

The New Man in My Mirror

Romans 3:19-31

There is a song that I remember from my youngest days. I remember my grandfather sitting on his front porch, singing a song entitled, “The Old Gray Mare.” I am not sure if it was just a line from the song, or if it was the chorus, but a portions of that song says, “*The old gray mare, she ain't what she used to be.*” Well, my friends, if you are saved this evening the very same things can be said about you!

2Co 5:17 Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

As we read the book of Romans, and in particular verses 9-18 of this chapter, we find that man is a totally depraved creature. There is absolutely no good in him at all! Everything he touches is tarnished by the sin that fills his being and he is wretched in the sight of God. As we consider these things we quickly realize that the Scripture was talking about the man we see in the mirror. Well, as the text continues to unfold before us, Paul continues his line of thinking, but he shifts directions on us. He gives us a concluding thought concerning the old man and he begins to talk about that new creature that Jesus makes when He saves the sinner. It is that new, saved fellow that we want to consider this morning. So, with that in mind, let's consider this passage that we just read, and think for a while about The New Man In My Mirror. And as we will see, he ain't what he used to be!

I. He Was a Ruined Man

Rom 3:19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

Rom 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

A. He Was Declared a Sinner by the Law

Because the Law of God exposes all the things that man is guilty of, man stands exposed as a sinner and condemned by the Law! J.B. Phillips said, “It is the straightedge of the Law that shows us just how crooked we are.” No one can look into the Word of God and miss the truth of what Paul is saying!

Rom 3:19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

It is the mirror of God's Word that reveals just how wretched we really are.

B. He Was Damned As a Sinner by the Law

Rom 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

God gave the Law to man as a tool. It was given to show man that he is a sinner and to drive man to Jesus.

Gal 3:24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

Gal 3:25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

If the Law's entire reason for existing could be summed up in one statement, it would have to be that the Law was given to show man that he is guilty in the eyes of God and is in need of a Savior!

Jas 1:23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

Jas 1:24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

Jas 1:25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

The Law is like a mirror. It can show you just how dirty your face is, but it cannot be used to clean you up. Now, think about this just a second. You do not take the mirror and rub it on your face to get clean. The mirror exists to point you to the water. So it is with the Law of the Lord. The Law cannot clean us up, but it can create a hunger in us for the One Who can: the Lord Jesus Christ. The new man in my mirror:

II. He Is a Redeemed Man

Rom 3:21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

Notice the little conjunction "but". It denotes a change of thought. It stands as a worthy doorkeeper to the thoughts that will follow. After reading the preceding verses, I realize that I certainly was a ruined man, yet I thank the Lord that there is a change that has taken place and it is represented by that little word "but." Pay attention to those little words in your Bible. Remember, even the largest door turns on a relatively small hinge! These few verses that we are about to look into now are jammed packed full of theological truth. Donald Gray Barnhouse called them, "*The heart of the Bible.*" Reformer Martin Luther labeled them as "*the marrow of theology.*" This is, perhaps, the deepest theological sea in the New Testament. We can never do them justice in the few minutes we have here this morning, but let's glean what we can nonetheless. Notice these traits about the new man in my mirror.

A. He has Experienced Faith

Rom 3:21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed

by the law and the prophets;

Rom 3:22 Even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

Rom 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Man has a very big problem. He is a sinner. Paul presents this fact loud and clear in the first three chapters of Romans. Man's problem is that he is lost and he cannot do anything in and of himself to get to God. The Bible tells us that man cannot roll up his sleeves and work his way to God. He cannot be good enough to please God.

Mat 5:20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

And yet, God the Father demands perfect righteousness to enter His heaven.

Mat 5:48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

You see, man will never be right with God by virtue of his own efforts.

Rom 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

When the Bible says that we "*come short of the glory of God.*" It means that we literally miss the mark. The tense of this word suggests that this is an ongoing state of affairs. In other words, no matter how good we may get, we will still be missing the mark and falling far short of the glory of God! You can't get to God on your own!

Therefore, God allows men to be made righteous by them placing their faith in His Son, the Lord Jesus. What these verses are telling us is that salvation doesn't come by works or by being good. Salvation comes solely by faith. You cannot buy your way to Heaven. You cannot be good enough to get to Heaven. You cannot work hard enough to get to Heaven. However, you can believe in Jesus, be saved by grace, be declared righteous by the Heavenly Father and go to Heaven with nothing but faith to show for it!

B. He has Experienced Freedom

Rom 3:24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

This verse introduces us to two great theological words and they are the words "*justify*" and "*redemption.*" The word "*justify*" means to "*To declare one not guilty, or to make one as he ought to be.*" In the biblical sense, it means that God, in His power and in His grace declares us to be righteous and worthy of a relationship with Him. The word "*redemption*" means "*to set at liberty after the payment of a ransom price.*"

To put it all together, when we received Jesus as our Savior, God applied the price that Jesus had paid on the cross to our account and declared us righteous. He thereby freed us from the condemnation and the consequences of our sins. He very literally set us free!

In Jesus, I am free from the need to try and please God. He is already pleased with me because of what Jesus did at the cross. I no longer have to try to be good to get God to let me go to Heaven. He has already given me His own righteousness and in His eyes this morning, I am as positionally holy as He Himself is! That is a blessing!

Here is the kicker! The Bible says in this verse that all of this happens “*freely*”. This word literally means “*without a cause*”. Basically, God gave us His righteousness even when we did not deserve to receive it. He gave it to us even though we could never earn it or pay Him back for it. He gave it to us without a single cause, or without any strings attached! There is no explaining why God saved a bunch of Hell deserving sinners. The only two words that enter my mind are “*Love*” and “*Grace*”.

I know that I do not understand all there is to know about salvation and redemption, but I am glad that I can experience it even though I don't understand it!

There are lot's of things I don't fully understand. I don't understand how electrons are created by a turbine and flow through wires until they make a light glow, but I don't sit in the dark because I don't understand. I can't figure out how a black cow eats green grass and gives white milk, but I don't do without dairy products. Even though my knowledge of God's methods and gifts is incomplete, I still enjoy the benefits of those things nonetheless!

C. He has Experienced Forgiveness

Rom 3:25 Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

Rom 3:26 To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

These verses tell us that Jesus is the “*propitiation*”. This is a theological word that means “*An appeasement, or a satisfying.*” This word comes from the Hebrew word which was used of the cover of the ark of the covenant in the Holy of Holies, which was sprinkled with the blood of the expiatory victim on the annual day of atonement (this rite signifying that the life of the people, the loss of which they had merited by their sins, was offered to God in the blood as the life of the victim, and that God by this ceremony was appeased and their sins expiated.

What this means for you and me is that when we trusted Jesus as our Savior, God requires nothing further from us. He is absolutely satisfied! Because of this, He has forgiven us by the “*remission of sins that are past*”. The word “remission” means “*to pass over, to disregard.*” When we trusted Christ, God put our sins behind Him, and has forever cleansed us and forgiven us.

Psa 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, *so* far hath he removed our transgressions from us.

Mic 7:19 He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

Col 2:13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

Col 2:14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

1Jn 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

As you can see, glory to God above, the man in my mirror isn't the man he used to be. How about the person who looks back at you? What are you trusting in this morning for your salvation? Is it in Jesus and His shed blood? Or, is it some religious experience? Have you experienced the glory and the power of the new birth in your life? For several weeks I have been teaching in Sunday school the bad news that man is a hell bound sinner who deserves nothing better. Today, I am glad that I can share the good news of eternal life through the Lord Jesus Christ. Are you saved this morning? If not, or you are not sure, let us help you. Please ask us about those classes before you leave today. Finally I would like you to see that the new man in my mirror:

III. He Is a Righteous Man

A. He has a New Relationship with the Law

Rom 3:27 Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.

Rom 3:28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

According to Paul, in these verses, the new man knows that he isn't saved by keeping the Law. He is saved by pure faith. Therefore, there is nothing about which he can boast in the matter of his salvation. Instead of man taking the credit for something with which he had nothing to do, all glory and honor must be given to the Lord. He knows that the Law was just a tool used by the Lord to bring that man to Himself. He isn't trying to please God, He knows that God is already pleased. He isn't trying to earn point with God, he knows that God is already completely satisfied. He knows that His salvation is complete in the Person of the Lord Jesus and He glorifies God on that account! He has passed from the state of salvation having to do with do's and realizes that it is done!

Imagine for a moment that there are 2 chairs sitting in an empty room. One chair is labeled “Do” and the other is labeled “Done”. Those two chairs represent every religion and belief system in the world. Every system is a “Do” or a “Done”.

The “Do” religions are all based on the notion that man must "do" something to please the Lord. Such as: pray, join a church, give money, be a good person, make a sacrifice, make a pilgrimage, wear certain clothing, keep the Ten Commandments, go to Mass, etc. Although all the “Do” religions may seem different from the outside, they all require their followers to "do" something in order to earn salvation. Religions like Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Shintoism, Mormonism, The Jehovah's Witnesses and Roman Catholicism are all examples of “Do” religions.

In short, every religion in the world is a “Do” religion, except one. Christianity is a “Done” religion! Those who are truly saved haven't done anything and aren't required to do anything, because Jesus has already done everything that is necessary!

Now, every person in this room is sitting in one of those two chairs. You are either in the “Do” chair where you are doing things to get to Heaven, or you are in the “Done” chair where you know that everything has already been done for you. Be honest with God and with yourself this morning. Which chair are you really sitting in right now? Your eternity hinges on your answer.

B. He has a New Relationship with the Lord

Rom 3:29 *Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:*

Rom 3:30 *Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.*

Now, because of our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, we are brought into a right relationship with the Heavenly Father. Now, He isn't just the Father of our Lord, He is our Father and we are His sons and daughters at this very moment.

1Jn 3:1 *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.*

1Jn 3:2 *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

He has saved us, justified us, accepted us in His Son and even now He awaits us in our new home in Heaven. We are no longer strangers, we are family. We have been reconciled to the Lord, and we have been brought into His presence by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ!

2Co 5:18 *And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;*

2Co 5:19 *To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.*

C. He has a New Relationship with Life

Rom 3:31 Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

In this verse, the great Apostle asks a final question. If we are saved by faith apart from the Law, then does this make the Law of God null and void. In other words, can we just throw out the Law and live as we please if we are really saved by grace?

The answer?

God Forbid!

What he is saying is that our salvation does not do away with the Law. Instead, our salvation establishes, or fixes in place, the Law of God. How is this true? Well, the Lord used the Law to teach us that we were sinners. He used the Law to show us that we were doomed without Him. He used the Law to establish our need. Now that we are saved, the Lord begins to live this Law through our lives. The difference is that we are not living the Law to be saved. We are not living the Law because we have to. We just naturally begin to live out the spirit of the Law of the Lord because He has placed His Spirit in us and because He has made us to be partakers of His divine nature.

2Pe 1:3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

2Pe 1:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

In the simplest of terms, we begin to live like God and His Son when we are saved!

Please do not misunderstand me. I am not referring to sinless perfection. I am referring to the fact that Jesus changes every life He saves by grace! He puts a desire and a longing within our hearts to love Him, to live for Him and to do the things that please Him, honor Him and bring glory unto Him. We show the world that people can live for God, by letting God live in them!

When I look in my mirror, the same face that has looked at me for 57 years still looks back. However, I know that the old man of sin has been changed into a new man by the power of the Lord Jesus Christ. I don't make that claim with the least bit of boasting. I know that there is a lot of room for improvement in my life. However, I do know where I was when the Lord found me. I know what He did for me when He saved me. I know the changes He has made in my life over the years.

Now, let me ask you this question: Has the Lord made a change in you? Are you saved? Which chair are you sitting in this morning?

If the Lord has shown you that you are in the wrong chair, wouldn't tonight be a good time to change seats? He is still saving souls by grace and He will save you if you will come to Him. I don't your need or your heart, but God does and so do you. If there is a spiritual need in your life, let Jesus meet it for you now as we go into this time of invitation.