

## INTRODUCTION

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the Good News of God, which he promised before through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son, who was born of the offspring of David according to the flesh, who was declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we received grace and apostleship for obedience of faith among all the nations for his name's sake; among whom you are also called to belong to Jesus Christ;

To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, that your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the Good News of his Son, how unceasingly I make mention of you always in my prayers, requesting, if by any means now at last I may be prospered by the will of God to come to you.

For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, to the end that you may be established; that is, that I with you may be encouraged in you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine. Now I don't desire to have you unaware, brothers, that I often planned to come to you (and was hindered so far), that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among the rest of the Gentiles.

I am debtor both to Greeks and to foreigners, both to the wise and to the foolish. So as much as is in me, I am eager to preach the Good News to you also who are in Rome.

For I am not ashamed of the Good News of Christ, because it is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first, and also for the Greek. For in it is revealed God's righteousness from faith to faith. As it is written, "But the righteous shall live by faith."

## 1 unrighteousness

### GENTILES

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known of God is revealed in them, for God revealed it to them. For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity, that they may be without excuse.

Because knowing God, they didn't glorify him as God, and didn't give thanks, but became vain in their reasoning, and their senseless heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and traded the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, four-footed animals, and creeping things.

Therefore God also gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to uncleanness, that their bodies should be dishonored among themselves; who exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

For this reason, God gave them up to vile passions. For their women changed the natural function into that which is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural function of the woman, burned in their lust toward one another, men doing what is inappropriate with men, and receiving in themselves the due penalty of their error. Even as they refused to have God in their knowledge, God gave them up to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, malice; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil habits, secret slanderers, backbiters, hateful to God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, unforgiving, unmerciful; who, knowing the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also approve of those who practice them.

## 1 unrighteousness (cont.)

### JEWS

Therefore you are without excuse, O man, whoever you are who judge. For in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself. For you who judge practice the same things. We know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. Do you think this, O man who judges those who practice such things, and do the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you despise the riches of his goodness, forbearance, and patience, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

But according to your hardness and unrepentant heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath, revelation, and of the righteous judgment of God, who “will pay back to everyone according to their works:” to those who by perseverance in well-doing seek for glory, honor, and incorruptibility, eternal life; but to those who are self-seeking and don’t obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, will be wrath, indignation, oppression, and anguish on every soul of man who does evil, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. But glory, honor, and peace go to every man who does good, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God.

For as many as have sinned without the law will also perish without the law. As many as have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. For it isn’t the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law will be justified (for when Gentiles who don’t have the law do by nature the things of the law, these, not having the law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience testifying with them, and their thoughts among themselves accusing or else excusing them) in the day when God will judge the secrets of men, according to my Good News, by Jesus Christ.

Indeed you bear the name of a Jew, rest on the law, glory in God, know his will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, and are confident that you yourself are a guide of the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of babies, having in the law the form of knowledge and of the truth. You therefore who teach another, don’t you teach yourself? You who preach that a man shouldn’t steal, do you steal? You who say a man shouldn’t commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who glory in the law, do you dishonor God by disobeying the law? For “the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,” just as it is written.

For circumcision indeed profits, if you are a doer of the law, but if you are a transgressor of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. If therefore the uncircumcised keep the ordinances of the law, won’t his uncircumcision be accounted as circumcision? Won’t those who are physically uncircumcised, but fulfill the law, judge you, who with the letter and circumcision are a transgressor of the law?

For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men, but from God.

Then what advantage does the Jew have? Or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way! Because first of all, they were entrusted with the revelations of God.

For what if some were without faith? Will their lack of faith nullify the faithfulness of God? May it never be! Yes, let God be found true, but every man a liar.

As it is written, “that you might be justified in your words, and might prevail when you come into judgment.”

But if our unrighteousness commends the righteousness of God, what will we say? Is God unrighteous who inflicts wrath? I speak like men do. May it never be! For then how will God judge the world? For if the truth of God through my lie abounded to his glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner? Why not (as we are slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say), “Let’s do evil, that good may come?” Those who say so are justly condemned.

### SUMMARY

What then? Are we better than they? No, in no way. For we previously warned both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin.

As it is written,

“There is no one righteous; no, not one.

There is no one who understands.

There is no one who seeks after God. They have all turned away. They have together become unprofitable.

There is no one who does good, no, not so much as one.”

“Their throat is an open tomb. With their tongues they have used deceit.”

“The poison of vipers is under their lips.”

“Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.”

“Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways. The way of peace, they haven’t known.”

“There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

Now we know that whatever things the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may be brought under the judgment of God. Because by the works of the law, no flesh will be justified in his sight; for through the law comes the knowledge of sin.

Please read the above text and complete the below in preparation for class. Give priority to the text!

1. What does it mean that “there is no partiality with God”?
2. What do we see man’s conscience doing? What about his thoughts?
3. Describe the the differences between those who “have sinned without the law” and those who “have sinned under the law”?
4. What advantage did the Jew have?
5. Were the Jews better than the Gentiles?
6. What type of summary comments does Paul share after discussing the unrighteousness of Gentiles and Jews?
7. Complete the table below. Add an ‘X’ in each applicable cell.

|                           | Can be<br>righteous. | Can be<br>unrighteous. |
|---------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Jews</b>               |                      |                        |
| <b>Gentiles</b>           |                      |                        |
| <b>Under law</b>          |                      |                        |
| <b>Without law</b>        |                      |                        |
| <b>Circumsied</b>         |                      |                        |
| <b>Uncircumcised</b>      |                      |                        |
| <b>Lineage of Abraham</b> |                      |                        |
| <b>Not of Abraham</b>     |                      |                        |