

Musing #47 — Romans 3:12-29

Paul continues his point that all are lost, due to sin and unbelief. No one comes into this world equipped to gain God's approval through anything they can do. The world at large is in need of a Savior.

John 3:3,5 and 6 Select ...unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

As we previously learned, the apostle was using his opportunities to help those who are lost to see how fruitless their "religion" was in gaining God's approval.

12 All have turned away; all have become useless. No one does good, not a single one. Literal—"rotten fruit" ... useless to God's purpose.

Judges 21:25 In those days... the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes. Not a lot has changed has it? The prophetic writings are happening before our eyes. The one thing we don't know is when!!! Modern communication has opened the doors to see what the apostle was seeing in his midst. The darkest times in history are coming to the world at large—and the masses are noticeably "distracted."

13 Their talk is foul, like the stench from an open grave. Their tongues are filled with lies. Snake venom drips from their lips. 14 Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.

Ever wonder why kids love to giggle at trash talk? Why adults love words with double meanings? Why many TV shows are full of offensive words? Their vocabulary is less than limited. Twisted, corrupt, depraved. Eliphaz warned Job, **Your sins are telling your mouth what to say. Your words are based on clever deception. Your own mouth condemns you, not I. Your own lips testify against you (Job 15:5-6).**

Matthew 12:33-37 "A tree is identified by its fruit. If a tree is good, its fruit will be good. If a tree is bad, its fruit will be bad. You brood of snakes! How could evil men like you speak what is good and right? For whatever is in your heart determines what you say. A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart, and an evil person produces evil things from the treasury of an evil heart. And I tell you this, you must give an account on judgment day for every idle word you speak. The words you say will either acquit you or condemn you."

Paul continues to remind us of the natural lostness of mankind at large.

15 They rush to commit murder. 16 Destruction and misery always follow them. 17 They don't know where to find peace.

The first recorded sin outside the garden was murder. The number of murders in our combined cities is in the hundreds per week. There are 44.7 murders in our country each and every day. And, this day, today, there will be nearly 4,000 suicide attempts by middle and high school students. Have any of them ever heard from their educators that... **The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. Proverbs 9:10**

Yet the United Nations building in New York proudly displays its statue of Poseidon for all to worship. He was the Greek god of sea and earthquakes.

18 They have no fear of God at all. 19 Obviously, the law applies to those to whom it was given, for its purpose is to keep people from having excuses, and to show that the entire world is guilty before God 20 For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are.

Here is the catch for the Jew & religious pretenders, "We are reconciled to God by grace, through faith, in Christ alone." Grace takes control away from powerful people. Grace completely changes the purpose of good deeds.

Our country fills churches with worshippers, YET....

2 Corinthians 4:3-4 - If the Good News we preach is hidden behind a veil, it is hidden only from people who are perishing. Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don't understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God.

The god of this world is behind all misleading religious belief systems. Does man need a savior? Yes! But the law does not save. The law condemns and exposes. Man always thinks he can get to heaven by some future good works. That is why "religion" per se was, and is, so powerful. It creates traditions, holidays, confessionals, special clothing—all things that make people feel righteous.

Paul was writing things that weren't new to the Jews. Many of his words in Romans came right out of the Old Testament scriptures, such as...

In verses 10 and 12 of Romans 3, he reminded us... "**There is none who does good, there is not even one.**" We see in... **Psalm 14:3 and 53:3 Everyone is corrupt. No one does good—not even one person!**

In verse 13 he writes, "**Their throat is an open grave, with their tongues they keep deceiving.**" We see in... **Psalm 5:9 Their throat is an open grave; They flatter with their tongue.**

In verse 14 we read.... "**their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.**" We see in... **Psalm. 10:7 His mouth is full of curses and deceit and oppression.**

In verse 15, 17... "**Their feet are swift to shed blood, And the path of peace they have not known.**" We see in... **Isa 59:7-8 Their feet run to evil, And they hasten to shed innocent blood; They do not know the way of peace.**

In verse 18 "**There is no fear of God before their eyes.**" We see in... **Psalm. 36:1 There is no fear of God before his eyes.**

Clearly Paul knew the Old Scriptures and he knew the religious Jews also knew them. He used their very scriptures to convince them that they are sinners and lost.

Luther said — "*The principle point, therefore, of the law in true Christian divinity is to make men not better but worse; that is to say, it shows them their sin, that, by the knowledge thereof, they may be humbled, terrified, bruised and broken, and by this means may be driven to seek comfort, and so come to that blessed seed that is Christ.*"

The law was given to reveal the curse of sin. Like a physician uses an MRI scan to diagnose disease, the law scans and reveals the disease of sin.

As believers we must realize that God's foreknowledge knew of man's moral weaknesses long before Adam was created and sinned. God knew that his complete plan would include redemption.

Revelation 13:8 Jesus Christ..... the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

1 Peter 1:20 God chose him as your ransom long before the world began.

Ephesians 1:4-6He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will.

We think of history as Adam, Eve, and the garden. Our timeless God was already there. Visualize a picture of a father and a member of his family...

It's noon, just rained, and the father needed to run an errand. He decides to take his son along and they can also hit McDonalds. He finds the son in the back yard, dirty and wet. Now he has a two-fold purpose. First clean the son up a little, then run his errands and get lunch. In the process however, the son sees his newest toy, gets "distracted" and fully unaware of dad's purpose and even McDonalds.

This is a great picture of our lives with God, our Father. He wants us committed to "up there" on the eternal path with Him—"Set your affections above..." and we're distracted with our latest toys.

In Paul's prayer for the Colossians in the Phillips translation.....

Colossians 1:9 We are asking God that you may see things, as it were, from His point of view by being given spiritual insight and understanding.

God gave us our Bible so we can learn to see things from His point of view.

Here's another example of our imaginary father and son. They live on main street in a nice town in a nice home and a pretty picket fence. Today there is a parade planned to come down main street. The young son is out in the yard playing when the parade begins. Oh.... how he wishes he was a little taller. He finds one of the pickets with a big knot hole in it, but still can't see much of the parade. The father sees his son's dilemma and takes him inside and up to the secure third-floor balcony. Wow! His eyes get big as he sees almost the entire parade. He can look one way and see what has already gone by, and then the other way he sees what is still to come. The entire parade is "NOW" to him... it's all "PRESENT."

Our Bible, ability to commune with God, the indwelling Holy Spirit all are available as we learn to "**see things, as it were, from God's point of view.**" We have been blessed with a record of what has been, and a prophetic picture of what is to come.

We close the chapter with Paul's transition from law to faith—for Jew and Gentile.

21 But now God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. 22 We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus

Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are. 23 For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. 24 Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. 25 For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past, 26 for he was looking ahead and including them in what he would do in this present time. God did this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and he makes sinners right in his sight when they believe in Jesus. 27 Can we boast, then, that we have done anything to be accepted by God? No, because our acquittal is not based on obeying the law. It is based on faith. 28 So we are made right with God through faith and not by obeying the law. 29 After all, is God the God of the Jews only? Isn't he also the God of the Gentiles? Of course he is. 30 There is only one God, and he makes people right with himself only by faith, whether they are Jews or Gentiles. 31 Well then, if we emphasize faith, does this mean that we can forget about the law? Of course not! In fact, only when we have faith do we truly fulfill the law.