

Questioning the Faith

Romans 3:3- 8

³What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness? ⁴Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar. As it is written: "So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge." ⁵But if our unrighteousness brings out God's righteousness more clearly, what shall we say? That God is unjust in bringing his wrath on us? (I am using a human argument.) Certainly not! If that were so, how could God judge the world? ⁷Someone might argue, "If my falsehood enhances God's truthfulness and so increases his glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner?" ⁸Why not say—as we are being slanderously reported as saying and as some claim that we say—"Let us do evil that good may result"? Their condemnation is deserved.

We can often adopt a casual approach to sin and disobedience. God, though, sees such things through a different prism. In today's verses, Paul contrasted God's faithfulness, righteousness and truthfulness with man's. The differences are, as we would expect, stark and startling. Remember, the Bible teaches us to let God be true and every man a liar.

We have to remember that the Scripture lesson we are studying today comes against the backdrop of what Paul had to say about the Jews and their presence as guilty before God and under His wrath. Many Jews in Paul's day would have pled for a case of Jewish exceptionalism. They would have argued that because they were God's people, in possession of the Law and the host of the Temple that somehow they were excluded from God's wrath.

Paul argued that such beliefs were wrong and unfounded. All have sinned (Jew and Gentile) and fallen short of God's glory and expectations (see Romans 3:23). Today's Bible lesson helps us to understand that even in our day all are still guilty before God regardless of one's standing, accomplishments or family tree.

In verses 3-4, Paul taught that human faithlessness in no way diminishes God's faithfulness. God is still true to His character and ways. God does not change in response to man's unfaithfulness.

In verses 5-6, Paul taught that God demonstrates His righteousness in spite of man's sinfulness. Our sinfulness does God no favors by allowing His righteousness to be magnified and spotlighted.

In verses 7-8, Paul taught that humans should not persist in sinning so they can experience God's grace more abundantly. Charles Hodge has written that

“According to this reasoning, says Paul, the worse we are, the better: for the more wicked we are, the more conspicuous will be the mercy of God in our pardon.” God does not have any “need” for us to sin so He can look better by comparison. God calls people to forsake wickedness simply because it is right to do so. We often can lapse into the situation where we attempt to justify our actions by reasoning that these actions were “necessary,” “not all that bad,” or “not as bad as someone else may behave,”

David Jeremiah wrote the following about today’s Bible lesson: *“The sense of the argument is like this - if we are saved by grace through faith, entirely apart from any works of the law, then what does it matter whether we live righteous lives or not? Indeed, isn’t it good that we sin, because then God is given even greater glory as our Savior.”* Such thinking is pure non-sense. We do not have to set fire to our house to appreciate the fire department! We do not have to ask someone to back over our foot with a car to appreciate a car’s weight! The end never justifies the means when the means are sinful or evil. Our response to God’s faithfulness, righteousness and truthfulness is to live out and express the same virtues as best we can each day. God is glorified best of all when His people are yielded and surrendered wholly and totally to Him.

Applications . . .

1. Identify areas in life where you struggle to be obedient and yielded to God. Pray for His help and grace for those areas.
2. You may often encounter non-believers in your daily life. Prepare an explanation of what you believe. Look for ways to share or incorporate what you have written into a conversation.
3. Write down ways you have personally experienced God’s faithfulness, righteousness and truthfulness.
4. Pray for all in our church who are studying Romans. Pray for insight and knowledge as we study this portion of God’s Word.

“For a professed Christian to live in continual, unrepentant sin is a certain mark that he is not saved.

To be a Christian is to be under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and genuinely desire to serve Him.”

John MacArthur,

New Testament Commentary on Romans