

Sermon or Lesson: Romans 3:9c-12 (NIV based)

[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: No Righteousness Or Goodness Of Our Own

INTRODUCTION: Have you ever noticed that we humans easily and naturally have sinful tendencies, displaying them even as young as infants and toddlers? Nobody has to teach a small child to demand candy, hoard his toys, or strike a sibling.

God has much to say about our sinful tendencies, some of which we will study in our Scripture passage today. Let's see if we can gain understanding and discover truths about this sinfulness we are all born with.

READ: Romans 3:9c-12. (cf. Psalm 14:1-3 or 53:1-3; Ecclesiastes 7:20)

[Lesson Question: What are the subsurface characteristics and the ramifications of each phrase in each verse?]

Theological Definition:

'RIGHTEOUS' - conforming to God's moral standard

v.10 - READ

SECTION POINT: God pronounces that no person in and of themselves is righteous, which must be comprehensive and perfect in sinlessness.

"There is no one righteous, not even one"

- - God has pronounced that no person is righteous.
 - - This is all-inclusive - "not even one" person among all humans past, present, and future is righteous.
 - - No person measures up to the standard God has set for being righteous.
 - - No person is equal to the perfect sinlessness that is required to be righteous before God. (from Strong's #1342 - "righteous")
 - - Furthermore, no person is equal to always thinking, behaving, and taking actions that are 100 percent absolutely pure, correct, holy, right, and in complete alignment with God and in all facets.
 - - So, being righteous is about: living perfectly without any sins whatsoever, **and** living perfectly with right-ness comprehensively, **and** living this way spanning throughout one's entire life without even one little instance of imperfection.
 - - Note that this being "righteous" is a technical judicial measurement to the extreme, and not a general state of being good that outweighs or ignores simultaneously being sinful.
 - - No person solely in and of themselves is righteous, God's kind of righteous.
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v.11 - READ

SECTION POINT: God pronounces that there is no person who in and of themselves seeks God and His righteousness.

"there is no one who understands"

- - No person understands or comprehends or discerns being righteous, God's kind of righteous.
- - Therefore, no person has the ability to correctly and fully understand being God's kind of righteous.

there is **"no one who seeks God"**

- - No person by their own volitional choice "seeks", or "searches out, or investigates" to find God. (Strong's #1567)
 - - Therefore, no person on their own even desires to find the true God, although many people desire and strive to find a god, usually of their own formulation or liking.
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v.12 - READ

SECTION POINT: God pronounces that also because of being sinful and being devoid of goodness, all humans in and of themselves are worthless for His purposes.

"All have turned away"

- "have turned away" = Strong's #1578 "to deviate, i.e. (absolutely) to shun (literally or figuratively), or (relatively) to decline (from piety)"; avoid; dislike; perhaps repulsed by.
- - Every person "has turned away" or "turned aside" (NAS) from God and from desiring or pursuing or being His kind of righteous.

"they have together become worthless"

- - Because of this turning away, every person has thereby "become worthless" - "spoiled and rendered useless and of no value" for God's purposes, which especially includes for the purpose of being righteous. (from Strong's #0889)
- - All humans have become useless for God's purposes together, as a group, "in association, at the same time". (Strong's #0260)
- - i.e. The entire human race became useless for God's purposes at one specific point in time, presumably when Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden. (see Genesis 3:1-6; Romans 5:12)

"there is no one who does good, not even one"

- - No person does "good" or right, having "moral excellence" so as to be "useful" for God's purposes. (Strong's #5544 - "good")
- - Clearly here, God has a very high standard and rejects our lower humanly opinion that people have goodness and do good, like modern psychology so adamantly asserts.
- - Our doing good may seem to us humans to be proper, beneficial, and of value, but to God it is entirely worthless.

- - Moreover, God holds there is not even one person in all of history or in all of the future who does the good or right that is useful to Him.

- - Therefore, the entire human race is not only useless for God's purposes, but it will remain that way, utterly helpless and permanently unable to pull itself out of this state.
 - - This state of being useless for God's purposes is comprehensively inclusive for all peoples throughout time, including and applying to the "Jews and Gentiles alike" - the religious and the non-religious peoples of the human race. (v.9c)
 - - All humans everywhere during every time are "under sin", subject to the effects and influences and state caused by sin. (v.9c)
 - - Notice the repeated emphases that there are no exceptions, "not even one" person - every person is under these aspects of sin. (vv.10,12)
 - - Being under sin is a condition we all are inflicted with and afflicted by, basic to our nature - who we are, what we are, the most we can be by our own determination and means.
 - - Our nature of goodness is intrinsically corrupted.
 - - And we are born this way, not by our choice.
 - - God has established that this condition remain and continue, cementing this official judicial verdict of judgment in writing - "as it is written". (v.10)
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IMPLICATIONS:

- - A reality of our inherited condition is that our successes at being good do not in any way cancel out the sins we commit, nor the guilt of those sins, nor the consequences for those sins.
 - - By our own determination, power, or means, we are incapable of removing these aspects of sin.
 - - And we can never erase the sins we have already committed.
 - - So the ultimate perfection that is required to be righteous is impossible for us to achieve on our own, by our own means or efforts.
 - - Fundamentally, all of us humans are born condemned by default, and thereupon we stand condemned by default as we humans live this life. (cf. Romans 3:23; 5:12; John 3:17-18)
 - - At this point in this discussion, it is important to note that God does offer the one way He has made by which we humans can get out from under this corruption with its condemnation that we humans are born into by default - if we choose to meet the specific requirements He has established.
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BIG IDEA: God has determined and pronounces that all humans in and of themselves are devoid of righteousness and goodness, thereby in this state being worthless and useless for His purposes.

APPLICATIONS:

- - You may have any number of reasons why you think you have, in and of yourself, sufficient righteousness and goodness to be accepted by God. Study this passage and reconsider whether or not you have it correct according to what God says in His Word.
- - Are you relying on your own merit, your own righteousness and goodness to be accepted by God?
- - Or do you see the reality that in and of yourself, you stand condemned by default because of the corruption from your sins?
- - Do you see that trusting in your own righteousness and goodness for acceptance by God is futile and does not in any way deliver you from the condemnation that will become eternally permanent for you and enacted upon you on the very day you die?
- - And from this, do you further see the reality and urgency that you need to take advantage of God's only way to get out from under this sin corruption with its condemnation?

- - HINT: How to take advantage of God's only way to get out from under this sin corruption with its condemnation is described in the next verses in Romans chapter 3 - particularly verses 3:20-25a.

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