

Romans 3; Lord's Day 2

ACCURATE KNOWLEDGE OF SELF

- I. My wretched misery.
 - A. Misery is the experience of distresses.
 - B. Misery indicates there is something wrong; misery is not the cause, but the result.
 - 1. God gives misery as a consequence of sin.
 - 2. Unless we see the cause of our misery and treat it, there will be no deliverance and recovery.
 - C. Aware of his misery, natural man uses the standard of himself and thus only increases his misery.
- II. The correct standard for evaluating misery and seeing its cause is God Himself.
 - A. The standard of God is Himself, which is revealed in His law which identifies what is right and what is wrong.
 - 1. Thus the law shows that man's misery is because man is violating God and His determination of right and wrong.
 - 2. God's law is good (I Tim. 1:8), so the problem is not with the law.
 - 3. Jesus believed in the law and did not come to destroy it (Matt. 5:17).
 - B. God's law, reflecting His own perfection, requires one thing: love (Rom. 13:10).
 - 1. We are to love God supremely with our all, all the time, which goes deeper than the appearance of good.
 - 2. The demand of love examines the heart, the motive of the mind and sub-consciousness.
 - 3. True love of God is reflected in loving our neighbor as ourselves.
- III. Just as the bright sunshine shows all the dust, so the law shows me the deep-seated cause of my misery is me.
 - A. The correct identification of me: I have a natural proneness to hate God and my neighbor.
 - 1. We actually hate (not just love less) God.
 - 2. Anyone who does not fear and love God has no respect for his neighbor.
 - 3. No one is righteous; all have sinned and come short (Rom. 3:10,23); man's heart is desperately wicked (Jer. 17:9); spiritually dead in sin (Eph. 2:1) living in malice and envy, hated and hating (Titus 3:3).
 - B. The true believer is the only one with the ability to admit honestly his natural and constant depravity.
 - 1. Grace breaks our pride, so this admission is a way of life, not just a doctrinal statement.
 - 2. Godly sorrow for sin characterizes the true believer.
 - C. Man tells us to avoid doctrine and just focus on love, but we cannot do that either.
 - D. But there is no reason to despair, for the same faith which acknowledges sin, also acknowledges justification (5:1 and 8:1).