

WITHOUT A LEG TO STAND ON

Romans 3:9-20

I can hear it now! “I’m tired of all the negative news!”

“You’ve been telling us this is a book about “Good News!”

yet so far all you’ve given us is **BAD** news!”

When do we hear some **good** news? [One last time...!]

Before we can understand how good the _____ is, we must realize how bad the _____ is!

Paul starts with bad news:

1:18-3:20: NECESSITY of gospel => Our Need

1st: PAGANS ARE GUILTY 1:18-32

Pagans don’t acknowledge God

Pagans aren’t grateful to God for what He’s done.

Pagans do what comes naturally

–know right from wrong;

do wrong anyway—even praise those who do wrong!

=> pagan people are guilty!

2nd: GOOD PEOPLE ARE GUILTY

2:1-16

You must *consistently* do good!—all the time!

Whether we learn standards from God’s law,

from what’s in our heart, or from a written code,

We don’t always DO what we know we should

=> “Good” people are guilty!

3rd: RELIGIOUS PEOPLE ARE GUILTY

2:17-3:8

Israel represents spiritual condition of *all* religious people

Even if our code comes from God, we’re guilty;

we don’t *live up to* our code!

**PRIVILEGED + EXTERNAL ≠ INTERNAL
POSITION RITUAL TRANSFORMATION**

Queen Mary: Luxury liner carried +/-2000 passengers across Atlantic 1001 Xs; impressive 81,000 tons of steel; 3 smokestacks 36 ft long; 23 ft wide; made of steel over 1" thick; 30 coats of paint—when lifted off, they crum-bled—***external appearance was hiding internal reality!***

Religious people—though pretty on outside—rotten inside!

External rituals can't change internal condition.

So, if *pagans* are guilty...

good people are guilty...

religious people are guilty... ***Who's left?***

Summary declaration: WE'RE ALL GUILTY!

3:9 [p. 1555] *"What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews & Gentiles alike are all under sin."*

All are lumped together under 1 verdict: "**Guilty!**"

We're all "under sin"—enslaved by it!

Billy Sunday: about to begin meetings in a city, wrote mayor, asked for names of people with spiritual problem who needed help. Mayor sent him a phone book!

From beginning, God *always* affirmed: people are sinful.

Quotes from O.T. show ALL people are guilty:

Because of our CHARACTER 3:10-12 *"As it's writ-ten: "There's no 1 righteous, not even 1; ¹¹there's no 1 who understands; no 1 who seeks God. ¹²All have turned away, they've*

together become worthless; there's no 1 who does good, not even 1."

Ps 14 & Ps 53 God's looking down on earth from heaven.

–to see if *anyone* understands truth

–if *anyone* seeks Him.

Conclusion: **Not 1! No 1's looking for Him!**

Everyone wanders off in own direction, totally corrupt,

What a neg. view of rebellious character of humanity!

Unless God prepares heart, NOT A CHANCE anyone will turn to

*Him! **Our character's set against it!***

[2nd reason repeated in O.T.: All people are guilty...]

Because of our CONDUCT 13-17 *"Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit. The poison of vipers is on their lips. ¹⁴Their mouths are full of cursing & bitterness. ¹⁵Their feet are swift to shed blood; ¹⁶ruin & misery mark their ways ¹⁷& the way of peace they don't know.*

=> All human activity is contaminated:

Our **throat** smells like open grave–putrid odor!

Our **tongue** lies. Our **lips** produce poison.

Our **mouth's** full of cursing & bitterness

Our **feet** rush to kill & to harm others.

We know nothing about how to find peace!

Human race in sad shape! –rushing toward death!

[3rd reason: All are guilty...]

Because of our ATTITUDE 3:18

"There's no fear of God before their eyes."

Our eyes don't see anything to cause us to fear God.
 So, because of our **character...** \
 Because of our **conduct...** > **We're ALL guilty!!**
 Because of our **attitude...** /

If this is true, then **WHAT GOOD IS LAW?**

3 REASONS FOR LAW 3:19-20 3 things law does:

Law shuts us up 19a “We know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so **that every mouth may be silenced**”

Law condemns us 19b “...and the whole world **held accountable to God.**”

Law reveals sin 20 “No one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing **[the]** law; rather, through **[the]** law we become conscious of sin.”

Law can't resolve sin problem.

It just makes us aware of it!

Paul's words refer to *more than Moses' law.*

Principle of law: **no article!** –applies to everyone's rules!

NO law will **EVER** make us pleasing to God.

Law is like plumb line–

Plumb line can't make crooked wall straight!

Plumb line just proves wall is crooked.

Law is God's plumb line, shows us we're crooked

It was never *intended* to make us righteous—it can't

TOURIST CENTER BY THE SEA

**LAW could never save us! IT ONLY SERVES TO:
Shut Our Mouth –Condemn Us –Reveal Our Sin**

Many people think they'll try to live by some set of rules:

10 commandments Sermon on the Mount

Some try to live by rules other people invent

What does passage tell us about attempt?

Question to ask people trying to make it by law:

How're you doing? Will WE make it?

That's built-in weakness of law-based systems.

Israel had the best! *God Himself gave them!*

Problem: they couldn't keep them!

Problem isn't the law! *The law is perfect!*

Problem's inside me! Law just proves my guilt!

It shuts my mouth! Makes me aware I've blown it!

***People who try to use the law as a ladder to heaven,
end up without a leg to stand on!***

Law ultimately proves WE'RE ALL GUILTY!

SO WHAT DIFFERENCE SHOULD IT MAKE?

Our guilt should drive us to Jesus

What we could never do ourselves, He's done for us!

Our guilt should stop us from bragging

Remember what we deserve—where we've come from!

Our guilt should make us grateful.

What God has given us in Christ is *undeserved!*

In short, doing good won't make it!

We'll never get there. We need a better solution.

I sure hope God has a better idea!

GOOD NEWS! God has a better idea! 21-22

“Now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law & the Prophets testify. ²²This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.”

Righteousness from God has been revealed!

Righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus -to all who trust Him!

What I could never do, God has done for me in Jesus.

His body was broken; His blood shed,
that we might have life!

Stop trying to earn it ourselves; trust gift He offers.