down we're good.

[37 : 10] We like to think of ourselves as open-minded, spiritually aware, humble pilgrims on a noble journey. But Paul says, no, you're blind, you're proud, you're running from the very one who made you.

And until you accept that, you will never seek grace for what it really is. Because if you could seek God on our own, we could figure it out through reason or tradition or religious effort, God came after us when we weren't looking.

God opened our eyes when we were blind. God awakened our hearts when we were dead. God sought us out and by his mercy, God saved us.

Amen? There is nothing in there that we take credit from. Luke 19.10 says, for the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

Whew! You weren't the seeker he was. You were lost. Now let me ask you, are you still trusting in your spiritual curiosity?

[38 : 35] Are you confusing emotional longing with true repentance? Are you assuming that because you think about God now and then, you must be okay?

Let the Word confront you. No one understands. No one seeks for God. If you are here seeking him now, it's because he's been seeking you.

And here's the thing, my friends. If you believe to this moment that you were the seeker, I'm going to encourage you to not miss this moment. Don't resist the Spirit's pull.

It means God is after you. He wants you to be his own. Don't run, don't harden, don't delay.

My advice to you is to fall on your knees and simply say, God, I am not the seeker. You are. Find me, save me. Open my eyes and awaken my heart.

[39 : 42] Amen. We move to observation number four, verses 12. The point is, The point is, this is not a picture of someone who is innocently lost.

This is someone who sees the path and walked away from it. The phrase turned aside is loaded. It's intentional language, like someone who steps off a clear road and goes into the wilderness.

This is, my friends, active rebellion. This is not passive wandering. It's a reference to Psalm 14 again, where the fool said, this is in his heart, there is no God.

They have all turned aside. The Hebrew carries the idea of leaving the right path. It means to veer away, to deflect.

It means you saw God brought you, open your eyes to the true fullness and gracious and goodness of his love, and you said, I'm still going this way.

[40 : 58] And it's not by accident. It's not like another car came in and made you veer that way. You consciously said, I want this way. And here's the thing.

It isn't a moment of weakness. It's a lifestyle of rejection. We didn't get lost. We chose a different direction. We didn't slip.

We strayed. We didn't accidentally wander. We willfully walked away. Isaiah 53 says it clearly. All we like sheep have gone astray.

We have turned everyone to his own way. You want your truth, your morality, your plans, your glory.

That's why you turned. That is decision that every sinner makes. Notice the term together, they have become worthless.

[42 : 14] Worthless. If you truly think about it, this is one of the most devastating phrases in the whole passage. The Greek word used for worthless was used for milk that had gone sour or fruit that had rotted.

It has no value. It is spoiled. It is useless. It's offensive. It's corrupt. Now, why does that matter? Lloyd-Jones says, man was created for God's glory. Man was designed to reflect God. But now, he's like a rusted out engine. He may have all the parts, but he just doesn't work. It's worthless. Think about how heavy that is. You and I, believe it or not, are created in the image of God.

[43 : 21] We're created to worship him, serve him, enjoy him, and spread his glory to the ends of the earth. And what did we do? We turned aside.

We sought our glory rather than God's glory. We chose our morality rather than God's morality. We chose our plans over God's plans.

Do you get how crazy that is? We turned aside. We became rotten. We exchanged glory for garbage.

We were made for the palace, but we chose the pigsty. And if you doubt my words, open your eyes and look at this world.

Look at your lives. Can you truly say everything is perfect? The fact is, we've rendered ourselves spiritually useless, no longer fulfilling our original purpose.

[44 : 25] That doesn't mean human beings are worthless in terms of dignity or value, but in terms of spiritual productivity before God, we are spoiled and worthless.

Paul will later remind us in Romans 8, 8, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. We can't. Now notice the term, no one does good, not even one. This is the final strike, the final blow.

Just in case someone in the audience still thinks that this doesn't apply to them. Just like verse 10, it's total repetition, total exclusion.

Paul is putting the exclamation mark on the indictment. There's no exceptions. There's no asterisks. There's no small print.

[45 : 33] What you read here is the final shattering of human pride. You might say, but wait, what about the nurse who gave up her time to care for the orphans?

What about the man who ran into the building to save a stranger? What about all the humanitarian good in the world? Here's the biblical answer. Those may be good in a horizontal sense, but it's not good in a way that qualifies as good before God.

Why? Because good in God's eyes is not just external right, it's internal righteousness. That it has to be done for the right purpose, God's glory.

It has to be done with the right motives, love for God and others. And it has to be done in the right power, through the spirit, not the flesh.

And who does that on their own? No one. The generous act, the sacrificial gift, the moment of kindness, if it's not done out of worship for God and dependence upon His grace, it is not spiritually good.

[46 : 50] It's interesting, when I was in university, I'd been sharing the gospel. These two friends of mine, one accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as His Savior, and the other one resisted. And the biggest area upon His resistance was built was because He could not accept the fact that His grandma was a sinner.

It's not funny. He just could not accept the grandma who loved Him and cared for Him. Now, if we had asked Him, why do your parents think grandma was perfect, you'd get a totally different answer.

But as a young boy who had his grandma always love Him with unconditional love, make sure there was plenty of candy, he was a little bit chunky, you know, he had wonderful love. love.

But, according to God's standards, she was guilty. Isaiah 64, 6 says, all our righteous deeds are like filthy rags.

Even our best without Christ is spiritually contaminated. Let's be honest, these verses offend our pride.

[48 : 04] It doesn't just expose our sin, but it exposes our best efforts of actually being tainted. Some of us are going to argue, hey, I'm basically good, man.

BK, I recycle. I pay my taxes. I try to be kind. I feel spiritual. I haven't killed anyone. And Paul simply says, not good.

Not one. Not even you. See, that's the point. He's not saying you've done bad things. He's saying there's nothing spiritually good in you.

He's saying, and I quote, there is nothing spiritually good in you at all. Apart from Jesus Christ. Christ. You have to come to this place of utter collapse before God where you finally stop talking, stop justifying, stop finger pointing, and simply say, God, I've got nothing.

You see, when grace gets real, that's when salvation gets personal. That's when the gospel stops being theory and becomes your only hope.

[49 : 31] Let me recap. Romans 3 verses 10 to 12. None is righteous. No, not one.

No one understands. No one seeks God. No one seeks for God. All have turned aside. Together they have become worthless.

No one does good. Not even one. The courtroom goes silent. So here we are. We've heard the charges, every one of them.

Grounded in scripture, confirmed by our conscience, and proved by experience. No righteousness. No understanding.

No seeking. No goodness. And ultimately no way out. What I've read to you is the most sweeping, devastated, offensive diagnosis of the human condition in all of scripture.

[50 : 41] Let's be honest. It doesn't flatter, does it? It doesn't negotiate. It doesn't leave room for us to maneuver. It simply leaves us silent.

Now turn in your Bibles down to verse 19. Paul makes this statement. He says that every mouth may be stopped and the whole world may be held accountable to God.

Notice every mouth stopped. That means no excuses, no defenses, no comparisons, no more pride, just silence.

Holy, trembling, courtroom, silence. silence. Why does God want us silent?

Why does God want us to shut our mouths? Because you will never ask for mercy if you're still pleading your case.

[51 : 54] You will never reach for a savior if you still think you can save yourself. You'll never embrace grace if you still believe in your own goodness.

God brings us to a point not to crush us beyond hope, but to cut out every false hope so we can finally see the only hope that remains Jesus Christ.

See, the gospel doesn't make bad people better. The gospel makes dead people alive. psalm 19 7, the law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul.

And the only people who get grace are the ones who know they're guilty. So let me tell you where salvation begins. Salvation doesn't begin with I'm trying my best.

Salvation begins with I am ruined. it begins with God I've got nothing. Because that's the time if you can get there that's when God steps in and says now you're ready to hear what I've done for you.

[53 : 21] So here's the question. Has your mouth stopped talking? I'm not talking you're talking lower, talking softer.

Have you stopped talking? Has your defense died? Has your pride cracked?

Has your I'm a good person theology gone up in flames? Good. then you're ready to finally stop talking and start trusting that you can't be good enough.

You can't work hard enough. You can't clean yourself up and you can't seek God on your own. But here's what we heard.

Jesus came after you. Jesus sought you. Jesus lived a righteousness and a righteous life so you don't have to.

[54 : 39] Jesus died the death you deserve and he rose to life to give you a life you can't earn. so now he says come to me not with your resume not with your religion but with your silence and your surrender.

So what will it be? Will you keep talking or will you finally shut your mouth and bow down to the king of all kings and the lord of all lords?

let's pray. Father I pray that those here who do not know you would just shut up and receive your mercy.

that they would no longer seek to defend themselves to pass blame or redirect or deflect make excuses.

Let's be honest the world is filled with excuses. Father there's not one who can stand before you. [56 : 02] There's not one who deserves to be before you. If there's anyone here who actually believes in the insanity that they can go before a just and holy God the creator of all creators and say I'm here I made it.

look at me. What a devastating place to be in.

So God I pray that those here who thought they were seeking would understand that you've been seeking them and that they would entrust themselves to you that they would let go of the earthly reasons and accept the heavenly ones.

May they cut the cords from this world and exchange that passport of sin for a passport of life, peace, and a right relationship with you O Lord.

That not only are they just citizens in this new world that they're actually accepted as sons and daughters of the king. For the kingdom of God is to be one of his, to be in his domain and to live for him.

[57 : 33] what a majestic thought, just that imagery that you provided for us in your word is outstanding O God.

Let us go before the great throne of glory and simply fall on your great mercy. Amen.