

The Footsteps of Faith Series
Lesson # 4 “All have sinned and fallen short”
Romans 3:1-20

Scripture: Romans 1:16-17

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.””

Introduction:

When you were little did you ever walk around in your parents shoes? I remember wearing a pair of dad’s cowboy boots around. It was hard keeping my feet planted firmly enough to walk.

Every since I was young I have tried to fill my dad’s shoes in another way. Dad was always an honest man insisting on integrity and truthfulness. I have tried my best to walk in those same footsteps as well.

Transitional Statement:

When it comes to faithfulness to God we can see many clear footsteps that have gone before us, especially in Hebrews chapter 11 the so called “Hall of Faith”. Church today many have bought into the idea that where our feet fall is merely a matter of happenstance, but God directs us to calculate our steps toward Him.

Lesson:

I. So, what is the advantage of being a Jew?

Romans 3:1-2

I Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision?

- A. Can you imagine growing up as a Jew. Having those deep roots going all the way back to Abraham. Certainly as a Jewish child you would be told the stories of the exodus time and time again, and how God descended on Mount Sinai with Fire.
- B. God had instructed His people not to intermarry with foreigners (Duet. 7:3), and latter told them that they were His chosen people (Psalms 33:12). The combination of these thoughts left them feeling that they were an exclusive club, favored by God and anyone not wearing the name Jew was destined for hell.

1. So, in the first century along comes a Jewish man claiming to be the Messiah prophesied from old (Deut 18:15-19) and ends up dying on a cross, which seems to be an apparent defeat, followed by His entourage, alias 12 Apostles teaching a whole new system of worship without daily animal sacrifices and without the need for a physical temple...it was tough pill to swallow to say the least.
- C. It is much easier for us here in 2008 to see the whole scope of God's eternal plan to redeem all mankind unto Himself. But there in the first century, before the penning of the New Testament, the Jews asked then what advantage do we have and what benefit is there in circumcision?
1. Their question about advantage has to do with position, they are saying, hey God made us superior and if the Gentiles are to be included in this thing they really need to keep their place.
 2. As far as an answer we would expect a resounding none.
 - a. But Paul says as a matter of fact you do have an advantage.

2 Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God.

- A. The advantage doesn't have to do with superiority
- B. The advantage here is one of entrustment
- C. You were given the oracles of God
 1. They were placed with you for safe keeping
 2. God chose you of all the people of the earth to begin His redemption plan for all of mankind, therefore you are special.

II. God is True, Just and Right

Romans 3:3-4

3 What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it?

- A. God's final entrustment for the Jews and all mankind is His son Jesus the Christ and if the Jews rejected Jesus, would that render God's plan useless and send Him back to the drawing board until all the Jews were in agreement?
- B. The answer comes back loud and clear in Verse 4

4 May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar, as it is written,

***"THAT YOU MAY BE JUSTIFIED IN YOUR WORDS,
AND PREVAIL WHEN YOU ARE JUDGED."***

A. God is true

1. He is completely reliable

2. He is unchanging

a. He doesn't say one thing now something else latter

C. Then as a proof text Paul quotes Psalms 51:4 where David has admitted his sin with Bethsheba and owns up to the fact that every word from God is true and His judgments even if they should condemn him are right.

1. It was great humbleness of heart that lead David to the truth of his sin and a great desire for God that turned him from his own desire to move in God's direction.

III. Sin really does matter

Romans 3:5-8

5 But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is He? (I am speaking in human terms.) 6 May it never be! For otherwise, how will God judge the world? 7 But if through my lie the truth of God abounded to His glory, why am I also still being judged as a sinner? 8 And why not say (as we are slanderously reported and as some claim that we say), " Let us do evil that good may come"? Their condemnation is just.

A. The thought here turns back to the Gentiles and confronts with full force the idea that sin doesn't really matter.

1. Some were claiming that the Apostles were promoting the idea that sin really doesn't make a difference.

2. The idea here is that if my sins really end up showing just how righteous God really is, how could that be held against me....i.e. sin doesn't really matter.

3. We see this thought again at the beginning of Chapter 6 where Paul says shall we going on sinning so that grace may abound?

B. Paul says that the condemnation of such thinking is just.

IV. The Jews and the Greeks are all under sin.

Romans 3:9-18

9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; 10 as it is written,

- A. Here Paul says this is the whole package of what I have been talking about.
- B. Now, put yourself in the shoes of a Jew....or a Gentile and listen to God make it abundantly clear that no-one is righteous on their own.

*"THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;
11 THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS,
THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;
12 ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME
USELESS;
THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD,
THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE."
13 "THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN GRAVE,
WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY KEEP DECEIVING,"
"THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS";
14 "WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS";
15 "THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD,
16 DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR PATHS,
17 AND THE PATH OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN."
18 "THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES."*

- C. I'm not sure about you but as I hear these words a big lump forms in my throat
- D. All I can say is I am glad Romans doesn't end here.

V. You can't hide under the Law

Romans 3:19-20

19 Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God; 20 because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.

- A. The Law speaks to those under the Law....Jews right?
 - 1. So that right may be established
 - 2. But he adds so the whole world may be accountable.
- B. The Law of Moses was not put in place to justify anyone
- C. The Law simply brought the awareness of sin.
 - 1. It helped them know the difference between right and wrong
 - 2. It helped them know the expectations of God in their lives.