

UNFAITHFULNESS WITH OUR ADVANTAGE WILL NOT COMPROMISE

GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS

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Romans 3:1-8 (Psalm 51)

Psalm 51:1-4, 15-17...King Jesus, we thank You for Your perfect sacrifice in our place that satisfied God's just anger against us, so our hearts may be circumcised by Your Spirit for our repentance of sins and for the praise of our Father in heaven. AMEN.

How many folks claim to be Christian but unrepentantly continue to sin thinking they are safe; because, they're baptized, go to church, or read their Bible? For example, how many would justify: voting for an immoral politician to uphold moral laws; fudging on taxes to give more money to charity; misrepresenting themselves on a ministry application to serve Jesus; attending a same sex union ceremony to be a sign of Christian tolerance; or participating in a mild form of idolatry with pagans to share the Gospel? Is it okay to engage in unrighteousness to magnify God's righteousness? Is it acceptable in God's eyes to "do evil that good may result"? I doubt that such thinking and behaving is Christian. These examples fail to characterize aspects of "the obedience of faith" to which we are called. Instead, they demonstrate unfaithfulness, and God is just to condemn them, especially in those who profess to be Members of His People.

Romans 3:1-8 concludes Paul's argument in chapter 2 by anticipating the question a Jew, or anyone outwardly identifying with God's People, may ask regarding Paul's statement in Romans 2:28-29. Paul's response helps us understand that, even if we identify ourselves as Members of God's People, we are subject to God's condemnation if we refuse to repent of our unfaithfulness and if we continue to live complacently thinking that our evil sinning is excusable before God.

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1. **The Advantage** [of being part of the people who receive God's promises...] (*Verses 1-2*)
 - a. The question: "If a true Member of God's People is one inwardly by the circumcision of the heart, then what good is it to be part of God's visible community?"
 - b. The answer: "Much in every way! First of all, the Jews [People of God] have been entrusted with the Word [oracles; promises] of God."
 - i. Immediately we come to The Gospel because, we, as the New Covenant People of God, know that all of God's promises find their "Yes and Amen" in Jesus to God's glory (2 Corinthians 1:20; ***Romans 1:1-4, 16-17***). We, as the Church, have the precious fulfilled oracles of God in the Person and work of Jesus.
 - ii. "Entrusted" means we have a duty to care for and act responsibly with what we have been entrusted.
 1. How are we caring for and acting responsibly with the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Whom all of God's promises are fulfilled? Are you growing in your joy and confidence in this gift and living in a way that others can see you are a servant of Jesus set apart for the Gospel you eagerly proclaim? Are you guarding it from dilution, distortion and destruction? Are you acting faithfully toward God with what He has entrusted you?
2. [...but this advantage will NOT compromise] **God's Righteousness** [because God is faithful to His promises to BOTH save the faithful AND judge the unfaithful] (*Verses 3-8*)
 - a. Another question: "So, if those Who identify as God's People are unfaithful to God Who entrusted them with His promises, will that compromise God's faithfulness to those promises?"
 - i. Here, we need to remind ourselves of the loving loyalty toward God and others that we discussed in our study of

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Ruth. That's what being faithful to God means, and it is demonstrated in serving Him and others in love because we trust God's loving loyalty toward us as He has promised. This also takes us back to understanding "the obedience of faith" in 1:5. We believe in God's promises; therefore, we live in obedience to His commands. We are faithful to Him.

ii. So, the question is: "If we are unfaithful as God's People entrusted with His promises, will that result in God being unfaithful to His promises? Does our unfaithfulness make God unfaithful?"

b. The Answer: "Not at all!" (*verse 4*)

i. Even if everyone one of us is an unfaithful liar, God is still faithfully true to His Word; His promises.

ii. To support this, Paul cites *Psalms 51:4*

1. First, David, as God's King over His People, recognizes that God is just to judge him for his own unfaithfulness; not merely toward Uriah and Bathsheba, but ultimately toward God. Second, David not only confesses and repents of his sin, he acknowledges that it is such a contrite and humble heart that God delights in; NOT empty forms of external religious practices. This genuine contrition in the heart only comes by God's circumcision of the heart. Repentance is essential. God desires sincere repentance when we are confronted with our unfaithfulness.

c. *Verses 5-8* Paul just stated that our unfaithfulness cannot make God unfaithful. However, Paul wants to show the stupidity of wrongly concluding that our unfaithfulness should be exempt from God's judgment.

i. It would be foolish to think God is unjust for being angry with my unrighteousness.

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- ii. It would be slanderous to think my lies should exempt me from condemnation; because, God's righteousness would be displayed in judging me for my lying. This is ridiculous! Paul is demonstrating the absurd danger of asking a questions like, "Why should I be judged for my unrighteousness and unfaithfulness if they demonstrate God's righteousness and faithfulness in judgment? If my evil brings about the goodness of God's righteousness, then why should I be condemned? Wouldn't it actually be better to keep sinning?" The Apostle Paul would never say or advocate for anything so ludicrous, and anyone who thinks this way is worthy of God's just condemnation.

The professing Christian must never presume that he/she is safe to continue sinning. While God is certainly faithful to His promises to save, He is also righteous, and that means God is also faithful to His promise to judge and condemn unfaithfulness. The advantage of knowing God's promises and identifying with the favorable aspects of those promises (especially in the Gospel) does NOT prevent God from judging me for my unfaithfulness.

What does such unfaithfulness look like that God is just in condemning me for? It is evident in a lack of repentance for sin, in impenitent pride, and in justifying sinful behavior, especially when presuming my unfaithfulness is excusable to achieve a good outcome. That is slanderous and deserving of condemnation. For the Christian, the end does NOT justify the means if the means entail being unfaithful to God. The genuine Christian, one inwardly with a circumcised heart, truly believes God is faithful to all His promises - to save those who repent and to judge those who stubbornly continue in their

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unrighteousness. This trust in God's faithfulness is demonstrated in our "obedience of faith" (loyal love) toward Him, which entails daily repentance for our sins and trusting in God's righteousness revealed in the Gospel.

Christians who possess the revealed fulfillment of all of God's promises in His Word made flesh, Jesus Christ, must teach God's Word and His promises in the Bible to our children within our covenant community; because, we are entrusted with them. The Church must be a Gospel university for Believers in this way, so we may also be a Gospel lighthouse to unbelievers. This is accomplished by the mutual encouragement of our faith in the Gospel when we gather weekly, so we may be unified in Christ our King as His servants, set apart for the Gospel we eagerly proclaim for His Name's sake.

AMEN