



St. Paul's Lutheran Church
Minot, ND
www.anchoredminot.com



The Epistle of Romans

The Justification of the Ungodly

Chapter 3 Verses 1-8

To certain people in the world have a better position because of their ethnicity, intellect, background, or intrinsic abilities? Absolutely not! We, humans, are in the same boat. While the world recognizes some people as more special than others (due to family heritage, money, and power), there simply is no position of 'specialness' before God. We are all sin-sick.

But what about the Jews? Was there an advantage in being Jewish? Yes, the Jews were blessed because they had the oracles of God – the Word. In other words, the Jews were blessed not because of anything intrinsically with them as people but because they were 'entrusted' with the Word. But what does it mean to be entrusted with the Word? The Jews were stewards of the Word – managers – because the Word was not given to the Jewish people to enjoy for their sole benefit. God's Word belongs to God; He is the author; we are mere stewards. Indeed, the Word of God was entrusted to the Jews to bless them 'and' to bless the neighbors of the Jews. The same is true for the Church – we are stewards of the Word, not owners of the Word. There is only one author of the Word – the Lord. Therefore,

sermons in the church do not belong to a pastor but belong to the church, the church who is a steward of the Word. Furthermore, there is no such thing as private church services – all church services are public because the Word is for everyone to hear and receive.

But what happens if people, who are entrusted with the Word, are unfaithful? Can God still unleash His wrath fairly if people are unfaithful with His Word? Shouldn't God bear some responsibility for the unfaithfulness of mankind, especially if that unfaithfulness hurts others? If people are unfaithful with the Word, doesn't that mean that God has failed a little bit? Absolutely not! The abuse of the Word does not nullify God's faithfulness. In other words, when people blame God for bad things that happened to them from unfaithful leaders in the church, they are placing their blame in the wrong spot. The Lord God is faithful; mankind is unfaithful. The abuse of something does not destroy its essence. For example, do you ever notice how when bad

things happen, we blame God, and when good things happen, we take credit for it? Oh, what an easy cop out! Furthermore, ever notice how we blame God for not intervening in our affairs, while at the same time demanding that we have the right to choose what we want when we want it, whenever we want it? We demand help and freedom at the same time. Don't we sound like a rebellious 4-year-old?

The point being, God is righteous; humanity is not. When we challenge this basic premise, we are not only putting God on trial, but we are going down the road of blasphemy. As sheep, we cannot shepherd the Shepherd. As clay, we cannot form the potter. As servants, we cannot boss the Master. As created beings, we cannot judge the creator.

So, when we confess that we are poor miserable sinners, we are saying that God is righteous and we are not. We are saying that God is fair to judge us – pour His wrath on us. However, whenever we start to tinker with God's righteousness, we open the door to distort the Gospel. For example:

- Legalists believe that they are better than others; therefore, it would be wrong for God to have the same wrath upon them as He has for others.
- Antinomians believe that God is not too stern on sin and mistakes; therefore, it is wrong to assume that God's wrath would reign down on them, for God is just not that strict – He is just not that wrathful.

As you can see, both the legalist and the antinomian undercut their need for the righteousness of God. The less we see ourselves as guilty, the less we need the righteousness of God. The more we see ourselves as guilty, the more we need the righteousness of God. Frankly stated; God is right, we are not, He will judge everyone justly at the Last Day unless we have a solution. And what is that solution? That answer is coming.



