***The Universal Condition of Sin  
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In our study of Romans, we have found that unbelievers maybe be of three types. They may be immoral people; they may be moral people; or, they may be religious people. All three types, we have found, are equally lost. All three types are headed for the lake of fire in eternity. Yet all three types, we have also found, have the necessary information from God for salvation. There's no such thing as some poor native in some far off place who never had access to eternal life, and who never had the truth necessary for salvation. Everybody who has ever lived to the age of accountability has had the information necessary to make the move toward God on his part that was required.

If we were to draw a circle, and we drew a line through the middle of it, to make two hemispheres, we may call the upper hemisphere the things that pertain to God. We call the lower hemisphere the things that pertain to man. That is, we may envision the lower hemisphere as the area in which we move. This is the material world, and the organization of societies; of governments; and, of education. In the upper hemisphere are the things that relate to God: the things that we have no access to; and, the things that we could not know.

We may envision the lower hemisphere as this auditorium. Suppose that you were born in this room; you never left this room; there were no windows in this room; and, it was completely closed. Yet, you were aware of the fact that there was something outside beyond this room. But because you were in a complete closed capsule, you could not tell who was out there; what was out there; or, what it was like. You could have no information. You had no radio. You had no television.

Now, that's the sort of thing that has happened to man when he was put in the Garden of Eden and put in the lower atmosphere of the material world. But there is another sphere of reality – the hemisphere of the things of God (the immaterial things). There is information out there, and there is information that man (in the lower hemisphere) very much needs. So, how does he get that information?

**Creation**

Well, there is no way (as man seeks to discover God) that he can get through that barrier. He cannot punch through. But on the other hand, God, from His side, can punch through, and that's exactly what He did. We have learned in the book of Romans that God punched through with creation. He said that creation tells about the fact that God is out there, and that He is powerful. And the very information of creation is God's method of bringing us to God-consciousness. Everybody everywhere, who has come to the age of accountability, has that.

**Conscience**

We have also seen that God broke through with information of conscience, for we are made in the image of God, and we cannot deny that image. We cannot deny what we are. We have been made in His image, and we function accordingly. One of the things that is within us is this element of conscience. So, conscience gives us information, and we've gone through that in detail – how the very image of God in us screams out to us that all is not well. We are not what we ought to be.

**The Bible**

So, God has come through with creation, and He has come through with conscience. God also broke through to our side with the information of the Bible – the written revelation of Scripture. That was a tremendous giving of information, and a tremendous coming through for us. Then God broke through with Jesus Christ. The book of Hebrews begins with that very statement. In different ways, God spoke in the past, in one way or another. Now, in these final days comes the greatest communication from the other side ever in the person of the God-Man, Jesus Christ.

So, we've got lots of information about God. Man was here trying to figure out: what's this all about? Where do I come from? How am I going to explain what happens in life? A child is born; he is taken care of by a mother at great personal sacrifice; and, reared to be a teenage son? And then he rebels against her, and in a moment of anger, he kills his mother. How do I explain that? Here's a detail. There must be some central explanation for all this. Why is all the turmoil in the world? Why is all the fakery in the world? Why is all the personal breakdown in the world?

Well, there's no way to explain this, except that we have information from God who gives us a knowledge about what happened to us historically; how He made us; what His plan was; what has happened to man; and, the construction of our nature (our souls, our spirits, and our bodies), and their interrelationships to divine viewpoint truth. The coordinating principal that ties things together is the Triune God: the Father; the Son; and, the Holy Spirit.

But what is man done? Man has said, I don't want creation's information. He has rebelled against it. Man has seared and hardened his conscience such that: "I'll not listen. I don't want any of that." Man has taken the Bible, and he's torn to shreds, and said, "It's just a human book full of errors, and I don't believe it. Even great seminaries will say that it's not infallible, and that it's not inerrant. It can have mistakes in it. Worst of all, they reject Jesus Christ.

So, while God has punched through from His side to our side with information, men have very quickly put a plug into every place that God has come through, so that the information (the communication) is cut off. And that's what Romans has been telling us.

Now, what has happened? What has happened is that this is where 20th century man is today, except that now, 20th century man, as he has increasingly released himself from the anchor point of communication from God (mainly the Bible, which we had since Reformation Times), now finds himself here in this visible sphere of his world and he knows that there is no meaning. There is no point. There is no basis for right and wrong. There is no future for him. There is no hope. Everything he tries to do crumples to the ground: in government; in education; in entertainment; and, in religion. So, natural, unsaved, unbelieving man, having cut himself off from the information that God has given him, says, "Eventually there's got to be something more than what I see here. There has to be something out there.

So, instead of going up to God, where the reality is, he inevitably goes down toward the realm of Satan. So, he tries to punch through, and he punches through with the occult. What's the great enthusiasm for the occult today? The great enthusiasm for the occult is man trying to find out where the reality is. He senses that just in this lower atmosphere of his, something is missing. He is not just like the animals. There is something screaming within him telling him that there is something out there. So, he goes to the occult. It takes him right down to Satan.

Or, he punches through with drugs. That's the whole drug scene. What is the purpose of drugs? To find reality. Remember that drugs originally was an ideology. It wasn't just something people did for pleasure. It was a principle of living. It was a concept. It was an ideology. By the end of the 1960s, that ideology had become a monster. It had become a Frankenstein, and it had become degraded and gross and crude and ugly. So, you don't have so much about drugs in ideology. It's no longer: "I'm reaching out to find God." It is no longer spoken of in the religious terms that it was in the early 1960s. But where does drugs lead? Right down to Satan?

So, tries something else. He tries, for example, astrology. The great interest in astrology is what? It is again reaching out there to say that there's something that man can find guidance from – something that gives him information. Where does it lead? Right down to Satan.

Or some try transcendental meditation, or any kind of Eastern gobbledygook, of which there's a lot of, to try to find some reality to life. Where does it go? Right down to Satan again.

They try sex. This has been a very old one. All of the ancient religions were all built upon the fact that sex was a part of worship. This was the problem for the early Christians – those who had been born again out of the Greek mystery religious systems where sex was an act of worship. So, the local temples were full of male and female prostitutes. And this was how they approached their gods. Well, of course, they were approaching a spirit being, because behind every idol god, there is a spirit demonic being. And sex was used for the purpose of trying to punch out of this realm to find reality. Again, it went right back down to Satan. It always going downward. It never moved upward, because they had blocked off the information that God gave.

Another very popular one is séances today. People sit around in a room and they actually communicate with spirits. They really do communicate with the spirit world. What are they doing? They're reaching out here to try to find reality, and they end up going right back to Satan.

One of the favorites is emotional experiences – experiential, emotional orientation. It has, of course, today its primary expression in the charismatic movement. And the charismatic movement leads right down to Satan again. Satan controls the people who are in the charismatic movement, because they are experiential emotional oriented. That's why the charismatic movement has been prepared by Satan to be the cementing force for the world of the tribulation church – for the world of the antichrist and his tribulation church. And it is easy to get people who even may be, interestingly enough, Christians. That's the sad part about this one. They themselves are Christians, but instead of moving toward the lines of communication that God has given them; namely here, particularly in Bible doctrine, as finding their access to God and the elation and expression of the emotions, they move down in a humanistic way of creating an emotion apart from the content of the Word of God.

So, when you have no base, you go right back to where Western civilization has gone. It has no base for its culture, and no base for its concepts. Here we have it even in the religious realm (and we could call that "religion," because that's what it is). We have various kinds of religious expressions that are emotional oriented, seeking to break out to find reality. Where do they go? Right back to Satan.

So, this is the picture that you have here described in the book of Romans, and updated to our present day. You have people who are closing off the lines of communication that God has given them from His hemisphere, and have contained themselves in a closed hemisphere, trying to break out now to reality on man's basis, and finding nothing but Satan waiting out there. And many of them, when they do recognize him, just say, "OK, that's OK with me, Satan. At least your something above and beyond the realm in which I work (in which I live), and I accept you." So, they actually become Satan worshipers.

So, we find that reason, as man cuts himself off from the Word of God, leads to naturalism and to humanism, and this ends up in despair. It is a desperate effort to find the God who is there, and the God who has spoken, but the one to whom they will not listen.

**Faith and Believing**

All three types of these people (the immoral, the moral, and the religious person) who are in that lower atmosphere, struggling to find God, needs one thing, and that is absolute righteousness in order to go to heaven – to have justification. Paul has told us, in these critical verses of Romans 3:21-23, that this absolute righteousness has been made available by God as a gift to all. This available absolute righteousness, we have found, is secured by the key factor of faith and believing. Those are the words – not "inviting Jesus into your heart." It is not all the other updated mod expressions that the human viewpoint mentality invents, but the solid scriptural grounds of trusting (relying) upon God and His Words as to what He has done to provide us with absolute righteousness. Faith is the means of acquisition. Faith does not give it to you. But faith is the means for acquiring this absolute righteousness – faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior.

So, the only means for securing eternal life is a means which is totally apart from human doing. That's what Paul is trying to say here. It is a righteousness apart from the law, apart from any human doing. This absolute righteousness for justification is universally needed by mankind, and it is universally available to all. Immoral, moral, and religious unbelievers are all included in the need, and thus they are all included in the provision. All are sinners. All lack absolute righteousness. All need that. God is ready to give us every one of them, but only on His basis.

Let's read these verses which we have just summarized now: "But now, a righteousness of God, apart from the law (apart from human doing) is manifested." Here God has broken through, and He's making this clear: "Being witnessed by the law and the prophets." In Scripture of the Old Testament this was made clear: "Even a righteousness of God which is by faith in Jesus Christ." This is by means of faith. It is a by-means-of-faith righteousness (absolute righteousness), instead of an attempted by-human-doing righteousness: "By means of faith in Jesus Christ, unto all that believe. And "upon all" is not in the text: "But unto all that believe." There is the critical factor again. First, it's a faith in Jesus Christ, and it's a believe-the-gospel righteousness. Those are the keywords. That's the method of evangelism. That's how you talk to unsaved people. When you tell them what God wants them to do, you tell them that He wants them to believe the gospel. You tell them that He wants them to trust in Jesus Christ; to have faith in Him; and, to rely upon Him as Savior.

Now, he has been talking here in this previous context in terms of Jews and gentiles. At the end of verse 22, he actually (we might say) interrupts himself. It's like a set of parentheses. The last phrase of verses 22 and verse 23 are really a set of parentheses: "For there is no difference. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

If you begin reading verse 22, and skip the parentheses, and take it up at verse 24, it follows very smoothly and logically. Verse 22 says, "Even a righteousness of God, which is by faith in Jesus Christ unto to all that believe." Verse 24: "Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." And the thought just carries on. But here, the end of verses 22 and verse 23 are really a set of parentheses in which Paul interjects just a little bit of information; but again, a very critical piece.

So, he begins with the word "for." This is the Greek word "gar." It's a conjunction, and it is used here to introduce an explanation. It explains the preceding phrase "Unto all that believe." God has an absolute righteousness, apart from human doing, that comes to all that believe. Then he explains why He has provided that. The word introduces this parenthesis, which tells why this is available to all who believe. And it is simply because everybody needs it: "For there is." There is the verb in this sentence: ("eimi"), which is the word to express absolute state. It is present tense. The present tense in the Greek means that it's constantly the case. It is active voice. It's a functioning fact. It's indicative mood. It's a statement of reality.

**No Distinction**

So, there is here a statement of a constantly true principle: "No difference." And the word "no" is the strongest of the Greek negatives, the little word "ou." And the word "difference" is the Greek word "diastole." "Diastole" really means "distinction." It's a word that literally means "setting asunder" or "separation." So, it came to mean "distinction," and would be a better translation simply to read it as: "For there is absolutely no distinction." And what he means is there is no distinction between immoral people, moral people, or religious people that he has been talking about since Romans 1:18 – all that he has been giving as preparatory groundwork as to why everybody is in the same boat: lost; and, in need of a righteousness that they can in no way secure on their own. It applies here to all categories of people, relative to securing this absolute righteousness by faith.

Everybody stands before God with real moral guilt for his actions – those with the Bible and those without it. They are really guilty. They don't just feel guilty. They just feel unfulfilled. They have a real moral guilt. And everyone needs the same absolute righteousness secured by faith. The moralist and the pornographer alike both need the same kind of absolute righteousness.

So, Jews or gentiles – we're all in the same boat in this respect. And there is no distinction with God. A little later on here in Romans 10:12, the apostle Paul is going to say, "For there is no difference between the Jew and the gentile, for the same Lord over all is rich into all that call upon Him."

So, that is the principle laid out here. There is no distinction between anyone. Why is there no distinction? The Jew doesn't like to hear this. He views himself as having a very great heritage. He was the depository of all the Old Testament Scriptures. He was the chosen people of God. He doesn't very well appreciate your telling him that there's no difference between him and the gentiles.

Well, in this respect, there is not. And verse 23 goes on to explain it. It says, "For." Again, we have our word "gar," which again is introducing (signaling) that an explanation is coming. Here it's going to explain why a Jew and gentile have the same need for salvation. It leads into the description of the human condition. Then is says: "All." The Greek word for "all" is "pas." It covers the whole human race relative to sinning. There's only one exception. That's the Lord Jesus Christ, who was born minus an old sin nature, so he was freed from that, as well as from personal sin. But outside of that, everybody (Jew and gentile) in the human race have sinned.

**All Sinned**

The Greek word for "have sinned" is one of several Greek words for sin. This one happens to be the Greek word "hamartano." And "hamartano" is the particular Greek word for sin which conveys the idea of shooting at a target and missing it. So, we describe this as "missing" in target practice. Sin is any lack of conformity, therefore, to the holiness of God and His will. It's missing God's standard. It's shooting at it, and missing it. And man has completely missed God's standard of righteousness. It is in the aorist tense. That is the one-point action tense. That gives us a little clue that he's talking about something that is a point in time event. We really would translate it as: "All sinned at some point in time."

What he is referring to here is particularly the fact that Adam, at one point in time, sinned when he ate the fruit in the garden. And when we get to chapter 5, we're going to go into more detail about what that means. I'm just going to brush over it now. But the Word of God presents the fact that, in God's eyes, when Adam ate that fruit, you did it too. Immediately, you're going to rise up and say, "That's unfair. I never touched it." You might even be inclined to say, "I never would have either, if I had been there." But you and I both know that's not true. You would have touched it. You would have done the same thing. But, be that as it may, in God's eyes, Adam was Washington, D.C. for us. And when Washington acts, it acts for all the states; and, when Adam acted, he acted for all of us. So, we are guilty of having sin.

So, you're born into the human race, and already you're guilty before God for the fact that you sinned in the Garden of Eden. Before you take your first breath, you're guilty of the fact that you sin in the Garden of Eden. And that's the significance of this point-in-time tense in the Greek. That's the only way we can know this. You'd never know that from English. But the Greek makes it very clear that this is what God means. Taking it all together as one-ball-of-wax-event sin. And that is back to this time in the Garden of Eden. We'll look more at that when we get to Romans 5:12.

It's also active, because Adam did it by his own volition. This was the only sin that Adam could commit. The only sin that Adam could commit in the Garden of Eden was negative volition. And this is what he did. He was negative toward the command of God, and he actively chose to do that. It is indicative mood, which indicates that we have a statement of fact here. This is the same expression that is going to be used in Romans 5:12 to describe humanity's fall in Eden. And Adam's sin is imputed to all his posterity. So, everyone is morally guilty, even if you never do a single thing wrong yourself, which is impossible. But even if you never sin, you're morally guilty because you are in Adam. The old sin nature that we inherit from Adam because of this makes it certain that we will have personal sins as well.

**Sin is Congenital**

So, people do not become sinners because they sin. You and I became sinners simply because we were born sinners. We were already born in that condition – with a sin nature. Sin is congenital. In other words, it's not acquired. This aorist tense tells you that when he says, "All have sinned" ("All have 'hamartano'"), he is saying that sin is congenital. It is not something that you have acquired in some way.

People don't like that. People don't like the whole idea of sin. Of course, I think that Paul is speaking about a broader concept of sin as well, at this point. I think here he's not only talking about what happened in Adam, but he is talking about everything else that we do – that we have a sin nature, and that we express it. This is the whole concept of being contrary to what is the mind of God, and contrary to the standards of God. It is what he calls here "the glory of God." Again, man who has closed himself into his lower atmosphere, and has declared that God is not out there, refuses to accept this kind of a concept of sin. Man has historically, through his philosophers and through his influential men in history, more and more accepted their viewpoint that man is good; that man is not depraved; and that man is capable of discovering what is right, and discovering what the answers are to his condition. Man has rejected the idea that he is a sinner, and incapable of finding the answers, so man has gradually degenerated more and more.

One of the great expressions, of course, of the anti-sin concept comes from the Russians themselves. In the Russian Dictionary, for "sin," you will read this definition: "Sin is an archaic and bourgeois word denoting the transgression of a mythical divine law." That is the way children and adults in Russia learn about sin. They open a dictionary; they look up this word "sin," and, this is what they discover – that it's something that's an old-fashioned idea. It doesn't really relate. It's a capitalistic notion that people do wrongs and rights, and they denote the transgression of some kind of a mythical divine law. So, there is no real sin. Man really hasn't done anything wrong because there is no divine law.

That's where Western civilization has come to. There is no absolute. There is no standard because there is no God who has spoken to us (at least that we're willing to listen to) who has told us what the standards are, and what the absolutes are. Yet, even the Russians themselves constantly contradict this because they feel the Gulag Archipelago (their chain of slave labor camps – their chain of political prison camps all over the nation) with people who they say are doing wrong. So, there the Russians are contradicting themselves concerning the fact of what's right and what's wrong. And they admit from their own image of God within themselves such that they come up and say, "Here's a thing that's right. Here's a thing that's wrong.

If you believe that there is no standard, and if you believe that there is no divine law, then you believe that you can't ever say that anything is right or wrong. Yet, that little feature within us keeps cropping up, even in the Russians.

"For there is no difference, for all (at a point in time, once-and-for-all) sin." Then it says, "And." That isn't enough. The word "and" is the Greek word "kai," which adds another thing that is the consequence of that: "And comes short of the glory of God." The word for "comes short" is the verb "hustereo." "Hustereo" means "to be behind;" "to lack;" or, "to fall short of." That's a good translation: simply "to fall short of." It connotes failing to achieve something. Here, it is failing to achieve the absolute righteousness to go to heaven. Man is completely devoid of it.

However, now notice that it's in the present tense. That tells us something. Before it was that Greek aorist tense that's a once-for-all action: "Man sinned." What is the consequence of that? He keeps sinning. Present tense is a continued action. He keeps falling short of God's standard. And it is middle voice, which means that he receives the results of that kind of failure. Upon man himself are the devastating results of the fact that he now keeps on doing what is wrong; keeps on doing what is wrong; and, keeps on doing what is wrong. Why? Because something happened to Adam.

Adam became a sinner by sinning. He's the only one that did that. He became a sinner by sinning. You and I are born sinners, and that's why we sin. But after Adam sinned and became a sinner, he just kept right on sinning. He became a fallen creature with an old sin nature. And that old sin nature expressed itself in sins, and God says that that's evil. That old sin nature expressed itself in human good, and God says that that is evil. And everything that poured out of him was evil. And when he had children, the law of reproducing after your own kind came into play, and he reproduced children who had that same old sin nature within them. From then on, we have been born with that defect. We have personally, then, as the middle voice tells us, been subject to the consequences of that act. We sin, and we receive the consequences of our acts. It is indicative. It's a statement of fact.

Therefore, we translate this as "Are falling short." So, we read, "For all sinned, and continued to fall short." Of what? The glory of God. The word "glory" is the word "doxa". We won't go into an analysis of that. We've done that before recently. It means the honor or the praise of God, and it has the word "the" the Greek, so it is specific ("*the* glory"). It is "the glory of God," and it has the word "the" before "God:" "before 'theos.'" So, it is "*the* God," meaning God the Father.

So, here we have "the glory of God the Father," the epitome example of the essence of God – of all that God is in His perfect holiness and His standards of righteousness. We have this concept, "to the glory of God," exemplified in 2 Corinthians 3:18: "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." This is the thing that is now happening to you and me as believers. We look with unveiled face now, beholding, as we were in a mirror, the glory of the Lord. We see it. We have the revelation. The ultimate expression was in Jesus Christ. And now, as you take doctrine into your mentality, and as you go positive to the principles that you learn, spiritual maturity develops in your soul. You're carried upwards toward that spiritual maturity structure that you're building in your soul. And that spiritual maturity structure, with its five sides, is the glory of God within you.

**The Spiritual Maturity Structure**

Now, what 2 Corinthians tells us is that day-by-day, from glory-to-glory, you're moving up, and you're constantly on that inclined plane, going up to the super grace life where you have a spiritual maturity structure established, and God is now over-pouring grace into your soul. Or you can go the other direction, and start clouding the glory of God. But when you get up to super grace, and you've got this structure built at its super grace level, the glory of God has been established in you in its finest moment. The ultimate fullest expression of this spiritual maturity structure in your soul is going to be, of course, when you face Jesus Christ in eternity. Then the conforming into His glory will be complete.

However, the glory of God here is an expression that refers to God's holiness – his standards of divine perfection. Everyone falls short of God's moral character, even though with varying degrees. I would not suggest that everybody is the same. After all, if you're on the western coast of the United States in California, and you begin thinking about the little island of Oahu in Hawaii, with its palm trees and everything growing, and its white sands of Waikiki Beach, and the dramatic. Diamond Head standing up there, and all the blue waters of the Pacific, and you say, "It really would be wonderful just to go to Hawaii, but I'm broke."

So, you say, "Well, let's swim there." So, you and your friends all gather on the shore of Southern California, and you go dashing out into the water. And another person comes running along, and he gets out and he's trailing behind, but he's swimming along out there on his way to Hawaii. And here Glen McGregor runs out. He gets into the water, and he flops right there at the beach or something. He can't get very far. His muscles aren't that big. So, we've got all these people swimming out here, and they get out in varying degrees, but sooner or later they get tired. And the 2,000 miles goes on and on and on, and they can't make it. So, one-by-one, they drop off and drown. They are doomed. Well, they were doomed from the beginning, in California. And do you know who is most doomed? The guy who got farthest out – the one who made the biggest progress.

Do you see why the Bible says that the people who produce the most human good are the people who are going to have the greatest condemnation upon them because human good is evil and you have stacked up the biggest amount of evil? Yet, people think that their human good is going to stand them with God, when the more good you produce, the farther you've gotten yourself out into the drink. That's the point such that God says, "Every one of you has fallen short." Glory land is out there. You can see the word right there – all over. If you've been to Hawaii, that's what you see when you first come in. The word "glory" is hanging over the islands, and you're never going to make it. You have missed it. Some of you did better than others, but nobody makes it.

That's what this verse is saying. There is no distinction between Jew or gentile. It makes no difference. You're all in the same need of absolute righteousness. And there's only one way you're going to get it. It the same way – by a non-human doing method. It's going to be secured by a method of faith. The problem of mankind is that in Adam we all sinned, and then we're born, consequently, with his sin nature, and like Adam, we have kept on sinning since. So, we started, and kept on, and on, and on. And every expression is a falling short of the glory of God. So, when Adam once sinned in Eden, we in him (that's aorist); and, then he continually sinned as we do (that's present tense). And that's the significance of these two tenses here in this verse.

So, we could translate verse 23 as: "For all sinned and are falling short of the glory of God." It is a past tense for sin; and, a present tense for the universal consequence of that sin. This consequence of falling short is falling short of the glory of God's absolute righteousness. And this is the whole history of the human race before God. He sinned in Eden, and he is now demonstrating the consequence of that act. Sin has robbed us of reflecting the glory of God in our lives.

Faith in Jesus Christ reverses all that, and it enables you to start building the spiritual maturity structure to establish that glory of God once more in your soul.

This is great, as tragic as this may seem. This is great that God has done it this way – that He has simply wiped us out. He says, "You're all hopeless. It's out. Don't bring Me your doing. You can't do anything. Just let me give you something. I'll give you the absolute righteousness. I'll pay for it. It's not free." I don't like to hear people say salvation is free. It's not free. Berean memorial tapes are not free. Somebody has to pay for them. But the tapes are given on a grace basis. They are available to you without cost to you personally. Salvation is given to us without cost to us personally. But it's not free. Jesus Christ had to pay for it.

So, God says, "Let Me give it to you, and I'll give it to you on a basis that will be compatible with My justice (My fairness)." It would be terrible if God said, "I'm going to give you salvation on the basis of your IQ." All the stupid people would be out, and all the smart ones in. That wouldn't be fair. It would be tragic if it were on the basis of our economic possessions. All the rich people would be in, and all the poor people would be out. That would not be fair.

You might say we could do it on the basis of culture: "God doesn't want a bunch of people in heaven who don't know how to use a fork and a knife when they eat; who use bad language; and, who pick their nose and their teeth and everything else. We don't want those people in heaven. They don't have the culture." Maybe you grew up in a home where they did all those things. Wouldn't that be a sweet condition for you to face your eternal destiny with – because you grew up learning bad habits, and being an ill-mannered person? God says, "No, it's not your culture. It's going to be on a basis that's fair. He does not hold us to anything that we ourselves can produce.

However, if God tolerated people in heaven who were less than absolutely perfect, and met absolutely less than His essence (all that constitutes His holiness and His righteousness – His "+R", and His absolute "plus justice"), then heaven would soon become like earth. All we would have would be the same kind of repetition of sin and breakdown, and everything that constitutes life here on this earth.

Unbelief blindly rejects all this –, all these standards that God makes for man to fit into. They plug the holes and say, "I don't want to listen to what God is saying. I reject all that." Instead, they want to put it on their education; on their religion; on their personal culture; on their moral standards; on their rational capacities; and, on everything else. God rejects all that.

All of these standards, our standards of righteousness, which God rejects. So, Matthew 5:20 tells us that unless you come up with something better than the kind of righteousness the Pharisees did with their doing, you will never see heaven.

Matthew 22:37-39 just plain condemn us all: "Jesus said unto him, 'You shall love the Lord God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Toward God, we fail; and, toward man we fail. Every one of us fails to keep that summary expression of the absolute standards of God's righteousness.

**Three Expressions of Sin**

The sin that Paul is referring to here, we may sum up in three expressions. What is the problem then, when it says that all have sinned and come short of the absolute righteous standard of God? Here is how we've done it.

1. **Imputed Sin**

First of all, we have failed because of imputed sin. You can read about this in Romans 5:12-18. Imputed sin is the sin from Adam, the head of the human race. This is the imputation of the sin which Adam committed, and we committed in God's eyes with him. From this sin, we have physical death. This is why you die physically. You die physically by something that you get directly from Adam to you. From Adam to you comes physical death by direct imputation. God imputes that sin to you, and physical death is the consequence.

Now, the cure for imputed sin is to bring physical death to an end by resurrection through eternal life in Jesus Christ. That's how God solves imputed sin. He gives you eternal life. You resurrect your body; and he wipes out the effects of imputed sin – the sin of Adam, and the consequence.

1. **Inherent Sin**

Secondly, we have sin which we call inherent sin. Inherent sin we received from our parents. We receive that in the form of an old sin nature. Romans 5:19, Romans 7:17, and Ephesians 2:3 describe inherent (or inherited) sin. Adam received an old sin nature by sinning, and then he passed that equality on to his children. This is why you die spiritually. From inherent sin, you receive spiritual death. It is because you take your first breath as a baby with an old sin nature residing in your soul, and immediately you're dead spiritually. You die spiritually because of this inherent sin – the sin nature. The place you get this nature is directly from your parents.

There was Adam, and then there were all the generations, and there were your parents, and there was you. And you get that directly from your parents. Whereas before, you got physical death directly from Adam, but you get spiritual death directly from your parents. The remedy for inherited sin nature is to be made spiritually alive through the salvation in Jesus Christ. When you believe in Christ, your human spirit comes alive, and you receive the reversal of the effects of inherent sin.

1. **Personal Sins**

Finally, there are personal sins, which you read of in Mark 7:20-23 and Galatians 5:19-21. This is a person exercising his will, contrary to the mind of God; contrary to God's essence; and, contrary to His standards of righteousness. And the expressions of the old sin nature may be sins of omission or sins of commission. For example, sins of commission are described in 1 John through 17; and, sins of omission are described in James 4:17.

However, the point here is that the old sin nature then expresses itself in individual acts of personal sins. This is what we're best acquainted with. This kind of a thing we understand – personal sins. And this we can see ourselves. God has to tell us that we've got something diseased within us that causes this. God to tell us about what He holds us responsible for in Adam. But this we know by our own observation. And there are two kinds of solutions for personal sins: one for the unbeliever; and, one for the believer. The solution for sins for the unbeliever is John 3:16 – faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. The solution for personal sins in the case of the believer is 1 John 1:9. Both of these verses are very critical. They are, perhaps, the two most critical verses in the Bible as starting points either for the unbeliever or for the believer in his life.

So, here's the problem that faces us. When Paul says, "We're all under sin," he is summing up these three types of sin. We're under imputed sin; inherited sin (the old sin nature); and, in our personal acts of sins.

Next time we'll take it up from here, and take up the question of: well, why didn't God just make us so we couldn't sin. Wouldn't all of you be happier without your sin? Wouldn't all of this been simpler? Well, is God really omnipotent? Could He not have made us so that we would never sin? If you'll come next time, you'll hear the answers to those questions.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1975

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