

**ROMANS SERIES NINE
TURNING FROM THE DARK SIDE**

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Romans 3:9-20; Rom. 3:23; I Tim.2:14; Matt. 6:14-15

SLIDE: Turning from the Dark Side.
Sequencing of life and death time line.

OVERHEAD: ROMANS PERSPECTIVE:

Romans 1-3: Mankind is not good enough for God's Heaven:— See that the atheists and agnostics have no excuse—"good people aren't good enough—religious people won't be let in.

Declaration: All have sinned.

Romans 4: Faith is the only thing that that pleases God.

Romans 5: Peace with God

Romans 6-7: Personal struggle with continuing to sin

Romans 8, 12: There is now no condemnation to those in Christ." Victory in Jesus!

●SLIDE: This morning, in Romans 3:9-20 Paul looks into the Dark Side of Mankind and sees the dark secrets of what we are really like. It is not a very good picture.

●SLIDE: We all have secrets: POST SECRETS by Frank Warren: Community art project: Gave cards to strangers, left them in public places. "You are invited to anonymously contribute a secret to a group art project. Your secret can be regret, fear, betrayal, desire, confession or childhood humiliation. Reveal anything—as long as it is true and you have never shared it with anyone before. Be brief, be legible, be creative."

The response was overwhelming:

"I love to pee when I am swimming in the pool."

"When I am mad at my husband, I put boogers in his soup."

"I stole valium from my epileptic dogs."

Starbucks employee: I give decaf to customers who are rude to me."

"My dog knew all my secrets, but one. I put rat poison out back to get rid of a family of rats. In around five days I had no more rats. Around two weeks later, I had no dog. Max, I'm so sorry. We miss you so much."

My secret: picking up marble rocks off of the top of the Acropolis in Athens.

"When I was a young teenager I used to baby sit my next door neighbor's son. When he was asleep I would go into their bedroom and go through their bedside drawers. I found a packet of condoms. I put a pin through the middle of each of them, and this ensured myself another 5 years of babysitting."

Some are not so funny. They remind us that to one degree or other ...

●SLIDE: ●WE ALL TRAVEL ON THE DARK SIDE (Romans 3:9).

"When I was in the 4th grade a new kid moved into our neighborhood. He was a charismatic leader who quickly became popular. Soon after, he convinced two of my friends to pin me to the ground and hold open my eyelids. They took turns spitting into my eyes."

READ ROMANS 3:9: What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin.

“What shall we conclude?” Summation of the first three chapters: Jews and Gentiles are “All under sin” – write over them, “The Dark Side.”

Many words for sin in the Bible. Let’s get a feel for some of the things that break God’s heart and hurt our relationship with Him.

●SLIDE: 1. HARMARTIA (Romans 3:23) was originally a shooting word and means “missing the target.” Therefore sin is the failure fail to hit the target.

Picture of archers – all shooting at target. Every arrow falls short. God has put the target out of reach – VP Cheney aims for turkey and hits friend. We all are bad shots.

But man is not an inefficient marksman. Man is a deliberately perverse marksman.

PS: “I’m with the only person I’ve ever been able to truly trust. He is the only person I have ever cheated on.

●SLIDE: 2. PARABASIS (1 Timothy 2:14) means “to step across the line.”

PS: He wasn’t cheating on you. But, since you chose to blame me anyway...he will be.”

●SLIDE: 3. PARAPTOMA (Matthew 6:14-15) means "to slip."

We speak of words slipping out, of being swept away by some impulse or passion, which has momentarily gained control of us, and which has made us lose our self-control.

PS: “There is reason to believe that I was a pre-honeymoon babyand evidence that my mother still has not forgiven me for this.”

●SLIDE: 4. ANOMIA (Romans 6:19) means “lawlessness.” It is the sin of the person who knows the right and intentionally does wrong.

PS: “During college I worked at a restaurant where we took turns running the cash register. I stole probably about \$5,000 over those four years. Most of that money went towards the year I spent backpacking around Europe. I had a great time.”

●SLIDE: 5. OPHEILEMA (Matthew 6:12) describes a debt. It means a failure to pay what is due or to do what we should do.

PS: “He’s been in prison for two years because of what I did. 9 more to go.”

One basic Christian duty is to express love

What was the trouble with the priest and the Levite who left the victim on the road? What did they do? That was the difficulty - they did nothing; they went by on the other side.

Here is what we must look like to God. Got all types of sins all over us.

HOT DOG: golf, sweaty, Circle K. Chili Cheese Dog. Add onions and jalapenos and mustard and ketchup.

Seat belt dripped ketchup all over my pants.

Came home to see Julie: Get away from me.

She didn’t divorce me. She had a lot invested in me. Cleaned me up.

Good news: God is not interested in divorcing us either. He has a lot invested in us.
Wants to clean us up in the blood of Jesus Christ.

●SLIDE: ●FROM A HEAVENLY PERSPECTIVE THE DARK SIDE LOOKS TRULY DARK (Romans 3:10-18).

Poetry: Quotes loosely from several Old Testament passages.

READ ROMANS 3:10-12 (Pause between phrases for emphasis):

10 As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; (This indictment includes every human being. At the beginning of the verse the inclusiveness is expressed positively by the strong word "all". At the end it is expressed negatively by the words "not even one".)

*11 there is no one who understands, (not can't comprehend—no spiritual discernment)
no one who seeks God. (God first seeks us—early days of life we seek best for ourselves)*

12 All have turned away, (Isaiah 53:6...) (verb meaning "to deviate", "wander", or "depart" from the right way.)

they have together become worthless;

there is no one who does good, (man's righteousness is not like the kind God wants.)

not even one." (positive then emphatic negative)

But we still struggle here. Hard to accept God's estimation.

●SLIDE: Jesus had the same opinion. He did not mince words about the gravity of human sin.

In a great passage dealing with what constitutes impurity and true purity he made the startling statement that out of the heart proceed murders, adulteries, evil thoughts and things of that kind (Mark 7:21-23).

When the rich young ruler approached him saying, "Good Master," Jesus said, "There is none good but God" (Mark 10:18)...

The Gospel of John records him as saying that he that believed not was condemned already because he had not believed on the Son of God (John 3:18). "This is the condemnation, that... men loved the darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (v. 19).

OVERHEAD: I remember as a child being taught a Sunday school lesson about sin. The teacher used a blackboard, and she began the lesson by drawing a yardstick in a vertical position on the left side of the blackboard. The yardstick was labeled, "the divine measure", and a verse was written beside it: Matthew 5:48. ("Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect"). A line was drawn across the top of the black board at the point to which the top of the yardstick reached. This was the standard. The teacher then asked, "Has anyone ever lived up to this standard?"

After a few suggestive hints, one of the students answered, "Yes, the Lord Jesus Christ lived up to it."

"That's right," said the teacher. So she drew a line parallel to the yardstick, reaching from the bottom of the blackboard to the line at the top that represented perfection. She labeled this line, "Jesus Christ."

"Has anyone else lived up to this standard?" she continued. We agreed that nobody else had, although, as she pointed out, some people have done better than others. To show that some persons are better than others but that no one had reached perfection, she drew a number of vertical lines, all of which fell short of the "perfection" standard. There was a line labeled "98 percent" for very good people, lines labeled "90 percent" and "80 percent" for fairly normal people, and a line labeled "40 percent" for pretty bad people. Then Romans 3:23 was added: "there is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of [his] glory."

As I look back on that lesson I know that it taught one very valuable thing, primarily that although some people look quite good to us by our standards, all people nevertheless fail to please God and need a Savior.

But the illustration has one great weakness. By putting the lines representing "98 percent" people, "90 percent" people, "80 percent" people, and "40 percent" people parallel to the line representing Jesus Christ, the diagram inevitably suggests that human goodness is essentially the same as divine goodness and that all people really need is a little bit of additional goodness which – added to their own efforts and attainments – will make up the required "100 percent". That error needs to be repudiated.

Is that what Romans 3:12 teach us? Not at all! If we are to express the teaching of these verses by our diagram, we must either eliminate the lines representing human beings from the diagram entirely, or else represent them not as lines stretching upward

in the direction of divine perfection, but downward in varying degrees of opposition to God and his righteousness. God does not merely say that people fail to live up to His standard, although that is also true and is one way of expressing sin's nature. He says rather that we have all "turned away". We have "together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

●SLIDE: In the next several verses (Romans 3:13-20) God made a close personal examination of mankind from head to toe. He was not impressed.

READ ROMANS 3:13a: "Their throats are open graves;

Now God looks down the throat. Go to doctor and always says, "Stick out tongue and say 'ah'." When's the last time that you looked into an open grave? Probably never. We cover that grave carefully with flowers. Take the edge off with lovely caskets. Even have fake green grass that we put over the mound of dirt that they get out of the hole so that we don't have to see the stark reality of the grave.

Slid into MaB's grave.

God looks inside and says, "It's a grave. There's death over there. It's corruption and stench and foul."

READ ROMANS 3:13b-14: their tongues practice deceit."

"The poison of vipers is on their lips."

14 "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness."

READ ROMANS 3:15-16: "Their feet are swift to shed blood;

16 ruin and misery mark their ways,

●SLIDE: POST SECRET VIEW OF THE WORLD.

"My friends and family think I am this sweet innocent girl. But, they don't know that I've posted nude photos of myself on the internet!"

"My father was jailed for the rape and molestation of his girlfriend's daughters. He's been there several years. I've always suspected he molested me, as well. But, I have never said anything, and I'm scared to find out if my suspicions are true. I'm not sure if my father is the imprisoned one, or if the imprisoned one is me."

"I am a Southern Baptist Pastor's wife. No one knows that I do not believe in God."

"My math teacher and my parents told me they were proud of me. I believed my parents."

"My mom killed my dad, long before he killed himself."

"The medication is not enough to make me forget what he did to me...if I see him again I will kill him to save the others."

Of course there are always those of us who do not think that is an apt description of us. Always those of us who say, "I never poisoned anyone... stuck knife into another's back... shot a bullet into a man's heart. I'm not guilty of murder!"

●SLIDE: Remind us all of Jesus insight into sin in His Sermon on the Mount.

READ MATTHEW 5:21-22.

READ MATTHEW 5:27-28:

READ MATTHEW 5:31-32:

READ MATTHEW 5:38-39:

READ MATTHEW 5:43-44:

READ ROMANS 3:17: and the way of peace they do not know."

First, they are not at peace with God; they are at war with Jesus Christ.
Second, they are not at peace with one another; they hate and attack one another.
Third, they are not at peace with themselves; they are restless and distressed.

The only way we can find peace is by coming to the cross of Christ, where God has himself bridged the gap to man and has made peace.

READ ROMANS 3:18: "There is no fear of God before their eyes."
This is the problem.

Since eyes are our organs of vision, to have the fear of God before our eyes means that we have God constantly in our thoughts and in a central position in everything that concerns us. It means that we are ever looking toward him.

Now do we begin to get a feeling why none is righteous—no not one?

●**SLIDE:** Let's take this a step further. (Monopoly)

Remember during VietNam war the prisoners of war who received several Monopoly Games in a Red Cross package?

Didn't play monopoly: use the monopoly money as currency in the camp. Bought and sold cigarettes, favors, extra scraps of food, chores, etc. Enterprising economy.

Always seems that one is a naturally gifted capitalist—one who is a genius at buying low and selling high.

He accumulated almost all the money in the camp.

Released, flew from Da Nang to San Francisco.

This capitalist prisoner was a little out of reality.

Went to bank and wanted to make a deposit. Asked for a slip to deposit \$500,000. Pushed \$500,000 in play money at the teller.

Human righteousness has all sorts of uses in the game we call life. But it does not work in God's domain.

We have no righteousness that God wants.

Our Monopoly money will not spend in Heaven.

The kind of righteousness that man produces is not even the kind that God wants.

Filthy rags: stench and they don't cover.

●**SILENCE IS THE ONLY POSSIBLE RESPONSE TO GOD'S EVALUATION (Romans 3:19-20).**

READ ROMANS 3:19-20: Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. 20 Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

Die tonight: What right have you to come into my Heaven?"

Only three possible answers:

"I am good enough." No body is really going to say that. Stand in silence in His presence.

"I don't know what to say."

"I received Jesus Christ. I am not qualified on my merits. I am qualified because of His merits."

The only solution to moving toward the "Dark Side" is turning toward the Light of Jesus Christ. He is longing for a pure, intimate, emotional and lasting relationship with us.

●SLIDE: The Hebrew language uses three basic words to describe God's intimacy with us:

1. *Yada* means to know intimately. Jesus wants to have a relationship where He knows us and we know Him.
2. *Sod* means to disclose. Jesus opens up and makes Himself vulnerable to us.
3. *Sakan* refers to the motive behind the knowing. The reason Jesus wants to know us well is so that He may minister more effectively to us.

The truth is God Knows us. And he wants us to know him. That is the beauty of the incarnation.

It is what is occurring in the upper room when Jesus says, "I no longer call you servants, I now call you friends." Why? Read the rest of the verse: "Because all that the Father has given unto me I have disclosed to you."

The point of these three words is that God knows us in order that He might be caringly involved in our lives and He gives us the privilege of knowing Him.

In Christ the Dark Side of Romans 2:10-18 is reversed.

End with the positives of Romans 2:9-20.

●SLIDE #: PS. *"I've given away all my secrets and I feel so free!"*

Ooo

"I married someone I didn't love because I wanted to wear the dress."

"Once I was asked by a doctor if I was hearing voices. The voice inside my head shouted: TELL Him NO!"

"I always wait a few days before returning emails from my friends because I don't want them to think I have nothing better to do."

"Sometimes, I hope the drugs will take me away before the loneliness ever gets its chance."

"Every time I approach an overpass, I think how easy it would be to simply turn the wheel ever so slightly to the left and find peace, at long last."

"Three years ago my dad died. One year ago I lost my virginity to a guy I dated for a month. If my dad were still alive that wouldn't have happened."

"Most people believe that I should hate him for hurting me. But, I don't. I hate him most for making me think I deserved it. I hope he burns in HELL."