

“Fallen Nature” **Romans 3:9-20**

Intro: People like to believe they are basically good yet they can't escape the feeling of guilt. Why? B/c they are guilty and not intrinsically good. Unless sin is removed guilt can't be. The gospel is useless before people are convicted of sin. Tozer, "No one can know the true grace of God who has not first known the fear of God." But human nature strongly resists conviction of sin seeing it as a threat to his lifestyle instead of an eternal blessing. Paul shows in this passage that every person has been charged and found guilty of a sin sick condition according to scripture.

Big Idea: *Accept the charges and the evidence against you and enter a guilty plea.*

9: The Charge: Are we better than those who have been shown to be condemned (moral and immoral Jew and Gentile: everyone)? No. Sin is missing the mark. We miss it with our thoughts, words, and actions. But you had no chance of hitting it. Professional knife thrower Jayde Hanson in an interview, "In 11 years of performing, I've only hit my assistant on 5 occasions." In a *Reader's Digest* interview, Muhammad Ali states: "One day we're all going to die, and God is going to judge our good deeds and bad deeds. If the bad outweighs the good, you go to hell. If the good outweighs the bad, you go to heaven." We often hear someone say: "Well, I'm not very religious, but I'm a good person and that is what is most important." But is that true? Living a "good life" but neglecting a relationship with the one to whom we owe everything is not enough. We all owe a debt that must be paid. There can be a temptation to think that God saved you b/c you were more deserving of salvation than others. False! It's a test that can't be passed. Putnam competition is the hardest math test in the world. Administered to college students. Out of a possible 120 points the average score some years is 1. Out of over 220k major league games in history there have only been 23 perfect games. Out of over 100 billion people who have ever walked the earth, only 1 perfect life. R.C. Sproul, "If you think about it, we are all really more like Adolf Hitler than like Jesus Christ."

10-18: The indictment: Paul Uses scripture to show man's lack of righteousness before God (Psalms 14:1-3, 53:1-3, Ecc 7:20, Ps 5:9, Ps 140:3, Ps 10:7, Is 59:7-8, Ps 36:1). Every aspect of man: character (10-12), conversation (13-14), and conduct (15-17). Why does Paul go to such great lengths to indict? Because people must be convinced. Statistics show that people exaggerate their own positive characteristics and abilities (most drivers rate themselves better than average, inmates jailed for robbery and violence rate themselves as more moral, kind, self-controlled, law abiding, generous, compassionate, dependable, trustworthy, and honest than not just the rest of the prison population but society at large; not one high school student in a recent survey rated himself below average in getting along with peers—60% believed they were in top 10%. 63% of college professors rated themselves above average). You will not be judged by your own criteria or code of morality but by God's perfect standard. C.S. Lewis explained that those who are growing in their relationship with God understand more clearly the evil that is still left in them while those who are not in a growing relationship understand their badness less and less. We do not sin because we are ignorant, we are ignorant b/c we sin. Yes, you have a choice but

you would never have even had the desire for God in the first place if he had not drawn you. He sought you before you could ever seek Him. Outside of God's Holy Spirit showing you your need through the law, humanity could care less about God. You may be tempted to think that with all the world religions and spirituality in the world that many are seeking God but all religious systems are actually attempts to escape the true god and manufacture false gods of one's own liking. In addition, all these religions are human solutions that treat the symptoms not the diseases (cool towel on head when have fever). The new fifth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5) has been released. This has been dubbed, "the bible of psychiatry." But it is being received with an overwhelming negative response. The reason? According to the Everyday Bioethics website, "DSM-5 added ten new mental illness diagnoses and loosened the criteria for many others." The article goes on to say, "Current odds are that, based on the DSM-5, half the population will have a diagnosable disorder in their lifetime." Everything is labeled a disorder which helps people to justify and rationalize as if they needed help. But all humanity has been diagnosed with a deadly disorder: sin.

(19-20): The Verdict: Law shines light on what you may not have even known was there. A Mirror serves a wonderful purpose in showing the dirt but it cannot clean off the dirt. A Thermometer may show us we have a fever but the thermometer cannot cure the sickness that causes the fever. Roaches in the pantry or rats in the basement—Can pretend like they aren't there till the light makes it obvious. Like a black light that shows stains you never knew were there. No exceptions, no defense. Only possible response is silence. You can tell you are getting close to beginning a relationship with God when you shut your mouth. Salvation begins by accepting your guilt and the sentence you deserve. Bob Morey, who has an apologetics ministry in Southern California, was once asked by an aggressive atheist to prove the Bible's truthfulness. Bob responded, "You prove the Bible to me every time you open your mouth." Shocked, she asked how this could be true. He asked her, "Do you fear God?" She answered, "No." "Well," he said, "you just proved that Romans 3:18 is true. 'There is no fear of God before their eyes.'" He proceeded, "Is the gospel foolishness to you?" "Yes!" He explained, "Well, you just proved 1 Corinthians 1:18. 'The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing.'" He continued, "Do you want your own way instead of living according to God's way?" She retorted, "I don't want God's way—I'll do as I please!" He responded, "Well, you just proved Isaiah 53:6. 'Each of us has turned to his own way.' Every time you open your mouth you confirm the Bible by saying what it said you would say. Thank you for making me a stronger Christian." Even unbelief confirms the truth of what we believe! There is no salvation through keeping the law because man is completely incapable. How cruel would it be to hide the sentence from a criminal, the diagnosis from a patient...? Luther, "The ultimate proof of the sinner is that he doesn't know his own sin. Our job is to make him see it."

Conclusion: Reading this description, you feel like the next line is going to be, "Enough! Wipe them out." But across this verse is Jn 3:16. The law wasn't sent to destroy but to keep us from having false hope in anything but the cross.