

BIBLE STUDY NOTES
All Nations Bible Study Groups, Term 2, 2020

Romans 3:9-26
Sin: Are we really born evil? How bad are we?
For week starting 22 June 2020

Introduction

On Sunday, we continued our sermon series looking at big questions. This week, we thought about the question of sin. Are we really born evil? Are we as bad as we possibly could be? Does sin really deserve God's judgment?

Today, we will work through some of these questions together to make sure the answers are clear in our minds. We will also see why a proper understanding of sin matters for our daily lives.

To get you thinking...

- Do you think that most people are “pretty good people”? Why or why not?
 - How would you define “sin”? Explain your definition.
 - How big a problem do you think sin is? Discuss.

Romans 3:9-26

Today's passage concludes a long section in the book of Romans that runs from Romans 1:18-3:31. In this section, Paul's major focus is on the sinfulness of humanity.

Read Romans 3:9-20

- According to these verses, who is guilty of sin?
 - What about children? Are they really sinful from birth? Explain. (If needed, see Psalm 51:5.)
 - As Christians, how should we think about our children in the church? Is there anything we need to know besides just that they are sinners? Discuss.

- In v12, Paul says, “No one does good, not even one.” How do you think God assesses what is “good”?
 - Does this mean that non-Christians can’t do anything good? Discuss.

- What type of sin does Paul address in vv13-14?
 - What images do he use to describe our sinful speech? Why do you think he uses these images?
 - Do you think sinful speech is a problem for most people? List some examples of ways we might sin with our speech.

- List all the different body parts Paul mention in vv11-18. How many body parts does he mention?
 - What point do you think Paul is making by listing all these different body parts?
 - Some people say that sin is only a problem of outward actions. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
 - Is Paul saying that everyone is as sinful as they possibly could be? Why or why not?

- Re-read v18. What does “fear of God” mean?
 - How are our specific sins related to not fearing God? Discuss.

- What is the verdict for our sin based on v19?

- What does it mean that we are all “accountable to God”?
- How would you sum up Paul’s main point in vv9-20?
 - Based on what Paul has said here, how should we think about evangelism or missions? Explain.
 - How should we react when we hear about crimes on the news? Discuss.
- How does Romans 3 affect the way we think about ourselves as Christians? How big a problem is sin for us as believers?
 - Is confession of sin a regular part of your prayer life? Do you think it should be? Why or why not?

Read Romans 3:21-26

- What does it mean to be “justified” (v24)?
 - How are we justified according to vv24-25? Explain.
 - Think back to the verdict our sin deserves (vv19-20). What is God’s verdict toward us if we trust in Jesus?
 - If this is true, how should we respond to God? How should we think about obedience to God’s law?
- Think back to what Paul said in v12. Do you think we can do anything good as Christians? Discuss.

Case Studies

- Bev is a non-Christian. She thinks that most people are pretty good people. Bev understands that sometimes she makes mistakes. Bev would even admit that she says and does things that might unintentionally hurt others. But she doesn't think those "mistakes" are really that bad. And besides, she does lots of good things like volunteering at her local soup kitchen. How would you use what we've discussed today to talk with Bev?

- Matt is a Christian, but he really struggles with anger. Sometimes he gets really frustrated and yells at his coworkers or friends. When Matt reads Romans 3, he can definitely identify with the idea of our sin, especially our sinful speech. Matt thinks, "Yes, my sin is really bad. It's so bad that there's no real hope for me to change. I can't really stop my angry outbursts. It's just who I am." How might you answer Matt?

- Is there anything you want to discuss or ask based on today's study?

Prayer

Spend some time praying together.