

Sermon or Lesson: Romans 3:13-19 (NIV based)
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Accountable For Our Total Depravity

INTRO: Have you ever secretively gotten a look at the messages of teenagers or pre-teens on social media or the phone, or covertly overheard a private conversation they were having with their peers? What was the flavor or tone of the content? Were you shocked to hear how they were speaking and what they want to do?

In the Scripture passage we are going to study today, God describes these kinds of behaviors and what He has prepared to do in regard to them. Let's look at what God thinks about this.

READ: Romans 3:13-19, with vv. 9c-12 for context

BACKGROUND:

- - Verses 13-18 are a continuation of the discussion in previous verses 10-12 declaring and describing the inherited sin nature of all humans.
- - We humans each in and of ourselves are devoid of righteousness and goodness.
- - We thereby are living in a condemned state of being worthless and useless to God for His purposes.
- - And we are entirely incapable of generating the perfect sinlessness and perfect righteousness that are required by God to be accepted by Him.

vv.13-14 - READ (cf. Psalms 5:9; 140:3; 10:7)

[Lesson Question: What category of sinfulness is being described here and what are its characteristics?]

SECTION POINT: We humans readily **speak** corruptly, which is hostile to God and useless for His purposes.

v.13 - "**Their throats are open graves**"

- - We humans speak draining, harmful words, which are quenching and unhealthy for the life and well-being of other people.
- - We speak from a position of being morally dead, a spiritual zombie, a walking dead person.
- - We make no attempt to hide this kind of speaking.
- - Our words are openly displayed, projected, and promoted - in fact even broadcast for everyone to hear.
- - This speaking comes from down inside; it reflects how we really feel, with no filter.

v.13 - "**their tongues practice deceit**"

- - We humans readily speak words designed and intended to deceive other people - dishonest, "treacherously cunning and stealthy, scheming". (Strong's #1387; 'guileful' - (AHD))

- - The meanings of these descriptive words suggests we are masterful at speaking deceit - quite effective, thoroughly and regularly practiced.
- - And in actuality, we are busy doing the work of the enemy, the Father Of Lies and his Kingdom Of Darkness. (cf. John 8:44)

v.13 - "**The poison of vipers is on their lips.**"

- - We humans intentionally speak damaging, destructive, deadly, piercing words.
- - We speak words designed and intended to rip people apart, shred them to pieces, destroy them intellectually, emotionally, relationally, and every other way possible.
- - This speaking is aggressive, assaultive, structured and purposed to make victims out of defenseless others.

v.14 - "**Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.**"

- - We humans seem to delight in speaking that is cursing, cussing, lewdness, vulgarities, obscenities, indecencies, profanities, blasphemes, contemptuous, irreverent. (Strong's #0685; 'imprecation' - (AHD))
- - Our bitterness gets vocalized, being "unpleasantly sharp, caustic". (Strong's #4088; 'acridity' - (AHD))

- - All of these kinds of speaking can be easily observed in society today, being common in the lyrics in many rock music and rap music songs.
- - These kinds of speaking is also prevalent in how many people communicate on social media or when they are secluded with a group of their trusted peers.

- - Notice that these kinds of speaking reflect what is in one's heart, inner thinking.
- - Characteristically, these kinds of speaking are contrary to and hostile to righteous speaking and righteous living, thereby hostile to God and the things of God. (vv.10-12)
- - God is declaring here that this is how we humans speak - totally corrupted and depraved - worthless and useless for His purposes. (v.12)
- - The description in James 3:6 summarizes these kinds of speaking very well, "The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell."

vv.15-18 - READ (cf. Isaiah 59:7,8; Psalm 36:1)

[Lesson Question: What category of sinfulness is being described here and what are its characteristics?]

SECTION POINT: We humans readily **act** corruptly, which also is hostile to God and useless for His purposes.

v.15 - "**Their feet are swift to shed blood**"

- - We humans have a proclivity or strong attraction to shedding or "pouring forth" the blood of other people. (Strong's #1632)
- - We are "swift" or have quickness with intelligence and understanding to shed blood. (Strong's #3691; 'keen', 'acuity' - (AHD))

- - Our inclination is to move in this direction with very little or no hesitation - with a short fuse we become physically aggressive and assaultive.
- - Behaving in this assaultive way apparently brings satisfaction, and perhaps enjoyment to us.
- - The common thinking behind this is: "If you don't like what somebody is doing, beat 'em up, bust their face, make 'em pay, work 'em over."

v.16 - "ruin and misery mark their ways"

- - The course or path that we humans make is "marked", or distinguished, or dominated by the ruin and misery we perpetrate.
- - This purpose of our actions is to totally destroy other people, inflicting irreparable harm to "ruin" them in every way advantageous to us. ('ruin' - (AHD))
- - Another purpose of our actions is to inflict "misery, wretchedness, and calamity" (Strong's #5004) upon other people so that they experience a "deplorable state of lasting terrible distress, anguish, and deprivation". ('wretchedness', 'calamity' - (AHD))
- - We want to make other people suffer - anybody we do not like.

v.17 - "and the way of peace they do not know"

- - The course or path that we humans make has no peace - "no contentment, no serenity, no tranquility, no conformity, no harmony, no cooperation, no agreement, no calmness, no quietness, no stillness". ('peace' - (AHD))
- - The aspects of peace are not usual, common, normal, acceptable, or desirable to us humans.
- - Instead, we relish ongoing agitation, disturbance, turmoil, mayhem, and we are not content until we have stirred up trouble, contention, arguing, fighting, and battles to get what we want. (cf. James 4:1-2c)

v.18 - "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

- - We humans get so consumed by our corrupt behaviors that we do not see, nor detect, nor recognize, nor consider, nor possess a fear of God.
- - Intrinsically, we have no fear, respect, reverence, or concern about how God regards our behaviors.
- - And furthermore, we do not perceive or foresee any potential threat, problems, or danger of a future encounter with God.
- - Essentially, we live as if there is no God - none.

- - These actions we take that comprise the path we make in life are corrupt and totally devoid of righteousness and goodness. (vv.10,12)
 - - If we are left to ourselves with no societal restrictions or laws, this is what we would all be and how we would behave - our capabilities, inclinations, tendencies.
 - - We each have an insatiable appetite for inflicting harm on other humans in a wide variety of ways, which is quite apparent when our lives are individually and comprehensively examined - thinking, words, and actions.
 - - God is declaring in this section that we humans not only speak but act in totally corrupt and depraved ways, which are worthless and useless for His purposes. (v.12)
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v.19 - READ

[Lesson Question: What has God prepared to do regarding all of our sinfulness?]

SECTION POINT: God has instituted His law to hold us accountable for our corrupt speaking and acting, thereby rendering as invalid any defense against our guilt.

- - God dispensed and instituted the Old Testament Law as a legal or judicial system and means by which to hold us legally accountable for all aspects of this total depravity that we each have and are under the influence of.
 - - We have been duly informed of His law, which makes us aware, conscious, and accountable for our violations of His law.
 - - Thereby, we are each and individually under the jurisdiction and applicability of God's law, being fully accountable to it and for it.
 - - Therefore, we have no legal standing by which we can try to launch any valid defense in verbal objection to the judgments, verdicts, and consequences for breaking His law.
 - - On Judgment Day, for each of us humans there is no valid excuse for our guilt in breaking God's law.
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BIG IDEA: We humans readily speak and act corruptly, which are hostile to God and violate His law, thereby making us subject to indefensible guilty accountability and to being useless for His purposes.

APPLICATIONS:

- - When you speak and act corruptly, do you realize that one day you will be held accountable to God for these behaviors?
- - Do you endeavor to resist and quench your natural inclinations to act according to your total depravity nature?
- - Or do you readily give into and cooperate with your total depravity nature, while not giving any thought to your future accountability before God?

- - This awareness of our total depravity and of our indefensible guilt we each have for breaking God's law creates opportunity and motivation to find and pursue a way to improve our condition regarding these problems.
- - Specifically, we need a God-approved way for getting out of or remedying our predicament of personally being under the grip of sin, its influences, its corruption, its depravity results, and the eternal adverse consequences it causes us to personally earn.
- - God loves us so much that He has made one way to get out from under the grip of our total depravity and its accompanying guilt with consequences for breaking God's law, which is described in the next verses in Romans 3:20-25a.

- - Perhaps you are interested in learning how to take advantage of this way God has made to get out from under the grip and consequences of your total depravity.
 - - Perhaps you are ready to make better choices for yourself and for your life long-term and eternally.
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