

Series: Romans – The Life of Faith, the Power of Grace
The Bad News and Good News – Romans 3:9-12, 21-31
Pastor Jon Haakana

“I have some good news and some bad news...” We have all heard this phrase. Sometimes, we even follow up that phrase with a question, “Which do you want to hear first?” Well, as we move to the 3rd chapter of Romans in our summer series, Paul here doesn’t seem to give us a choice. He gives us the bad news first.

The bad news is that “no one is righteous, not even one.” **(5:30 – Read verses 9-12)** Paul quotes numerous Old Testament verses that confirm this to his Jewish objectors and says the law is not going to make anyone righteous, but the law only shows us that we are sinners.

We see in these Scriptures that Paul quotes that we sin by following our own way. We sin in what we say. We sin in what we do. And it is because there is no fear of the Lord before people’s eyes. People pursue their own way because there is no fear of God. We don’t have to look very far into the news to see how this has played out in our country and world, especially in the past few weeks.

The Law was not given to gain righteousness by living according to it. It was given so that man could see how desperately they needed saving because they could not live according to the standard. Then they could have a proper respect and fear of the Lord.

The bad news is that none of us have any hope in ourselves to live righteously. God’s Word helps us to recognize how far short we fall and shows us our need for a Savior. That is what the Old Testament Law did. It was not plan A in regards to salvation. It was to show us our need and leads us to Plan A, the only plan, Jesus Christ’s atoning sacrifice for our sins. The Bad news is that you aren’t good enough and you never will be. You are a sinner in need of a Savior.

But that leads us to the Good News. The Good news is that righteousness (or becoming right or sinless in God’s eyes) is available for free to all who have faith in Jesus Christ (3:22-24): “This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.” That is VERY – GOOD - NEWS!

We need to understand the bad news, before we can truly comprehend the good news. If we don’t recognize our utter need for a Savior, the impossibility of us attaining our own salvation, then we won’t truly understand the good news that Christ died for us and has freely given those who trust in Christ and walk in His ways, the ability to live righteously.

Justice in the Past and Present - The Jews may argue that it is not just for those Jews of the past who had to live under the law, but Paul argues and he will go on to further explain in the next chapter when he talks about Abraham, that salvation has never been about works, but has always come through faith and that salvation for the Old Testament saints was by faith

and not by works and that the Father was looking ahead to the work that Jesus was going to do.

Look at verse 25 and 26: “God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.”

The law, as Paul will confirm later, was put in place to show man that He was a sinner and could never be good enough to earn salvation. The sacrificial system of the Old Testament was all a foreshadowing of the ultimate sacrifice that Christ would make upon the cross and a help in showing the Jews and everyone that nobody could keep the law.

There is no one who can boast about deserving or earning their salvation. One commentator writes: “God’s way of making man righteous by an obedient faith eliminates boasting in one’s works, while upholding God’s call for holy living!”

The mistake many people make today is by believing that faith only saves, and obedience is not necessary. But the Gospel of Jesus, as described by Paul and the other apostles, is an obedient faith.

So, let’s be clear: Paul states again here in chapter 3 that salvation is all about God and what He has done for us in Jesus. There is one God and He is the God of all creation, whether people believe in Him or not. But there is joy in heaven when a person trusts in and receives Jesus as Savior in faith, trusting by faith in the work Jesus did on the cross for salvation. And then the life lived in faith, is an active and obedient faith, responding in word and works for all God has done for us in Jesus. This is good news!

Conclusion

And so, I ask each and every one of you here today: Have you trusted in Jesus for your Salvation? Have you been trusting in Jesus for your righteousness, and for ability to live a righteous life, or have you received Christ as Savior and now been trying to live righteously in your own strength and power? For those Christians here who have been trying to live righteously in your own strength, repent and ask for forgiveness and ask for the Lord to strengthen you to walk in the Spirit. As Paul writes to the Galatians, “Since you live by the Spirit, keep in step with the Spirit.” This good news! In Jesus. Amen.