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Romans

For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner? Romans 3:7

A third line of reasoning based on man's unclear thinking is given. "For" looks back to the previous two examples. Paul is making his case by citing arguments people either had or could give to justify both their sin and why God should overlook it.

"If the truth of God has increased through my lie..." God, throughout His word as well as through the moral compass he has placed within man, lets us know that sin will be punished. In punishing sin, God is shown to be the holy Being that He is. His punishment of our sin because of His holiness demonstrates that He is truthful in His judgments; He says He will punish and then He follows through with it. This validates the truth of God to us and thus brings Him glory.

As this is true and God is proven truthful and glorified through my lying, then how can He punish me? I have only increased His glory... see the great thing I have done! This is the faulty reasoning of the one attempting to justify his perverse actions.

There are several points which have to be considered in this. The first is that the lying is actually intended to do the opposite of what is claimed here. Lying, in and

of itself, is intended to protect and elevate self, not God. When one lies, it is motivated by and promotes self-serving interests, not another's glory.

Secondly, if "the truth of God is increased through my lie to His glory" because He has promised to judge sin, then if He doesn't judge my sin, the result would be that the truth of God isn't increased through my lie at all! The question, "Why am I also still judged as a sinner" is invalidated by the faulty premise of the question in the first place.

Finally, God doesn't need man to be glorified. He is glorious in and of Himself. The "glory" which is reasoned by the one proposing the argument is the glory of God in the eyes of His creation, not God's innate glory. Likewise, the truth of God isn't "increased" in God - God is truth. Rather the increase is found in our realization of it. Again, God's character isn't dependent on man and He isn't dependent on what we think about Him. Our perceptions of Him don't change His truth or His glory.

The answer to, "Why am I still judged as a sinner?" is found in the fact that I am a sinner and I am deserving of punishment based on my sin. To attempt to justify sin by using faulty reasoning can only added to my judgment, not somehow fool God into throwing up His hands and overlooking my misdeeds.

Life application: There is no excuse for sin and all sin will be dealt with through punishment. As you go about your day, don't try to rationalize away your wrongdoings. Once you have accepted that sin necessitates a penalty, then take the time to give God praise for what He has done for you in Jesus. The cross of Calvary was a high price for the sins we so easily dismiss.

And why not say, "Let us do evil that good may come"—as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their condemnation is just.

Romans 3:8

"And why not say" is Paul's conclusion to the previous concepts which he has laid before his readers. Is God's faithfulness nullified by the unfaithfulness of man? Does man's unrighteousness demonstrate the righteousness of God? Is the truth of God increased through my lie to His glory? Each question and its answer has led Paul to say that if the answers are "yes" then we might as well say "let us do evil that good may come."

This line of argumentation is known as *reductio ad absurdum* or "reduction to absurdity." If God is somehow positively affected by whatever evil man does, then let us take the most evil course of all. The idea is that when we commit temporal evil the result will be the greater good of glorifying God. If so, then no matter what we do the outcome justifies the means.

Unfortunately, this means that stealing would not only be acceptable, but a good thing. Personal property would have no value. Murder would magnify God and therefore it would be the right course of action in any circumstance. Adultery would then be a noble thing. Getting married would simply be a step towards many partners - all to bring about a better purpose. For every sin we commit, the glory of God would shine forth all the more brightly.

The absurdity of such thoughts is self-evident, but such is the confused state of the unclear thinker. They only see the results of the first half of their argument, but they have fail to think the entire scenario through. As evident as it is, this is the state which the world is rapidly heading. As one-line arguments fill the cyber-world of Facebook and Twitter, our ability to reason out important issues is diminishing.

As Paul saw in his own time, those around him misunderstood, either unintentionally or intentionally, his comments about the grace of God and reported that Paul had actually affirmed that this was what Christianity held. But he, noting that God's grace is magnified through the repentant sinner, never went to such extremes. For every note of how gracious God is, there is a note of warning that those who call on Jesus need to abstain from willful sin. Grace, to Paul and the other apostles, never meant a license to commit iniquity.

The Christian world of today though is turning away from the truth of the Bible and is actually following the absurd course Paul lays out. Homosexuals preach from the pulpit. Perversion of all sorts is openly condoned by the church and yet to them the grace of God is expected to cover such unrepentant actions. As Paul says, when this attitude is seen "their condemnation is just." God will judge and condemn those who hold to such flawed views. They failed to use the brains He gave them and their actions will result in an eternal swim in the Lake of Fire. Let us heed the Proverb -

The first to present his case seems right, till another comes forward and questions him. (18:17)

Life application: An argument which sounds fine on the surface, such as allowing abortion for rape or incest is found false when it is completely thought through. However, most people hear the initial argument and stop with that, agreeing that the murder of the unborn is somehow just. When you are presented with an argument, make sure to think its consequences through to the end. When you do, you may find that what originally seemed as right as rain is actually as twisted as a tornado.

What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. Romans 3:9

"What then?" What is the result of the question posed in 3:1 & 2? "What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God."

Paul noted that there is both advantage and profit in being a Jew and being circumcised. However, he then laid out the case that if their actions didn't correspond with the sign they bore that God would be proven just in His judgment of them. He also showed that His faithfulness isn't negated by their unfaithfulness and that His receiving glory through their unrighteous actions gave them no excuse in acting in an unrighteous manner.

And so he asks "Are we better than they?" In the end, are Jews better than the gentiles? The answer, "Not at all." In chapter 1, he proved that the gentiles are bound under sin and then in chapters 2 and 3 he showed that the Jew are also - "For we have previously charged..."

The charges have been made and they have been fully substantiated. "All are under sin." This is a truth not just found in Paul's philosophy, but is found in Scripture itself. As Paul notes in Galatians 3:22 - "But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe."

Yes, Paul wrote Galatians, but he is citing "Scripture" which at that time consisted only of the Old Testament. The proof of Paul's claim comes from the earliest pages of the Bible and continues right up until its last paragraph. Something more would be needed - Jesus. As chapter 3 unfolds, we will see this clearly.

Life application: God has shown in His word that all people are bound under sin. This doesn't merely mean that we are sinners individually, but that we are under a broad kingdom of sin. We are trapped in it and there is only one exit. Take time to read Jesus' words from John 14:1-6 and then stand fast on the truth that Jesus is the only way to be reconciled to God. Then, determine in your heart not to waffle on this conviction when confronted by those who challenge it.