

# **Inclusive Exclusivity**

(Romans 3:27-31)

## **Historical Context:**

Paul was writing to a divided church. The Jews had been exiled from Rome for 5 years, and the Gentiles had been running the church. When the Jews returned, relational problems arose as Jewish and Gentile Christians looked at each other differently. Paul's message of the Gospel in this section of Romans calls for unity between believers by showing there is only one kind of person: sinners.

## **The Exclusivity of Religion:**

- All religious viewpoints are exclusive. All of them create an us vs. them mentality. Some people are in, and some are out.

- When your identity is tied to your own goodness, this always creates competition.

  - That competition leads to pride and boasting when you feel you are doing well compared to others, leading to judgementalism

  - Competition leads to depression and guilt when you feel you are doing worse than others leading to jealousy, hatred, and criticism

## **The Inclusivity of the Gospel:**

- Our justification is built on Christ's goodness alone, not our own. This undercuts our boasting and levels the playing field because **everyone** is **equally** bad; no one is good.

- The gospel eliminates divisions and distinctions between people groups and creates only a single class of people: sinners! All have equally sinned and fallen equally short of the glory of God.

## **Spurgeon's "Three Boasts" of Humanity Leading to Division:**

### **1. The Pride of Race:**

- Distinguishing yourself based on ethnic identity or racial distinctness leads to racism and prejudice.

- Any ethnic superiority is contrary to the gospel.

### **2. The Pride of Face/Place:**

-Self-identity based in any way on appearance/success/talent/SES will always lead to pride and ultimately division.

-How can we have pride about any of these things when we can't control them and everything we have from our appearance to our talents was given to us as a gift?

### 3. The Pride of Grace:

-Any comparison and sense of distinction from others because you don't struggle with the same issues as them is rooted in pride and will lead to division.

-"The seed of sin is in every heart"; all of us are sinners and equally as unrighteous.

-No merit of yours brought you closer to God; we are ALL justified only through God's righteousness.

### Questions to Consider:

1. Examine your heart. Where is your boast? Race? Face? Place? Grace?
2. What would the Lord have you do this week to repent of your pride in that area?
3. In what area of your life is God continuing his work of sanctification?