

October 18, 2012

THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE

Romans 3: 21-28

Look at Romans 3: 21-22 “But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:”

The Apostle Paul had drawn a conclusion in verses 19-20. He had made it (abundantly) clear that NO SINNER would be declared righteous by God based on their efforts to obey the law, (“**by deeds of law shall no flesh will be justified;**” because “**by law is the knowledge of sin**”). He now moves on to öbetterö news. öBut nowí .ö Explain!

There are lots of differences between men and women. **You** could take a survey of just those sitting in this room and find a VAST ARRAY of differences (shapes, sizes, backgrounds, values). **Multiply** those differences by the people of this TOWN, this STATE, this NATION, this WORLD, and there would be 1000ø more.

But, it might surprise you that in several areas, there is NO DIFFERENCE. **Among** all of the souls ever born into this world, in THESE areas we are ALL ALIKE. **That** is what we will consider this morning; these ways in which there is NO DIFFERENCE.

FIRST, ALL are the sons and daughters of Adam. **Adam** was the Federal head and Representative of ALL men. Adam (alone) was created. ALL are born from his seed.

Look at Romans 9: 21 “**Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?**”

There is a lot of interest in genealogy these days. **People** are wanting to know where they came from; **who** their distant ancestors are. **Trace** your roots, your lineage, your heritage, your family tree, trace them back as far as you will. **We** ALL came from the ösame lumpö. **Those** traces ALL end up at Adam.

That is the **FIRST** way among ALL who will ever be born into this world in which there is NO DIFFERENCE: **ALL** are the sons and daughters of Adam.

The SECOND way: **because** ALL are the sons and daughters of Adam, ALL are sinners.

In the context of Romans 3, we can see two ways in which ALL are sinners. **First**, we are sinners by Representation. **We** sinned in our Federal head, our Representative, Adam.

Look at Romans 3: 23 “**For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;**”

Adam is not just the (physical) father of ALL. **He is** also the Federal head and Representative of the whole human race. **Which** means that what he did, we ALL did IN HIM. Adam sinned against God. **And**, HIS sin was imputed (or charged) to ALL his posterity. In Adam, “**ALL did sin**”.

It might surprise some to learn that we did not BECOME sinners because WE sinned. **None** of Adam's sons and daughters were born when Adam sinned, which means, our sinner-hood did not begin with OUR (personal) disobedience. **Our** (personal) disobedience is (rather) the product (the result) of our sinner-hood. **We** were made sinners when Adam, our federal head and representative, sinned.

Look at Romans 5: 19 “**For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.**”

We were made (LEGALLY ACCOUNTED) sinners by the imputation of Adam's sin. **And**, the result of THAT sin (death) passed on to ALL.

Look At Romans 5: 12 “**Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:**”

Because of Adam's sin imputed to us, ALL are born (spiritually) dead. **ALL** are facing (physical) death. **And**, ALL are worthy of (eternal) death. **And**, ALL are facing that (eternal) death EXCEPT for God's mercy and grace in Christ.

We are talking about the sons and daughters of Adam ALL being sinners. **First**, we are ALL sinners by REPRESENTATION. **Second**, we are ALL sinners by PRACTICE.

Look back at Romans 3: 23 “**For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”**

Being the sons and daughters of Adam, we ALL inherit his (fallen, sinful) nature. **We** ALL inherit his sinner-hood. **We** are (all) BORN sinning.

According to the scriptures, ALL were shapen in iniquity. **ALL** were conceived in sin. **And**, we never rise above that by our efforts at obedience. **We** ALL come short of the glory of God. **I.e.** **We** ALL (continually) fail to measure up to God's Standard in a way that would enable Him to declare us righteous based on our efforts.

What about our good works AFTER conversion? **What** about our faith? What about our repentance? **What** about our perseverance? **Even** though these are gifts of God, **EVEN THESE** do NOT measure up to God's standard of perfection. **We** NEVER have a thought, a motive, or a deed that is NOT tainted with sin.

There is NO DIFFERENCE. **ALL** are sinners by nature and by practice.

The THIRD way in which there is NO DIFFERENCE: **Because** ALL are the sons and daughters of Adam; **and**, because ALL are sinners (by nature and by practice); **ALL** are also WORTHY of; ALL are DESERVING of the eternal wrath of God. **We** are ALL (in ourselves) WORTHY of (eternal) death.

Look at Romans 6: 23 “**For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.**”

Eternal death is all that sin has EARNED us. **It** is all that (even) our BEST efforts to obey God's law can (ever) EARN us.

“The soul that sins shall die.” “God will by no means clear the guilty.”

WORSE than being sinners, **WORSE** than being **WORTHY** of God’s eternal wrath, **NONE**, (no not one), can do **ANYTHING** (in ourselves) to change this **WORTHINESS**. **We** cannot even diminish our **DESERVEDNESS** of God’s eternal wrath one iota based on our **BEST** efforts at obedience and reformation. **We** are **HELPLESS** to free ourselves from this dilemma.

Look at a couple of verses that declare this plainly. **Look** at Isaiah 64: 6 “**But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.**”

Our “righteousnesses” here are our actions aimed at gaining and maintaining the favor and acceptance of God. Some might admit that our **WORST** acts are deserving of God’s eternal wrath. But, this verse and others make it clear that our **BEST** efforts are as well.

Look at Galatians 3: 22 “**But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.**”

The ALL here is not (just) all “persons”, but **ALL** “things”. **EVERY** thought, **EVERY** motive, **EVERY** act is sinful. **We** don’t do **ANYTHING** that is not sinful. **Which** means that we don’t **EVER**, (at our **BEST** moment), do **ANYTHING** that does not leave us **DESERVING** of the eternal wrath of God.

That is why we need a Savior. **That** is why we need to be saved by Christ **ALONE**. **If** you and I are not sinners whose **BEST** efforts leave us **DESERVING** of God’s eternal wrath, then, God has provided a far “better” Savior than we need.

Christ said, “**I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.**” **Christ** came to call sinners: **Sinners** by **NATURE**; **sinners** by **PRACTICE**; **sinners** **WORTHY** of the eternal wrath of God. **And**, He came to call them to “repentance”, (i.e. to change their thinking that they are anything less than that based on **ANYTHING** found in them).

There is **NO DIFFERENCE**: **ALL** are **WORTHY** of; **ALL** are **DESERVING** of the eternal wrath of God.

Now, if that’s all the information we have, it paints a pretty dim and gloomy picture of fallen humanity. **Thankfully**, there is more to be known.

That brings us to the **FORTH** way in which there is **NO DIFFERENCE**. **Since** **ALL** are sons and daughters of Adam, **and since** **ALL** are sinners by nature and by practice, **and since** **ALL** are **WORTHY** of, **DESERVING** of the eternal wrath of God, **then**, there is **NO DIFFERENCE**, All **STAND** in need of a Savior.

We don’t need a **POTENTIAL** Savior, but a (true) Savior. **We** don’t need a Savior who made a “way” for sinners to be saved **IF** they will just “get on it”. **We** need a Savior whose obedience unto death has brought **REDEMPTION** to **EVERY** sinner He died for.

Look at Romans 3: 24 “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:”

Justified means ðdeclared Righteousö. **“Freely”** means UNCONDITIONALLY. **“Grace”** means it is conditioned on Christ ALONE. **“Redemption”** means a RANSOM has been paid IN FULL (nothing left owing).

When Christ had ðfinishedö His work, there was redemption. **He** had paid the two-fold debt of every sinner He died for. **He** had paid the debt of punishment to God’s Justice. **He** had paid the debt of obedience to God’s law. **He** had paid the RANSOM that a JUST God required. **And**, He paid it for EVERY sinner He died for.

That is why Psalm 130 says, **“Let Israel hope in the LORD: for with the LORD there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.**

8 And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.”

There is NO DIFFERENCE, ALL need the Savior that God (Himself) has provided for those of His choosing.

Look at Romans 3: 25-26 “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”

Isaac: ðBehold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?ö

God has provided Himself a SACRIFICE. **God** has provided His people a SAVIOR. **And**, God has provided Himself a SATISFACTION. **God** set Christ forth ða propitiationö, (i.e. a penalty bearing, justice satisfying sacrifice). **God** provided the Savior His law and justice demanded.

We don’t need a Savior who has made a ðwayö of salvation. **We** need a Savior who has ACCOMPLISHED salvation IN FULL. **Fallen** humanity (one and ALL) needs a Savior who reveals the Justice of God. **We** need a Savior who reveals how God MUST and WILL do RIGHT. **We** need a Savior who has demonstrated God’s punishment of the guilty, (i.e. One who reveals the LOVE of God, but NOT at the EXPENSE of the JUSTICE of God).

How can we KNOW that the God we worship is JUST? **Where** has God manifested His JUSTICE (so plainly) that there is NO QUESTION that He is JUST? **Where** has He demonstrated (so clearly) that He MUST and SHALL do RIGHT?

There is only ONE place to see that. **That** PLACE is the Cross. **When** it came time for the God appointed Surety, Substitute, and Sin-bearer to suffer the punishment that His (chosen) people deserved, God ðspared Him notö. **God** punished Christ with all the punishment His people deserved. **And**, Christ SATISFIED that demand SO COMPLETELY that there is no more demand for the punishment of those He died for.

Therefore, God is Just (i.e. He is DOING RIGHT.) to NOT punish the sinners Christ died for with the punishment they deserve. **He is JUST** to NOT give them the eternal death their sin has earned. **The** demand for THEIR punishment and death was ended FOREVER in the death of Christ, their Substitute.

What I am saying here is that if Christ died for you, it is IMPOSSIBLE for you to end up under the eternal wrath of God. **God** has already poured out on Christ, (your Substitute), ALL the wrath you DESERVED.

Therefore, YOU cannot be punished. **You CANNOT** perish. **Christ** drained the cup of God's wrath for EVERY sinner He died for. **THESE** sinners MUST (and SHALL) go free.

And, Christ has not just satisfied the Justice of God, He has also fulfilled the Law's requirement for perfect continual obedience. **By** His obedience unto death, Christ has provided the Righteousness God requires. **He** has fulfilled the prophecy of Daniel. **He** has brought in everlasting righteousness. **And**, He is the end of the law FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Look at Romans 10: 4 **“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.”**

Christ has fulfilled the precept of the law and ENDED it as a MEANS of Righteousness to every sinner who finds all the righteousness they need IN HIM.

And, God is DOING RIGHT to freely give those sinners all things (Justification, sanctification, pardon of sin, reconciliation).

Look at Rom 8: 32 **“He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”**

There is NO DIFFERENCE between those Christ was delivered up for and those who MUST be freely given all things. **Having** punished their sins FULLY in Christ's death; and Christ having brought in the Righteousness sinners need to stand Justified before God, how shall God NOT give those SAME sinners all that Christ has merited for them? **He** shall! He must! **He** will do RIGHT! **His** Justice demands it!

Now, what does this (really) mean? **It** means that if God delivered up Christ for YOU; if Christ died on the Cross for YOUR sins, YOU cannot perish. **YOU** cannot end up under the eternal wrath of God. **You MUST** and SHALL be given salvation (and all that goes with it). **And**, you will be given salvation NOT because YOU have done ANYTHING, but because Christ has ACCOMPLISHED your salvation IN FULL.

This is the Savior and salvation that ALL stand in need of. **NOT** a Savior who enables US to meet a condition; but One who has met EVERY condition. **NOT** a salvation we gain or maintain by OUR efforts at obedience; **NOT** a salvation we appropriate or make effectual by our faith. **But**, a

salvation that has been gained FOR us and is maintained FOR us by Christ based on the Righteousness He worked out.

There is NO DIFFERENCE. **We** need a salvation we don't have to DO anything to GET or DO anything to KEEP. **We** need a salvation that is free, UNCONDITIONAL to the sinner. **We** need a Savior who has met ALL CONDITIONS. **We** need a salvation that is COMPLETE and COMPLETELY through the DOING of Christ ALONE.

There is NO DIFFERENCE. ALL stand in need of a Savior (THIS Savior).

But, we have a problem. **By** nature we don't know what shape we are (really) in. **We** think that we have just fallen down and need a little help to get up. **We** think we have stumbled and just need someone to help us get our balance. **We** don't know how DESPERATE and DEPRAVED we (really) are.

ALL are born dead in trespasses and sins. ALL are born (totally) ignorant of Christ, His person, His work, His Righteousness. ALL are born going about to establish a righteousness of our own. ALL are born on a way that seems right. **But**, that way is the broad way that leads to destruction.

We NEED a Savior, a (true) Savior. NOT a Savior who can help US do something to help ourselves. **We** need a Savior who has done EVERYTHING a holy and just God requires for sinners (like us) to stand Righteous in His sight.

And, that brings us to the FIFTH way in which there is NO DIFFERENCE. ALL are in need of hearing the Gospel (wherein the Righteousness of God is revealed). **We** ALL desperately need to hear THE Gospel. **The** Gospel (alone) declares the Savior we ALL need. **The** Gospel (alone) declares the Savior and the salvation God has provided.

Without the Gospel, we are ALL on a way that seems right to us. **But**, it is a way that ends in death. **The** Gospel (alone) will deliver a sinner from off the broad way. **The** Gospel (alone) will bring the boasting of sinners to an end.

Look at Romans 3: 27-28 “**Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. 28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.**”

The law of faith is NOT inward (subjective) faith. **It is** NOT the gift of faith, which the Spirit imparts to every born again sinner in regeneration. **The** law of faith is the BODY of faith. **It is** the DECLARATION of faith. It is the Gospel.

And, it is NOT the Gospel (itself) (i.e. NOT *simply* the words heard and understood) that delivers (or excludes boasting). **But**, it is, rather, the SAVIOR declared IN the Gospel that delivers. **Christ** is the One by which sinners are justified. **Christ** is the One that STOPS sinners from boasting in themselves. Regenerate sinners boast in Christ.

Now, why is the hearing of the Gospel so NECESSARY, so VITAL? **It is** because WITHOUT the Gospel, BEFORE you heard the Gospel, the ONLY öchristö you heard about was a counterfeit. BEFORE the Gospel, the ONLY ögodö you heard about was an idol of menö imaginations. WITHOUT the Gospel, the ONLY ösalvationö you knew was one of ödead works and evil deedsö.

Christ sent His disciples into öall the worldö to preach THE Gospel. **He** sent them to declare the (true) Christ; to declare sin öput awayö; **to** declare righteousness brought in; **to** declare God Just to Justify sinners based on Christö righteousness imputed ALONE.

This is the SAME message we are attempting to deliver to the world in our generation. And, we do so because WITHOUT (the) Gospel, sinners know NEITHER God or the Christ who reveals Him. WITHOUT (the) Gospel, sinners BORN ödead in trespasses and sinsö REMAIN ödead in trespasses and sinsö. WITHOUT (the) Gospel, sinners BORN ögoing about to establish a righteousness of their ownö, REMAIN ögoing about to establish a righteousness of their ownö.

The Spirit of God does NOT work APART from (the) Gospel. **He does** NOT öconvince of sin or righteousness or judgmentö APART from (the) Gospel. **THE** Gospel MUST be heard and understood. **THE** Gospel MUST BE acted upon. öWhosoever believes **THE Gospel** shall be saved.ö

There is NO DIFFERENCE: ALL need to hear and understand THE Gospel.

That brings us to the SIXTH way in which there is NO DIFFERENCE: ALL stand in need of the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. **Without** THIS work, the Gospel is just another system of doctrine. **It is** the Spirit of God that takes the things of Christ (things revealed in the Gospel) and shows them unto sinners.

Look at John 16: 13-15 “**Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.**

14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”

It is the Spirit that shows to sinners things that God has öfreelyö given to the objects of His everlasting love.

Look at I Corinthians 2: 11-12 “**For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.**

12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.”

A salvation that is öfreeö (i.e. unconditional) is foreign to the natural mind. **Without** the Spirit of God giving us life and faith and rest in Christ, we are but önaturalö men and women. **Without** the Spiritö work in the heart, we will not receive those things that are öfreelyö given to us of God.

Look at I Corinthians 2: 14 “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

The NATURAL man is who we ALL are as we are born into this world. The NATURAL man is who we ALL are without the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit.

But the scripture says, “Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power...”.

What do ALL need to be MADE ðwillingö to do? ALL need to be made: ðWillingö to bow to God’s Sovereignty in salvation. “Willing” to see our need of a salvation that is ðfreeö (unconditional). “Willing” to see our need of THE Savior and THE salvation God has provided. “Willing” to bow to the doing and dying of Christ ALONE (His Righteousness imputed) for ALL our salvation.

There is NO DIFFERENCE. ALL stand in need of the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit.

So, IN LIGHT of who we are, and IN LIGHT of who God is, and IN LIGHT of what God requires, WHAT are we to do? Are we to just throw up our hands and let God do what He will? Are we to just sit back and wait for God to move us? The Bible never steers us that way. ALL are commanded to seek the God who is ðrichö in mercy.

The SEVENTH (and final) way in which there is NO DIFFERENCE: ALL are RESPONSIBLE; ALL are ACCOUNTABLE to God to look to and to rest in Christ ALONE.

Look at Romans 10: 12-13 “For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.

13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

It is not nearly as important for a sinner to believe that they are one of God’s elect as it is for them to see their need for the mercy and grace of God that are found in Christ ALONE.

God is ðrichö in Mercy. He is ðrichö in Grace to ALL who see their need to be found in Christ not having a Righteousness of their own (making). He is ðrich in mercyö to those who NEED to be found in the Righteousness Christ worked out by His obedience unto death. He is ðrichö toward ALL who see their (desperate) need of **that Righteousness God has imputed to ALL who find their hope in Christ ALONE.**

Look at Matthew 7: 7 “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” These promises are to ANY who will ask and seek and knock. How do you know they are ANY and to ALL?

Look at verse 8 “For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

There is NO DIFFERENCE: ALL are responsible; accountable to seek the God of Mercy through the Savior He has provided. The Savior He makes known in the Gospel.

Despite the (many) DIFFERENCES between us: **We** are ALL the sons and daughters of Adam; **ALL** sinners by nature and by practice; **ALL WORTHY** of/DESERVING of the eternal wrath of God; **ALL** need a Savior; **ALL** need to hear and understand the Gospel; **ALL** need the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit; **ALL** are accountable to God to seek His mercy in the doing and dying of Christ ALONE. **We** have (many) DIFFERENCES. **But** in THESE ways, there is NO DIFFERENCE.

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