



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Romans 3: 1-8

Romans

"Divine Faithfulness"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Our text this morning Romans chapter 3 and we're going to look at verses 1 through 8. We are in the initial portion of the book following the introduction in chapter 1 verses 1 through 17, chapters 1:18 through chapter 3 verse 20 is the portion of the book in which Paul is indicting the human race. He is exposing the guilt of mankind in order to show our need of the gospel, and he's done that first with the Gentile in chapter 1 verse 18 through 32, exposing the obvious guilt and corruption of the Gentiles. And then in chapter 2, he turned to the Jews and exposed their guilt to show that while they judge the Gentiles for their corrupt behavior, the Jews have done the same thing. They have the law, but they broke the law, even though they're teachers of the law. This morning, we come to an extension of his indictment on the Jewish people, and it's a rather complicated passage. That's why I mention this, because it involves questions and answers. And as we read through the text, Paul asks questions. And they're not questions that Paul is asking himself, but they're the question that a Jewish objector would make to Paul's statement that the Jews are really no different than the Gentiles. Fundamentally, both are fallen, guilty before God and in need of salvation. That flew in the face of everything that the Jew believed about himself. And so, the questions arise, and Paul states these questions. These are the questions of a Jewish objector. And what they really are, are objections, not so much questions about seeking information, but a question that raises a problem supposedly with Paul's argument and Paul deals with it. So, it seems as though that if we are to see this portion of the Book of Romans as a court of law, Paul is allowing the other side to give its argument, its rebuttal to his

case. But Paul shows that every answer to his or every challenge that he has made is groundless. Well, let's read the text and then we'll spend most of the hour explaining it.

Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision? Great in every respect. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God. What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it?

May it never be! Rather, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar, as it is written,

"That You may be justified in Your words, and prevail when You are judged."

But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is He? (I am speaking in human terms.) May it never be! For otherwise, how will God judge the world? But if through my lie the truth of God abounded to His glory, why am I also still being judged as a sinner? And why not say (as we are slanderously reported and as some claim that we say), "Let us do evil that good may come?" Their condemnation is just.

May the Lord bless this reading of His word. Let's bow in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we do thank You for this time together. We come to a rather difficult text, a complicated text. And yet, an important text in the argument that Paul is making. And so, we look to You to bless us, that You might enable us to understand it clearly and make the proper applications to our lives. What a blessing it is and what a comfort it is to know that we are not left to our own in understanding the Bible. That in the Scriptures, we have Your inerrant word, that this book is Your inerrant word. It is revelation. It is Your truth. There is nothing more important than this book. And we can do nothing greater than spending our time studying it and learning Your truth. And You have blessed Your people greatly in that You have given us new hearts. Every believer in Jesus Christ has the capacity to read and understand Your word. We have the faculties for that, whereas before, we were blind. Our hearts were hard. We could not comprehend Your truth. But now we can. And we can do that because we not only have new hearts, but we have a teacher dwelling within our hearts. We have the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, and we

pray that His ministry would go unhindered this morning, that You would prepare our hearts to receive Your truth, and have it applied to our lives. And so to that end, Father, we pray that You would clear our minds of all of the details of life. We live very busy lives. And our thoughts can become cluttered with other things, some important, some not so important. We pray Lord, that in this hour, You'd clear our minds of all of that and enable us to think about the things that we will study, and to comprehend them. This is how we grow in the faith. This is how we become like Christ. It is through the study of Your word. And so, sanctify us through our time of study. Bless it.

We pray for ourselves spiritually in that way, but we also pray, Father, for the material needs that we have, and we have many of those. We are not only spiritual creatures; we're material creatures. We're physical, and we are dependent upon the things around us and one another and ultimately, Father, of course, dependent upon You for every good thing that we have. Because every good and perfect gift comes down from above, from the Father of lights. So we look to You to provide for those who are sick, for those who are recovering from surgery. We pray that You'd bless them, bless their health, bless their spirits, encourage them. Bless those who are weighed down by the various cares of life, those who may be without employment. We pray that You may open doors of opportunity for them, and for all who are in various difficulties. Give them encouragement. Direct their thoughts to Your promises where we have great encouragement. Remind them that all of Your people are firmly in Your hand and You're not going to lose one of us.

Now, the paths of life that are so difficult for us, that bring us through hardships are paths that You have charted out for us, and therefore are good, and that really we should be encouraged by the hardships of life because they are used by You to change us and make us more like Your Son. At the end of it all is great blessing. So help us to gain that kind of perspective.

Bless Your people in many different ways, Father. We look to You for that. We receive every good and perfect gift from You, and so we thank You for that. We thank You for Your faithfulness to us. We are reminded of that in our text this morning. May we understand that from our time of study together. May we come away from our time together this morning with a firmer conviction that You are faithful to Your promises. They never fail. They will not fail. We praise You for

that. Bless our time this evening as we gather here and we take the Lord's supper, and we remember Him and His death for us and remember that He's coming again. That day will come. There is a specific time in the future that has already been set which Jesus Christ will stand up from His throne and He will reenter this world, enter again time and space to conquer the enemy and establish His kingdom. He's coming with His reward. There's great reward for faithfulness. Help us to be faithful men and women and look forward to that day. Help us to be faithful now, to think about the things that we will study, and bless our final hymn as we sing it, that it would prepare our hearts for the things that we will study now. We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

[Message] When you look at Jewish history, you are struck by two things: the terrible persecution the Jews have suffered in the world, and the amazing success that they have had in the world. We all know about anti-Semitism from the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 to the Holocaust of the 20th century. But Jewish achievement is another side of the story.

I read some interesting statistics a few years ago in a book entitled: *Why the Jews?* in which the authors cite impressive figures of Jewish success just in America. Jews who number less than three percent of the population have won 27 percent of the Nobel Prizes awarded to American scientists. They enjoy the same kind of achievements in medicine, law, mathematics, not to mention finance. American Jews are twice as likely as non-Jews to go to college. And it is a similar story in other places down through the ages. The Jewish people occupy a prominent place on the stage of history. In spite of horrible persecution, they have survived and flourished, which is an evidence of God's blessing on them. Even though modern Jewry is largely secular and non-religious, God's hand is still on them as a people, which seems to be a proof that they are His chosen people.

The Bible says that they are, calls them the apple of His eye. And yet, after reading Romans 2, you might wonder if that is still true. Paul wrote that circumcision, which the Jews regarded as their passport to salvation has no power for salvation, and that they are guilty of violating the very law that they taught. As a result, there is fundamentally no difference between the Jew and the Gentile before God. Both have sinned. Both are lost. And both are need of salvation.

Which raises some questions. If that is so, if the Jew is fundamentally no different from the Gentile and just as lost as the Gentile, what then is the advantage of being a Jew, or the profit in circumcision? Have the Jews forfeited their position? Is there a future for Israel? It seemed to the Jews that Paul was denying all of that. So Paul answers those questions in chapter 3. They are actually Jewish objections that are raised in the form of questions, and there are three of these objections. The first is that if Paul is teaching the truth, if what he is saying is correct, then God is unfaithful. He made an eternal covenant with the Jewish nation. If the Jews are lost just as lost as the Gentiles, then God is unfaithful and His word is untrue.

Second, Paul's teaching impugns the justice of God. If it's true, God can't judge sinners. And thirdly, his teaching gives incentive to sin. Now, the point of these questions is: these are the implications of Paul's teaching. But since these are obviously false, since God is faithful and God will judge the unjust, Paul's teaching about the Jews being lost apart from Christ is false.

Well, Paul was well-acquainted with Jewish objections to the gospel. He anticipated them. He had heard them many times during his debates in the synagogues and the marketplaces of the world, so he answers all of these. He makes his argument in the form of what is called a diatribe, which was a well-known form of instruction by teachers and philosophers in the ancient world. In it, a teacher sets up a dialog with his critics or his students. He first states their question or their objection, and then he answers it. That's what Paul does in our text. But first, he corrects the misinterpretation that his teaching denied Jewish advantages and denied the value of circumcision. He raises the question that would've been on the mind of his Jewish opponents. If God treats Jews and Gentiles alike, if circumcision doesn't ensure salvation as the Jew believed that it did, well then what is the advantage of being a Jew? What advantage has the Jew? is the question. Paul there, asking, have you forgotten that God chose Abraham and his descendants from all of the nations and all of the peoples of the earth, have you forgotten that God has given His people circumcision and the covenants and has given them magnificent promises? He's done all of that, and are you saying that there is no advantage in that?

The same question could be asked by a modern churchgoer. Much of what Paul says applies to that individual in principle. And one could ask: is being raised in the church and being baptized and catechized, observing the Lord's supper, of no

value? It's the question of the religious man. But specifically, in our text, it is the question of the Jewish man. Does he have advantages? Paul's answer is yes, he does, and they are great in every way. Paul never denied that the Jew had a privileged position among the nations or that circumcision was a blessing. In fact, he affirmed that in chapter 2 and verse 25 where he wrote, "Indeed circumcision is of value." It has value as a sign of the gracious covenant that God made with Abraham and for recalling the blessings of that covenant, and as a reminder of the faith by which all of those blessings are received. You go back and you read the history of Abraham, and what stands out about that man is that he believed God. And because he believed, it was reckoned to him as righteousness. It was through his faith that he received all of the gracious blessings that God had given to him.

But, if circumcision is misunderstood to be more than a sign, to be a sacrament with saving value, then its value is missed. Just as the value of baptism is missed if a person believes that it saves, or that baptism is necessary for salvation. No one is saved by ceremonies. That is not the gospel. The gospel is very simple. The gospel is that of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. The problem is not with circumcision as an institution. The problem is not with baptism or the Lord's supper as institutions. It is with the circumcised or the baptized person who doesn't believe and isn't obedient, and misunderstands the ordinance, misunderstands the meaning and the significance of the sign.

So, are there advantages to being a Jew? Yes, very many. Those advantages don't save, but they are real advantages. And Paul begins to list them in verse 2. First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God. That is the only blessing that Paul lists here. The fact that he uses the word "first" indicates that he was going to list more. This is the first one on the list, perhaps the most prominent on the list. That is the oracles of God. But he doesn't go beyond that. He doesn't list any more here. Now later in chapter 9, he will do that. Paul gives a fuller list of Jewish advantages. He writes in chapter 9 verses 4 and 5 that they have the adoption as sons and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the law and the temple service and the promises whose are the Father's, and from whom is the Christ, according to the flesh.

The Jews had great advantages, many blessings. But here, Paul doesn't go beyond the first one, which is that Israel was entrusted with the oracles of God. Now that expression, the oracles of God, has been explained in different ways. It has been

explained as broadly as the whole of the Old Testament Scriptures, so the oracles of God are all of the Old Testament, and it has been explained as narrowly as the Messianic promises of Scripture.

The Scriptures are the words of God. We can speak of them as the oracles of God. And having them is like having God's speech, is like having His very utterances. We have, in the Bible, God's words. We have God's revelation. But there's good reason for taking this expression, the oracles of God, as a reference to the promises of Christ, promises of salvation. For example, in Numbers 24 verses 16 and 17, it is used of Balaam's prophecy in which he sees a star coming forth from Jacob. The star is a reference to Christ. It's a messianic promise. The expression is used in Isaiah 28 verse 13 to introduce the messianic prophecy of verse 16 where Christ is spoken of as the cornerstone, and the promise is given of blessing to everyone who believes. God blessed Israel with the Scriptures. He blessed the nation with the law and the prophets, and that is the very words of God. Great blessing.

But here, Paul seems to be focusing on the narrow blessing, the narrow revelation of God's messianic promises, which God entrusted to Israel. So Israel did not lack advantages. It did not lack privileges. The problem was: Israel lacked faith. The people who were entrusted with the oracles of God didn't believe them. They rejected Christ. So in verse 3, Paul asks a question that arises as an objection to his statement about Jewish unbelief. What then? If some did not believe their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it? And the objection is that Paul's teaching, that the Jew is a sinner, like the Gentile, that the Jew is condemned like the Gentile and in need of salvation, that teaching nullifies God's faithfulness. The reason is because God made a covenant with the Jewish people. And in that covenant, He gave them glorious promises of salvation, of a kingdom on the earth. But if there is fundamentally no difference between the Jews and the Gentiles, all of that is empty. That covenant, that promises, they mean nothing. God didn't live up to His word, so God isn't faithful. And the point is, this is the point that the objector is making; we know that that's not true. That cannot be. Therefore, Paul must be wrong in what he's saying.

Paul's answer is: I'm not saying that God is unfaithful. That's an improper implication. You're drawing the wrong conclusion from what I've taught. God is not unfaithful. Man is unfaithful. If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify

the faithfulness of God, will it? He raises that question and then immediately in verse 4 he answers it with an emphatic no. May it never be, or God forbid. That is the force of it. It is a very strong denial. The unbelief of some Jews, and you'll notice he says some. Paul did not say that all Jews were in unbelief. Many Jews had believed. Multitudes had believed. Paul himself is an example of a Jew who had believed. In fact, the church began as a Jewish church. But the unbelief of some and the reality is, it was the unbelief of many or most, Paul is saying, cannot invalidate the privileges that were given to Israel. That unbelief cannot make empty the promises that God gave to the nation. God is faithful to His word. He must be faithful, and that is the point that Paul is emphasizing here.

Rather, he says, let God be found true, though every man be found a liar. Calvin called this statement of Paul's, that God is true, the primary axiom of all Christian philosophy. In other words, this is where we begin. This is our starting point. This is our axiom. This is an immutable, inflexible, inviolable law. God cannot lie. He cannot break His word. His promises cannot fail. God is true, and He is always faithful. If God were brought into a law court, and every human being, every member of the human race were brought into that court of law and gave testimony against God, Paul is saying God would still be true and every man a liar. If every man, woman, and child who ever lived proved to be unfaithful, still, God would be true, and God would be faithful. Nothing about man, nothing about the circumstances outside of God can affect Him and change His will. God never changes. He always remains true to Himself, therefore He always remains true to His word, always remains true to His promises.

And Paul proves that from Scripture. He quotes Psalm 51 verse 4. That you may be justified in your words and prevail when you are judged. Psalm 51, as you know, is David's great confession of sin with Bathsheba. A full quote of that verse, of Psalm 51:4 is: "Against You, You only, I have sinned/And done what is evil in Your sight." And then, David adds that You may be justified in Your words and prevail when You are judged. Now, in making that statement at the beginning of the verse, David is saying all sin is against God. He's saying the sin I committed against Bathsheba, the sin I committed against Uriah, those were sins against those people. He's not denying that. But ultimately, all of that is sin against God, and that's what makes it particularly heinous. What he did, his sin, is evil. And yet, it also serves

God in that it proves Him to be completely righteous and just in His judgments. There was no doubt that David's sin with Bathsheba proved that God's condemnation of him was right.

To look at his sin, was to demonstrate that God was righteous in His judgments. He did a terrible thing. But what he did, did vindicate God's word. It showed the justice of His verdict. The point that Paul is making here, and what He is doing, it seems, is reasoning analogically, that is, by comparison, and saying that if man's injustice cannot detract from God's justice, then by analogy, by comparison, neither can man's unfaithfulness make void God's faithfulness. In fact, it only proves it. We actually see the greatness of God's faithfulness against the greatness of man's unfaithfulness. Nothing can prevent God's promises to Israel from being fulfilled, not even Israel's unfaithfulness. That demonstrates how faithful God really is, how true to His word He really is. Paul did not teach that the Jews did not have privileges and promises. They had great privileges. They had magnificent promises, and he didn't teach that God failed His people. Israel failed Him. But God will still keep His promises to them. That is His nature, always to be faithful, even when His people are unfaithful.

Now, that has direct application to Israel and the future of the Jewish people. But, by application, it has a great deal to say to us. Because it underscores God's faithfulness to us. If God made unconditional promises to Israel that turned out to be conditional because they fail, what's that going to say about the promises He's made to us, to the church? Is He going to be faithful to us only because we're faithful? The assurance we have in this statement to Israel about Israel is that God, who is faithful to that people, will be faithful to this people. He's faithful to His people. No greater example of that or illustration of that than the Book of Hosea, is all about the unconditional love of God for His people, specifically for Israel. And there, in Hosea 11:8, He asks: "How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I surrender you, O Israel?" He cannot. He will not. At the same time, He cannot bless unbelief. He blesses faith. How can He bless a people in unbelief? That's the question we might ask. How can He not give them up because of their unbelief?

He can change their unbelief to belief. He can restore the Jewish people to faithfulness, and He will do that in the future. Paul will develop this point later in Romans chapter 11. In fact, chapters 9, 10, and 11 answer the question: what

happened to Israel? What about Israel? And there, he will explain all of that. God will give Israel a new heart. That is the promise of the New Covenant in Jeremiah 31 and in Ezekiel 36. The future of Israel is one of repentance and forgiveness. That's also the promise of Zechariah chapter 12 and verse 10 where God declares that He will pour out His Spirit on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. That's the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, the Spirit that gives grace and will bring that people to prayer, to petition, to repentance. They will look on Him whom they pierced, whom they crucified. They will mourn over Him, Zechariah says, as one mourns for an only son. It's the deepest kind of mourning that one could have, the loss of the only son. What grief, what sorrow that would produce. And that's the kind of sorrow that will occur within the nation. When they understand what happened in their history and what the rejection of Christ meant, they will mourn, and the unrepentant house of Israel will become repentant and be saved. Paul writes in Romans 11:26, "And so all Israel will be saved. The deliverer will come from Zion and will remove ungodliness from Jacob." Remove ungodliness from Jacob. Paul is not saying that Israel will be saved in unbelief as unbelievers, in spite of their denial of Christ. No, that will be changed. Ungodliness will be removed, the same way it is removed from the Gentile, which is the whole theme of the Book of Romans: justification by faith, by grace. They will believe in Christ. They will be justified.

Well, that's the future that Israel has, and what that means is God will supply what He requires of Israel in order to fulfill His promises to the nation. Augustin put it well in his prayer: give what You command and command what You will. I like that statement. I like the way he puts it. What he's saying is: God, You command me to do whatever You will. Command me to do whatever You wish, but give what You command because I cannot do it any other way. God commands faith, but the only way that sinners can have faith is if God first gives the faith. And He has done that for every one of you who have believed in Jesus Christ, and He will do that for Israel. God is faithful to His word, to His promises. In spite of man's sin and unbelief, in fact, the faithfulness of God is magnified against the unfaithfulness of man. Paul has been saying that.

And we can illustrate that in a number of ways. We see it true in our own experience. If you are ever in the market for a diamond, or you have been in the

market for a diamond, then you know that the way to do that, the way to obtain one is you go to the jeweler and state your desire for some diamonds, and he'll lay them out and give you a different array of choices, and perhaps take one of them and he'll hold it up to the light, and you'll watch it sparkle and see the beauty of it. But to really bring out the beauty of the stone, he will set it on a piece of black velvet. The dull, dark background highlights the bright character and beauty of the diamond. We see the glory of the diamond because of the contrast. It's heightened in that way. Or, if you're right-handed, try writing your name with your left hand. The clumsy attempt confirms that what you may have taken for granted is certainly true, and that is the strength and the dexterity of your right hand. At least, I'm speaking from my own experience. I could barely scribble anything with my left hand.

What that illustrates when I seek to do it is what I have in my right hand. We see the same thing in affliction. Affliction magnifies and causes us to appreciate the blessings of joy and peace. The end, or the second part of *Pilgrim's Progress*, and you may, if you've read it, know the structure of that story that Bunyan wrote about the Christian life. It begins with Christian leaving the City of Destruction and his family pleading with him not to go. He leaves anyway. He runs toward that wicked gate where the cross is, seeking life, life, eternal life. The second half is of his family leaving the City of Destruction, believing, and going forward. And his wife, Christiana, as she sets out on that pilgrimage, makes the statement: "The bitter is before the sweet, and that also will make the sweet the sweeter." She understood that the pilgrimage is going to be hard. The life before is going to be very hard. It's going to be bitter, but that bitterness is going to make the sweet, that is, the blessings that come, all the sweeter. It seems like a paradox, but it is true, that we are able to appreciate the sweet because of the bitter. If all were sweet, if everything you tasted were sweet, it'd be dull. You wouldn't enjoy it. It's the experience of the bitter that heightens the pleasure of the sweet. And in the same way, we understand joy better in contrast to sorrow.

And the same principle is at play here in our text. In the same way, sin magnifies God's righteousness. God's righteousness is seen more clearly because of man's transgression. The increase of sin magnifies the grace of God. And the faithlessness of man heightens the faithfulness of God. So, Paul is not teaching that God's word failed, or that God broke faith with His promises. Man failed, not God.

Jewish unbelief does not make God a liar. That's impossible. Jewish unbelief has actually demonstrated more clearly the faithfulness of God.

This raises two more objections. The first, that if Paul's teaching is true, it impugns, or it undermines the justice of God. And secondly, his teaching actually promotes sin. If it is true that sin actually serves to exhibit God's righteousness, then God cannot punish sin because it actually benefits Him. Verse 5. "But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is He?" In other words, if it is true that the more unrighteous the criminal is, the more righteous the judge appears, then God can't punish the criminal because he is benefitting God. It would be unfair of God to inflict wrath on those who magnify His righteousness by their unrighteousness. Because by their unbelief, by their unrighteousness, they are actually serving God and benefitting Him.

This is basically the argument of the questions that are raises in verses 7 and 8 as well. The objector says: "But if through my lie the truth of God abounded to His glory, why am I also still being judged as a sinner?" These are the objections that Paul heard during his debates with Jews in the synagogues. And the force of the objection is: Paul can't be right because the logical outworking of his argument is absurd. It means that sin is good because it serves God and benefits Him. In fact, his teaching actually promotes sin because if unbelief serves to magnify God's faithfulness, then let us do evil, that good may come. That is a statement of what is known as antinomianism, which is word that's made up of two Greek words: *anti* and *nomos*, which means against law. And it refers to the idea that it's not necessary for Christians to keep moral law, and this is the rationalization of it. We can put it something like this: evil behavior produces a good result, such as revealing God's character or promoting His glory, then we should increase evil in order to increase good. The end justifies the means. That is completely contrary to the gospel.

Paul will deal with that later at the end of chapter 5 and the beginning of chapter 6. Salvation is not only deliverance from the penalty of sin; it is deliverance from the power of sin. The child of God is a new creature in Christ with a new nature, a new disposition with new desires. He or she no longer desires sin. We struggle with it, it's true, and Paul will deal with that in Romans 7, but we are fundamentally new and different from what we were, and so we cannot behave the

way we once did. We possessed the Holy Spirit, who is our guide, who does not guide us into unrighteousness, does not guide us into sin, but guides us into righteousness.

Now, there may have been people in Paul's day who claimed to be followers of the apostle, and who had distorted his teaching, and turned God's faithfulness into an excuse for license. But here, we have the objection of the legalist. And it is a common objection to grace. You have probably heard it. Salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, can't be true, because if that is true, if everything is a gift, if we are saved apart from our works, apart from any effort on our part, and God's people are absolutely secure, grace keeps them saved. Well then, people just go on sinning. They have no incentive not to sin. Grace and security actually are incentives to sin. And that is the very point that Paul's opponent is making here. We know sin is evil. It's not good. Therefore, Paul's teaching is wrong because it leads to license. It promotes antinomianism. And again, all of this is intended to overthrow Paul's charge that the Jews have sinned like the Gentiles. They are guilty before God and justly condemned, just as the Gentiles are, and equally in need of salvation. They objected to that. That cannot be true, they were saying, because if Jews are no different from Gentiles, and are not saved because of God's covenant, then God is not faithful to His promises. To which Paul responded: no, God is faithful. Man is unfaithful. In fact, his unfaithfulness actually demonstrates God's faithfulness. The Jewish counterclaim is: that can't be because it would mean that sin is good, and therefore, God can't judge sinners.

Paul's response is to dismiss all of this as mere sophistry, false reasoning, false conclusions that have been drawn from his teaching. He calls this last accusation, the one that he promoted sin, a slander. It's unworthy of a response. He gives no more of a response to it than that. Paul didn't teach that, and he condemns those who said that he did, and condemns those who practice such things. The logical conclusion of his teaching is not: let us sin. It is not: God can't punish sinners because their sin ultimately serves to glorify Him. His response to that is in verse 6. He states: "May it never be, for otherwise how will God judge the world?" In other words, we know God is going to judge the world. The Bible clearly teaches that. Therefore, the objection is obviously false, and it is obviously a wrong implication from what I have been teaching.

Now, this is not a lengthy refutation. We might have expected that from Paul. We might've expected him to develop an argument for the final judgment, or try to prove that in some way, or get into a more detailed response to show how the claims of the opponents were wrong. He doesn't do that. He simply dismisses that and does so by affirming that the judgment to come is true. But then, he didn't need to get into an involved discussion on that. He didn't need to prove it because the Jews, to whom he is addressing this, knew that it was true. They knew that from Scripture. It is taught very clearly throughout the Word of God. Even the Gentile knows that there is going to be judgment. The Gentile has that inner conviction, as Paul pointed out in chapter 1 and verse 32 of universal judgment. And so, recognizing that as a certainty, recognizing the judgment to come as a certainty, any objection to it is obviously false.

John Murray made a statement in regard to all of this, in regard to Paul's very simple response. And the statement is: the answer to objections is proclamation. The answer to objections is not always argumentation. Sometimes, and ultimately always, it is proclamation. That's true because the Word of God is true. It is light. We can't do better than it. It is living. It is powerful. It is sharper than any two-edged sword. The Spirit of God uses it to convict men of sin. That doesn't mean that we shouldn't reason with men, we shouldn't enter into discussions with them. We should, but our reasoning should be governed by Scripture. And ultimately, it is our answer. Our answer is proclamation.

So, the force of Paul's response here is, if I can put it in the simplest terms: judgment is a certainty. There's no denying that. It's a false objection that the Jew would raise. Paul is not denying that. That's not the implication of what he's saying. Judgment is a certainty, and the Jew has sinned. Just like the Gentile, he has broken the covenant. He has violated the very law that he taught. That's obvious. That's clear. Therefore, Jews are condemned just as Gentiles are. Having privileges does not save. They had many privileges. But those privileges must be appropriated. They must be accompanied by faith. That's the proclamation. It applies to the churchgoing Gentile as well as it does to the religious Jew. Going to church, hearing the word of God taught is a privilege.

The person who has been raised in a church and heard the things of God's word Sunday after Sunday, and witnessed baptisms in the Lord's supper has great advantages. But if the light of God's word and the ordinances is not received, if it's

not believed, then regardless of the privileges, regardless of the opportunities, regardless of all of the blessings, that person is lost. There's only one way of salvation, and that is faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God who died for sinners and bore the penalty of sin in their place. That is the full proclamation. Not just that mankind is lost, Jew and Gentile alike. That's an important part of the proclamation. Judgment is coming. But the full proclamation is that there is salvation for all who believe, Jew and Gentile alike. That's the good news. It is God's promise, and God is faithful to His promises. Paul has given that assurance.

But all of the Scriptures give that assurance. God is faithful to His word. He has given promises. Those promises are great, and we can rely upon them. Listen to just some of them. Isaiah 55:1. "Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters, and you who have no money. Come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money, without cost." That's a picture of salvation. He's saying: come for the most basic things. Come for the great luxuries. Come and buy without money. It's free. It's a gift. Come and receive it. Matthew chapter 11 and verse 20. "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." John 6:35. "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst." John 6:37. "The one who comes to Me, I will certainly not cast out." John 7:37. "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink." Come believe. That's the invitation. That's the gospel.

Do you have a spiritual hunger and thirst? Are you weary from sin? Are you weighed down with guilt? If so, then come to Christ. He is the Savior. He has died for sinners. He has paid the penalty, and He lifts the guilt from everyone who believes in Him, and lifts it from all without qualification. Everyone who thirsts, all who are weary, everyone who comes to Christ in faith is received by Him. None are rejected, none are cast out. All are forgiven and given eternal life at the moment of faith. Well, that's God's promise. It's an unqualified promise, and He is faithful to His word. His promises cannot fail. They will not fail toward Israel. His grace will overcome their hardness of heart, and it will bless everyone who comes to Him, everyone who believed, regardless of how deserving you may be.

So if you're here without Christ, look to Him. Come to Him. Believe in Him. The moment that you do, you receive complete forgiveness and life everlasting. May God help you to do that. May He bring you to Himself. And you who have believed,

rejoice in what He has done. Rejoice in the fact that He's faithful to His every promise, and He's faithful to you now, and will be to the end. The God who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. Let's pray.

[Prayer] Father, we do thank You for that great truth, that You are faithful. Objections can be raised to Your grace. Arguments can be made that sinners use to justify themselves, and to convince themselves that they are safe, and all is well. Father, nothing can overturn the reality of sin, the reality of condemnation, and nothing can overturn the reality of Your promises and Your faithfulness to them. And we thank You for that. We thank You that You are faithful to Your word. We are thankful that You sent Your Son into the world to die for sinners, and You bring them to Yourself by Your grace. We thank You for Your –