

ROMANS – LIVING BY FAITH
GOD’S RIGHTEOUSNESS & MAN’S REBELLION – Chapters 1-3

LESSON 11 – QUESTIONING THE FAITH – Romans 3:3-8

In this section of Romans 3, Paul deals with man’s unfaithfulness, unrighteousness and untruthfulness and contrasts that to our faithful, righteous and truthful God.

When we feel like saying, “It doesn’t matter...God will forgive me...” we are playing with spiritual fire. Yes...God will forgive us, but He expects His people to obey Him.

Some of the Jews in Paul’s day felt that because they were descendants of Abraham, they had immunity from God’s judgment. They didn’t like Paul’s teaching that everyone...including the Jews...were guilty before God in their sin.

Paul asks and then answers three questions that he knew the Jews would have because of what he has just told them.

God’s Faithfulness and Man’s Unfaithfulness

As we’ve discussed, Israel had been given many advantages as God’s chosen people. This included being the caretakers of God’s Word, but they had been unfaithful to these privileges.

The Question

Romans 3:3 “What if some were unfaithful? Will their unfaithfulness nullify God’s faithfulness?”

When Paul talks about those who have been unfaithful, he is still talking to the religious, hypocritical Jews. They have been entrusted with the truth of God’s Word but refused to be transformed by its truths. Paul anticipates that they will accuse him of saying that God has abandoned them...that the Jews are no longer God’s chosen people.

The Answer

Romans 3:4 “Not at all! Let God be true, and every human being a liar. As it is written: So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge.”

Paul answers the Jews by quoting David from Psalm 51:4. When David sinned by committing adultery and murder, God sent the prophet Nathan to confront David about his sin. David realized that it was God speaking through Nathan and rather than deny his sin and make it seem as though God is a liar...David confesses his sin.

Paul wants the Jews to know that God is faithful. He is faithful when He rewards us and faithful when He judges us. Whether they acknowledged it or not, the Jews knew this. The Old Testament is full of verses that talk about the faithfulness of God.

Isaiah 11:5 “Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist.”

Numbers 23:19 “God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?”

Psalm 119:90 “Your faithfulness continues through all generations; you established the earth, and it endures.”

So the first question is answered. Is God’s faithfulness diminished by your unfaithfulness? Absolutely not!

God’s Righteousness and Man’s Unrighteousness

Now the Jews want to argue that since their unfaithfulness proves and magnifies God’s faithfulness, they shouldn’t be judged for it.

The Question

Romans 3:5 “But 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.)”

Paul’s answer to this question is direct and clear...

The Answer

Romans 3:6 “Certainly not! If that were so, how could God judge the world?”

The Jews should have learned through their own history that God will judge even when it means judging His own people. He doesn’t need His people to sin in order to

give Him the opportunity to show His righteousness.

God’s Truthfulness and Man’s Untruthfulness

The Question

Romans 3:7 “Someone might argue, “If my falsehood enhances God’s truthfulness and so increases his glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner?”

Charles Hodge, in his commentary on Romans, said this...

“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.”

This argument comes up quite often in our day. The mercy killer believes it is right to alleviate pain. The abortionist would kill an unborn baby to spare the child from a difficult life.

New age philosophy and a newly defined morality will easily creep into our churches and our lives if we are not careful.

The Answer

Romans 3:8 “Why not say—as some slanderously claim that we say—Let us do evil that good may result? Their condemnation is just!”

The essence of Paul’s argument is this...

If we are saved by grace through faith and not by any works we can do, then what does it matter whether we live righteous lives or not? Isn't it good that we sin because then God is given even greater glory as our Savior?

Do evil so good can result? If you find yourself thinking like this, you are NOT a true Christian. You are not a Christian if evil and sin is in you and it doesn't bother or distress you. If you are truly a Christian, you will hate sin, fight against it and strive for righteousness.

The end does NOT justify the means. Paul is saying here, "Your sin not justifiable in any way. God WILL judge it."

One of the most important theological terms of the Old Testament is the "lovingkindness" or "loyal love" of God. This shows the loyal, dependable, long-lasting love that God has for those who are in a covenant relationship with Him. We can believe, trust and depend on Him. God's Word is forever dependable.

Here's the question for us...

Are we as faithful to God and others as God is to us?