

**Introduction:**

**Good morning...** Thank you for being here this morning...I am Byron Bradshaw that pastor here at Calvary Bible...

**I am going to do something a bit different this morning...** This morning I am going to put a tool in your toolbox...

**The reason for this is because** I got more questions and feedback from last week's message than any I have ever given before...And Much of the feedback was centered around the statement I made last week, "That replacement theology is not "heresy"..."

**So the tool I want to give you is a FILTER...** It is a FILTER to be able to distinguish between what is heresy and what is not heresy...

**It is a filter that seminary gave me...** When filtering if something is "heresy" ask the question.... **"Can they still be a Christian and believe that?"** If yes, it is not heresy. If no, then it is heresy...

**Allow me to give you some examples...**

Can you believe one earns their way to heaven and be a Christian? Nope...That's heresy.

Can you believe that the Bible is not inspired of God and be a Christian? Nope...

Can you believe that Jesus was not fully divine and be a Christian? Nope...

**However,**

Can you believe in amillenialism and be a Christian? Sure...

Can you be a 5 point Calvinist or a 5 point Arminian and be a Christian? Sure...

Can you believe in the cessation of spiritual gifts and be a Christian? Yep...

Can you believe in covenantal theology or dispensational theology and be a Christian...Yep...

Can you believe in transubstantiation, consubstantiation or the symbolic representation of communion and be a Christian? YEP

Can you believe in replacement theology and be a Christian? Yep...

**If you think about it...** If you use this filter, then there are really only a handful of non-negotiable fundamental doctrines that REALLY are totally worth dying on a hill for... the following list is not exhaustive...

The Sinfulness of Man...

Full Deity and Humanity

The inspiration of Scripture,

An orthodox view of the Trinity,

Virgin Birth  
 Substitutionary Atonement  
 The Return of Christ,  
 Saved by grace through faith,  
 And the bodily death and resurrection of Christ...

These are all doctrines worth dying for...I will go to WAR with anyone over these core non-negotiable doctrines...

**Everything else...**at the end of the day... We can agree to disagree...And give each other a big hug...Let us remember what Jesus prayed before His death...

**John 17:22-23**, “The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they (disciples of disciples...us today) may be one, just as We are one; <sup>23</sup> I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected <sup>[g]</sup>in unity, so that the world may <sup>[h]</sup>know that You sent Me...”

**Transition: So, please friends**, let us remember that we can be unified yet disagree on the doctrines that are not non-negotiable to our faith...

**Transition: Before we pray**, I want to also recognize all the veterans that paid the ultimate price to allow us the freedom we enjoy today...Memorial Day is a day to remember those civil servants and military veterans that have paid the ultimate price for our freedom...

Bow with me in a Word of Prayer:

**ME:**

**Today, I want to talk to you about the depravity of man...**Specifically the importance of understanding the extent, evidence and effects of mankind’s sinfulness...

**Transition: As** we open up this issue...And as many of you know, I personally profess to be imperfect and a sinner...I also am a self-professed nerd...As you’ve heard, I enjoy numbers, Greek, deep Bible doctrines ...But I also LOVE documentaries...

**If you get to know me well**, you know that I have some personal favorites...My wife has heard the same 15 documentaries over and over again...

**One of those 15 is a documentary called**, “Hank: Five Years from the Brink...” the entire documentary is an interview with the former secretary of the Treasury, Hank Paulson...who was the Treasury Secretary during the crisis called the Great Recession...He started in 2006 and left office in 2009 serving as secretary in the heat of the crisis

At the height of the crisis major American banks were losing BILLIONS AND BILLIONS of dollars almost daily...

**In the documentary, Hank tells the story that** in order to solve the problem he gathered all the CEOs of the major American banks...He gathered them all together in a room to discuss how to best handle the economic crisis...

**But when he called them in the room there was one HUGE** hurdle...The biggest hurdle was getting these banks to admit that they each had a problem...

**Although all of these banks were** hemorrhaging cash and on the verge of bankruptcy...And Although their problems were evident to literally everyone in the ENTIRE WORLD...These bankers still would not admit their brokenness... Hank called it that “Everyone in the room wanted to be the tallest midget...”

EACH BANK WANTED TO APPEAR PERFECT and IMPENETRABLE BUT

Until they recognized their problem...Until they realize their own brokenness... then the problem could not fix the problem nor could they work together nor could they be released from crushing debt...

**Transition: Yet...as I think of it...**I am...and We are.....much like those bankers...So, many Christians around the world are a lot like those bankers...

**We Christians often walk** around with a mask...appearing perfect... impenetrable, immutable...appearing as model citizens...and not admitting our problem....But in reality.....the mask is not the reality....Reality is that we each are broken and sinful...

**But ladies and gentlemen, can I speak frankly?**

**Until we lower our masks of perfection,** we will never know intimacy...Intimacy with God, with Friends and even with family...

**Until we realize our own brokenness,** we will never really “love others”

**Until we realize our own brokenness,** then we will never truly be unified as a church...

**Until we realize our brokenness,** then we will never realize our need for the Gospel...

**And Until we realize our own personal brokenness,** we will never show God’s grace to others...

**Transition: In the passage today,** Paul gives us perhaps the most thorough Biblical account of the brokenness of mankind...

**Transition: So come with me to Romans 3:9-20...** And as you turn to Romans 3... To give you a brief preview... Paul provides the question in verse 9... Are we, individually, better than they? And then answers this question by examining the extent of brokenness (vs 10-12), the evidence for brokenness (vs 13-15) and the effects of brokenness in verses 16-18...

### **GOD:**

**And we will begin in verse 9** with Paul's central premise.... "What then? *Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin;*"

What is Paul's central premise in verses 9-20? It is revealed in a question, right? Are "we" better than they?

But notice with me the original language... It is fascinating... Here is Verse 1 in the original language...

"9 Τί οὖν; προεχόμεθα; οὐ πάντως· ἵ προητησάμεθα ὁ γὰρ Ἰουδαίους τε ἰ καὶ Ἑλληνας πάντας ὑφ' ἁμαρτίαν εἶναι\*,"

**As you see there...** The first word is the Greek interrogative pronoun followed by the Greek conjunction "οὐ" or therefore... So literally Paul says, "Therefore What?" Notice the semi-colon after those two words... The semi-colon is actually the question mark in Greek...

**Now the next phrase...** Notice in your English translations the next phrase says, "Are we better than they?" Those 5 English Words are actually only one Greek Word... Yes one... It is the third word up there "προεχόμεθα;" This verb means to "jut out or to excel"... And then this Greek verb is parsed as Present tense and middle voice... the middle voice is telling me that the subject is acting on behalf themselves... or in their own best interest...

Now, there are four possible interpretations for this **one word** that scholars wrestle with...

**#1: It can be translated,** "Am I (Paul) making an excuse for the Jews?" However, this is not the most advantageous since the verb's subject is "we" and not Paul...

**Interpretation #2** that scholars propose is that this word means, "Are we trying to excuse ourselves from judgment?" This interpretation is off base... This interpretation has the correct subject and is mindful of the context but does not contain the best meaning of the verb...

**Interpretation #3:** "Are we Jews *surpassed or excelled* by others?" In other words, are the Jews surpassed in spiritual blessing and promises as the promised people of God? This interpretation

proposes that this verb is passive...This interpretation is actually pervasive represented in “God’s Word Translation” amongst others...Yet this does not seem best...Because Paul just answered that question in verse 1 of Chapter 3...

**So, Interpretation #4 is the** best understanding of this one word... “Are we ourselves better off?”

**To put it in simpler and clearer terms...**I believe based on the context and the parsing... Paul is asking the question, “Are we, who are Christians, essentially “better” than those who rejected Christ in verse 8?

**Transition: What is Paul’s answer?** Look back at verse 9. “What then? Are we better than they? Not at all...” Literally, “BY NO MEANS!!!”

**Essentially,** is one person any less guilty of their sin than another? BY NO MEANS...

WE are all messed up...We are all sinful....Some of us put on a better mask than others but in the END WE ARE ALL broken and depraved...

**What is Paul’s point in verse 9? Point #1: No one is better than another...**

**Now I know what some of you are thinking**...Some of you are thinking...”Ya know, Byron, you’ve already talked about this...And this is true...We’ve already discussed the depravity of man...

**And Paul even admits it...**Notice Paul’s admission in verse 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*”

**Paul admits it even here...That he’s already discussed** this...Paul has already established in Chapter 1:18-32 that mankind is completely broken.....That our hearts our impure, our minds are depraved and our souls are worthy of Death...

**But we must ask an insightful question...**If Paul has already established this, then why revisit it again?

**Good Question...**Paul is actually bringing the depravity issue to a final conclusion....Many scholars believe that this is the “Hinge of the book”...that Paul is turning the page on our depravity right before Paul discusses our justification by faith...

**Transition: But scholars** miss something when they say Chapter 3 is a mere conclusion...

**Because the** treatment of the depravity of man here is different than in Chapter 1 and its difference is in the evidence...Chapter one's evidence for man's depravity is founded in general revelation and Paul's observation of the culture...Whereas here, Paul's treatment is rooted in evidence found in the Biblical text...

Because look at verses 10-18...What do you immediately notice about verses 10-18?

#1: The Length but #2: the All Caps, Right?

**What does the all caps tell me?**

#1: **The all caps** tells me that Paul is pulling in an Old Testament verse into a New Testament context to prove a point, right?

**But Why? Why is Paul's point?** In my opinion, Paul is giving depravity the final proof needed for his Jewish audience...

**I mean think about it...Paul's Jewish** audience could logically dismiss Chapter 1's brokenness of mankind as Paul's mere observations... But in Chapter 3...when Paul pulls in verse after verse on the subject...It is the final, irrefutable proof...that all of mankind's hearts are impure, minds are depraved and their souls are worthy of death...

**Transition: But I want you to walk into the text with me...Walk with me through verses 10-18...**In his Biblical theology treatment of mankind's brokenness, Paul gives us the extent of brokenness in verses 10-12, the evidence of brokenness (vs 13-15), and the effects of brokenness in verses 16-18...

**Transition:** And notice the repetition as we read, ““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.”

**In verses 10-12,** Paul reaches to Psalm 14:1-3 to show the extent of mankind's brokenness...

**What is the extent of mankind's sinfulness? Point #2: All are Sinful...**Notice, how many times does Paul say that there is none that are righteous?

#1: Verse 10- There is none righteous

#2: Verse 10- Not even one

#3: Verse 11- There is none who understands

#4: Verse 11- There is none who seek for God (is there truly none righteous?)

#5: Verse 12- All have turned aside,

#6: Verse 12- There is none who does good...

#7: Verse 12- There is not even one...

**Can it be any clearer?** I mean really I count 7 times in 3 verses that Paul says every human is sinful...7 times!!! It seems slightly obnoxious...

**Why is Paul being repetitiously “obnoxious”?** My father in law like to say... “Repetition is theological glue...” I believe Paul is trying to once and for all...To Stick in the mind of his Jewish audience...That not only are those Gentiles sinful... but they are too...

**Paul is saying...** “Ya know... You, Jews, although you are God’s promised people you are still broken and depraved in desperate need of redemption...”

**Transition: So, Paul discusses the extent of sinfulness...** that ALL are sinful...in verses 10-12...But Paul then gives the evidence of mankind’s brokenness in verses 13-15...

**Read verses 13-15,** “*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,*”

**Paul here pulls from Psalm 5, Psalm 139, and Psalm 19...**and he pulls all these verses together.....To give us the great evidence of mankind’s sinfulness.....

**When we look Biblically and when we look around us,** what is the greatest evidence of mankind’s sinfulness? The greatest evidence of mankind’s sinfulness is **This (point to your own mouth)...**

**Because Notice out of the 5 phrases here....4 of them refer to the dangers of the tongue...** This agrees with James 3... If a person is able to control their tongue then they control their entire body...In other words, the tongue is the last thing to go.....The greatest evidence for our sinfulness is our tongue...

**Transition: So we see the extent of mankind’s brokenness in verses 10-12...**All are sinful, we see the evidence of our brokenness (this), and now let us look at the effects of our sinfulness in verses 16-18...

**Read verses 16-18,** “*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.*”

**Paul here pulls from Isaiah 59:7-8 and Psalm 36...**and what does he say are the effects of mankind’s sinfulness?

**#1: Destruction and misery-** Hmm.....Have you ever wondered why terrible things happen? Perhaps its not God's fault but ours....Remember we ushered in death to this world through our sin not God....

**#2: And the Path of peace they have not known.....Have you ever wondered why we go to war and struggle to find peace? Well according to verse 17...It's mankind's sinfulness...**

And notice the las effect of mankind's sinfulness.....Verse 18...

**#3: No fear of God...18** *"There is no fear of God before their eyes."*

**Transition:** Verses 10-18 represent perhaps the most thorough Biblical treatment of mankind's brokenness...But even though it is a WELL of DEEP Truth...I hope to put verses 9-18 in a small sentence easy to remember sentence...

**"No one is better than another because all are sinful..." (Repeat)**

**Point #1: No one is better than another...(verse 9) Why?**

**Point #2: Because All are sinful** (vs 10-12) evidenced with our words (vs 13-15) which cause destruction, misery and conflict (vs 16-18)

**Transition: But then Paul puts the cap on Chapters 1-3...by summing up the final issue...The Law...**

**Read verses 19-20,** *"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 <sup>b</sup>through the Law comes the knowledge of sin..."*

**Wait a second...According to these verses...**Not only is none better than another...Not only are we all sinful... but according to these verses...we are all accountable to God for our sin ...

**Why.....?**

**Because he gave us this...**right? He gave it not to just the Jews but all of mankind rules to abide by...He gave us instruction to guide our paths yet none of us fully obey...According to verse 19, We are accountable to God because of this...(Hold up the Bible)

**Notice what verse 19 says...** "The Law speaks to those who are under the Law..." Who are under the Law? *"So that every mouth may be closed and ALL THE WORLD may become*

*accountable to God...*” Wow...

**Listen friends...Watch this...**every person who has ever lived is accountable to God for their sin even if.....What? Even if they have never read of or even heard of God’s Law...

**Now, I imagine some of you are saying...** “Now that doesn’t seem very fair.....” “It doesn’t seem fair that the indigenous Indians who have never heard of Jesus or the Jews or God...are held accountable to God for their sin.....through the Law...

**Transition: Now, in our postmodern** culture this really does not seem fair...And on the surface, I might agree with you...That this does seem in the least bit fair...

**But allow me to illustrate this point...**

**Imagine this with me..... Let’s say...you walk into a Madison County** courtroom and you see the defendant standing before the judge accused of robbing a bank.....The courtroom defendant surprisingly openly admits that he robbed the bank...And even nods in agreement with the prosecution....

**But then.....Right, before the Judge** slams the anvil down with the prison sentence.....The criminal stops the judge...And He waves the judge down...and Says “Wait a second, judge...”What are you doing?”...“You cannot condemn me.....”

**The judge then** pauses and says, “Why not? You have admitted your wrong...”

**And the man says,** “You can’t sentence me.....” “How can you hold me responsible since I have never heard of nor read the United States constitution.....”

Now if you were in that courtroom...How would you expect the judge to react? Bewildered and dismissive...

**Why? Because in that scenario....It matters not, right?...It doesn’t matter** if he has ever read the constitution or not...He is still held accountable to it...As an American, **regardless if we have ever read the Constitution or not...** We in America are still accountable to abide by it...Right?

**The person who admits their own guilt** before God but proclaims their innocence due to ignorance...Is like that defendant.....The person who denies culpability to God due to ignorance of the Law is like a man who admits to robbing a bank but denies culpability because he never heard of the constitution.....It matters not, right?

**Transition: What is Paul's point in verses 9-20?**

**Point #1:** No one is better than another...(verse 9) Why? Because

**Point #2:** All are sinful (vs 10-12) evidenced with our words (vs 13-15) which causes destruction, misery and conflict (vs 16-18)

**Point #3:** And all sinners are accountable to God...(vs 19-20)

**Transition: And then Paul closes this section with verse 20,** “because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for <sup>b</sup>through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin...” which actually nicely transitions to next week's passage...

If the Law does not justify... Then, “How can we be justified...?” Great question... Come back next week...

**YOU:**

**Transition:** And as I head toward closing... Since none of us are better than another.....since all of us are sinful and accountable to God.....since this is true then how should I live?

**Application Point #1:**

**#1: Put away the mask of perfection-** When is the time that is most tempting to wear the mask? Here, right?

**But ladies and gentlemen...** This is a sad reality... Church should be our safest place... Because we have the truth... And the truth of God's Word tells me that each of us are broken and sinful... Why hide it?

**As I reflected upon this point I began to** reflect personally.... Ya know... I realize something new about myself... That I have a mask of perfection that hides my imperfections... And do you know where I store it?

**On the passenger seat of our car...** So that when I pull up into church and Park my car... Before I open my car door to go to church... I reach over for my mask.....(Clear throat)...

**Transition: I imagine** I am not the only one here with a mask in my car... **I imagine that your mask** sits on your passenger seat also... I imagine it is tempting to pick it up before you go to church to hide your insecurities and weakness... to hide your brokenness and fears...

**Friends, this should not be this way...** This room should be the safest place on earth.... Because we realize that we are all broken and sinful...

**Transition:** Because we are all broken and sinful...Put away the mask of perfection...And Application Point #2...Let us have...

**#2: Grace for one another-** Not only should we empathize with others, but we should also have grace for others...We should “tolerate” and “put up with one another...” When people come into your home...When people come into church...It should be warm and SAFE... This should be a soft place for people to land and find Jesus and the answers to all their difficult questions...

**Transition: As I close allow** me to share a story that illustrates the importance of having grace for one another in the midst of a sinful and broken world...

**WE:**

There is much sin, difficulty, and suffering in this life...But we should have grace for each other in spite of it...

**Story:**

**As Many of you know**, Laurel and I are no exception to sin and suffering...and we have been shown grace by so many during those days...

**But there is another family in** my past that equally needed grace and did not receive it....There was a family in a previous church that suffered to a Job-like level...

**They started out as a typical Huntsville family**...Dad was an engineer...Studying for his PhD in Physics from UAH...And he was married with 3 children...

**Yet the parents began to notice their middle child**...As a toddler the middle child was not developing the way she should....So, they took this toddler to the doctor and the doctor discovered that the girl toddler had Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy...

**Now, Duchenne MD is NASTY**...It is a slow decline that by the teenage years a child is confined to a wheelchair and is only expected to live about 20 years...

**But then their story continues...**

One day, his family noticed a slight limp in the father’s step...Thinking it was just a sore knee the father went to the doctor to get it checked.....And it was not a sore knee.....

**The father’s limp was caused from** an early onset of a very aggressive form of MS...Multiple Sclerosis...The diagnosis was so aggressive that this 45 year old father had only a few years to live...

**Now, I knew this family well...**and despite it all....This family was still faithful to serve and attend church despite their great suffering...

**But as I reflect upon this story...On one hand** I think of this family's faithfulness to God...Their perseverance under great trial...Their devotion to the church...Their devotion to Jesus Christ in the midst of Job-like suffering was inspirational...

**But then on the other hand....**I think about the people that were around them...Some of the church members around them were very good to them...Loving them well...Taking them meals...Going overnight with them to doctor's visits...Going waaaaay above and beyond to help them...

**And then on the other hand some church members** were exceedingly rude to them...Many of them behind the scenes criticized this family for being "attention seeking..." I heard criticism after criticism of this family from CHURCH PEOPLE...

**Criticism of this family made me want to throw up...Why?** Because by the grace of God goeth I.....If I were in their shoes would I be much different?

**Those that judge forget grace...those that judged them...**forgot the grace given to them...

**Those that judge others** for any reason forget the grace given to them...Those Christians that readily judge others...are often the ones that reach for the mask of perfection and looking down on those that don't...

**All while forgetting the grace given to them....**

**Friends,**

Church should be the safest place on earth

Church should be a place that we embrace peoples imperfections and inspire them toward perfection...

Church should be the place where we extend grace to the hurting and sinful

Church should be the place that we take down our masks and be ourselves.

**Friends....the grace** we receive from God should be the humble grace we extend to others...I hope and goal for this message was through the examination of our own depravity...that it create in each of us a humility to then extend grace to others that are suffering and sinful...

Because After all we are broken and sinful in desperate need of grace.