“Now We Know”

12/03/2017

Titus 3:1-7

Please find with me the third chapter of the Book of Romans.

The most-sold book in the world is the Bible. The second most-sold book in the world is one called “The Pilgrim’s Progress” by Pastor John Bunyan. Bunyan lived from 1628 to 1688 and has become one of the most famous preachers in English history. He was and is popular as a British author, having written a combined sixty books and stories.

Externally, Bunyan live an exceedingly difficult life. He was poor from childhood. And as a child, he endured many nightmares. He married at the age of twenty, and Bunyan once claimed that when the couple married they had not *“so much household stuff as a dish or spoon betwixt us both.”* And by Bunyan’s own account, he led a wild youth and was con-verted at the approximate age of thirty.” [John Piper’s “The Pilgrim’s Progress”]. In “Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners,” he described himself this way. *“So that until I came to the state of Marriage, I was the very ringleader of all the Youth that kept me company, in all manner of vice and ungodliness.”*

Ten years into his marriage, Bunyan’s first wife died. He was thirty and was left to raise three children alone until he met and married his second wife. So, needless to say, Bunyan had a difficult life.

And, wouldn’t you know it, after he was saved, Bunyan encountered a huge problem. God had called him to preach the Good News that Christ had died for sinners. And the problem was as follows. He had no license to preach. So, for those first twelve years of his Christian life, Bunyan was arrested and imprisoned time and again. He was one of 2,000 Pastors who were imprisoned at that time in England for preaching without a license. And while in prison, Bunyan found a way to provide for his family financially. He made shoe laces and sold them. He was released from prison in 1672, when he was forty-four.

 Bunyan died of pneumonia at the age of sixty. He had been exposed to a drenching, cold rain while on a two-day trip on horseback in which he attempted to heal relations between a father and his estranged son. Bunyan was buried in the famous non-conformist cemetery in London called Bun Hill Fields.

The reason I mention Bunyan is this. “The monument on his tomb is today the most prominent site in the cemetery. On the side of his tomb is the carved figure of a person carrying a burden on his back. That picture comes from the most famous moment in The Pilgrim’s Progress where Christian loses the burden of his sin which happened when he reached the foot of the cross.” [Piper].

And it’s possible that you are here today and have never felt the burden of your sin, which, as you are about to see, opens wide the door of salvation. I found this verse over in Psalm 38:4 *“For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.”*

Now, the burden, as presented by Bunyan. Here’s page one of “The Pilgrim’s Progress.” *“As I walked through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place, where was a den; and I laid me down in that place to sleep: and as I slept I dreamed a dream. I dreamed, and behold I saw a man clothed with rags, standing in a certain place,*

*with his face from his own house, a book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back. I looked, and saw him open the book, and read therein; and as he read, he wept and trembled: and not being able longer to contain, he brake out with a lamentable cry; saying, ‘What shall I do?’”*

Here’s just one more paragraph from “The Pilgrim’s Progress.” *“He ran thus till he came to a place somewhat ascending; and upon that place stood a cross, and little below in the bottom, a sepulchre. So I saw in my dream, that just as Christian came up with the cross, his burden loosed from off his shoulders, and fell from off his back; and began to tumble, and so continued to do so until it came to the mouth of the sepulchre, where it fell in, and I saw it no more.”* [From “The Pilgrim’s Progress” page 47 (Chapter nine)].

Bunyan’s picture of the burden of his sin rolling down into the sepulchre is a depiction of what happens at the moment of salvation.

Now, which book of the Bible would you say is the clearest on the matter of sin? My answer is this. The Book of Romans. There is no more important book that’s ever been written on the subject.

So, I’d like to start with sin today. Two questions. One, are you here today carrying the weight of your own sins? Or, two, are you absolutely sure that Someone Else has carried all of your sins and that they no longer burden you down?

I’ve titled today’s sermon “Now We Know.” Shall we pray?

So, yes, today’s subject is sin. But the topic is “the burden of sin.” You see, until someone is burdened down by his sin, he won’t truly see the burden that Christ took for him when He died on the Cross of Christ. Christ’s death doesn’t really have any meaning if you don’t feel your sin has burdened you down.

So, what was it that prompted the Father to send the Son into the world? It was your sin and your *sins* and the burden of those sins upon you. Now, if we human beings had had no sin and if there were no sin, then there would have been no need for Christ to come into the world. So, think about it like this. The burden of sin was so heavy on the souls of men that God had to send His Only Son from heaven down to this world to remove it. The Cross was God’s answer to the burden of your sin that you carry day after day and year after year.

When we want to speak a word about Jesus Christ and what happened at the Cross, we have to also speak a word about sin. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AClpE3JbvT0

So, today’s word from the Book of Romans is a word on the burden of sin. Please look at the words of your Bible with me; just a few verses here in this third chapter. This is the first time Paul addresses the subject of sin in Romans

The first time is here at verse nine.

Romans 3:9 *“What then? Are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under* ***sin****; …”*

Romans 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****.”*

Romans 3:23 *“For all have* ***sinned****, and come short of the glory of God; …”*

Romans 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; …”*

Can you imagine Paul writing or speaking on the subject of sin? That itself must have been a heavy load for him to carry.

Again, verse nine – “they are all under sin.”

Verse twenty – “the knowledge of sin.”

Verse twenty-three – “all have sinned.”

And verse twenty-five – “the remission of sins.”

How would you define sin? Just a few years back, a Paula Fredriksen, Professor of Religion, from Boston University, wrote a book called “Sin: The Early History of an Idea” (Published in 2012). Here’s what Professor Fredriksen writes in her book. “Sin” is in the eye of the beholder, and our society is richly multi-perspectival: we don’t have a single definition of anything, “sin” included.” [Found on [www.bu.edu](http://www.bu.edu) “Evolving Ideas of Sin.”].

Now, how does that modern comment on sin compare with this one? Sin is *“The voluntary departure of a moral agent from a known rule of rectitude [correct behavior or thinking] …, prescribed by God; any voluntary transgression of the divine law, or violation of a divine command; a wicked act; iniquity.”*

It’s also the *“native depravity of heart to the divine will, that corruption of nature of the deterioration of the moral character of man, which is … the effect of Adam's apostasy; and which manifests itself in moral agents by positive acts of disobedience to the divine will, or by the voluntary neglect to comply with the express commands of God.”* [Found in KJV Dictionary].

Mankind in general takes sin lightly and so we also take the consequences of sin lightly. God can’t do that. And God took sin so seriously that He provided a Savior for us in His Only Begotten Son.

As I thought about today’s sermon, I wondered what it was about sin that Paul was so concerned about.

So, first, the purpose of the Law, verse nineteen.

Romans 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. (20) There-fore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”*

“Now we know.” That’s what Paul says here in verse nineteen. Romans 3:19 *“****Now we know*** *that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: …”*

The Law, here in verse nineteen, is the Law of God. Now, technically, we’d say “The Law of Moses,” which begins with the Ten Commandments. [Show a picture of the Ten C’s].

And what is the purpose of the law? The purpose for God’s giving the Jews the law through Moses was not so that we strive for Heaven by keeping all the rules. Rather, the rules were given so that we would see ourselves for what we all are; sinners.

Romans 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.”*

Now, what happens in your heart when you hear the words “Thou shalt not kill”? Or, “Thou shalt not commit adultery”? Or, thou shalt not steal”? Here’s what happens. The truth of those words ring true inside your heart. And why? Because you are a moral being and the law is a moral law.

“The moral law does not consider our weaknesses as human beings; in fact, it does not take into account our heredity or infirmities. It simply demands that we be absolutely moral. The moral law never changes, either for the highest of society or for the weakest in the world.

It is enduring and eternally the same. The moral law, ordained by God, does not make itself weak to the weak by excusing our shortcomings. It remains absolute for all time and eternity. If we are not aware of this, it is because we are less than alive. Once we do realize it, our life immediately becomes a fatal tragedy.

“I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died” ([Romans 7:9](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+7:9)). The moment we realize this, the Spirit of God convicts us of sin. Until a person gets there and sees that there is no hope, the Cross of Christ remains absurd to him. Conviction of sin always brings a fearful, confining sense of the law.” [O. Chambers “My Utmost For His Highest” December 1st].

The Law speaks and shows us that we are sinners, which then makes us guilty before God.

Romans 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.*

Do you see this line *“that every mouth may be stopped …”?*

What does that mean?

It means that everyone everywhere is infected by sin; deeply infected; infected into the deepest recesses of our being. Romans 3:9 *“What then? Are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under* ***sin****; …”*

Romans 3:10 *“As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one: (11) there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.”*

So, how many mouths are there in the word? How many languages are there? How many people have said something about God or about right and wrong? “Every mouth” covers every single person everywhere.

God spoke the Law through the Jews and he placed a sense of that moral law inside every person’s heart for this primary reason *“that every mouth may be stopped …”*

Imagine standing in a courtroom and hearing the verdict read after your trial. You hear one sentence *“the jury finds the defendant guilty.”* And what happens to your mouth? Stopped. You have nothing to say. That means that the whole world is guilty.

Have you ever said this? *“I am pretty much a good person; I have never committed any murders or anything severe.”*

So God says “Stop!” Or maybe you’ve said, *“I’ve always been a Christian. I was born a Christian.”* God says “Stop!” Or how about this. *“I didn’t grow up that way.”* Or, how about this, “I keep the Ten Commandments.” God says again “Stop!”

A man said this to me recently. *“I can’t see how God can send people to Hell who’ve never the Gospel.”* And God says “Stop!”

And why? Because we are all law-breakers, Jew and Gentile, rich and poor, religious and atheists, ignorant or massively intelligent. We’ve all broken all His laws. So, we’re all guilty.

Romans 2:14 *“For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: (15) Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) …”*

Romans 1:20 *“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: …”*

Do you know the best answer to these words in your Bible? “Silence.” God wrote down His laws so that your mouth and my mouth would be stopped. God placed His moral law inside your heart. And you are a law-breaker and you are guilty. And what’s even more interesting is this. Even the most knowledgeable, intelligent, more learned doctor of sociology in the world has to do the exact same thing the poor, wretched savage in the jungles of South America, whose language has never been written down, has to do. And what is that? Stop; *“that every mouth may be stopped …”*

Romans 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.”*

“Now we know.”

First, the purpose of the Law is to show us that we are sinners.

Second, no one can be saved by keeping the Law, verse twenty. Romans 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.”*

I remember one of our children, the last one, learned something that Janet, nor I, nor the other children taught her; to bite. Then, when she bit one of the other children, she’s look at one of us and, immediately, she knew that she had done something wrong. We, Janet and I, were the law. And the law was very clear. “Biting is wrong.”

John Piper puts it this way. *“It's like a teenager who goes to the mailbox to get the mail. He brings it in and puts it on the table. He flips through it and sees nothing for him, and so he starts to walk away. No bad desires at all here, right? But then he notices at the top of one of the postcards the words, "For parents only!"*

*And suddenly there is a desire to read the card. Are those words on the card sin? No. But through those words come the knowledge of sin. Suddenly what was lying dormant in the heart is shown to really be there - the desire to read what one ought not to read.”*

Justified. The entire Book of Romans is an explanation of what it means to be justified. What does it mean? It means that, not only is the burden of sin been removed when you come to Christ for salvation, but it also means that God declares us to the as righteous as Jesus.

The deeds of the law imply obedience to God’s law. Paul’s point is simple and it’s the complete opposite to what we think naturally. It’s very common for us to think that if we just “do our best,” “try our hardest,” “make the greatest effort,” etc. that God will see those good intentions and count up your good deeds and weigh them against your bad ones.

And, I imagine some of you here today believe that. But, in the matter of justification, being made righteous before God, even if you were to keep ever single command of God, you would not be justified. Why?

This is the truth. We can’t be justified by keeping God’s commands. Why? Why won’t God let us be justified by keeping His commands?

One, because if we could gain righteousness by works, then there was no need for Jesus to die. Galatians 2:21 *“I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law,* ***then Christ is dead in vain****.”*

Two, because if we could gain righteousness by works, there would be no need for God’s mercy.

Titus 3:5 *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but* ***according to his mercy he saved us****, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; …”*

Three, because if we could gain righteousness by works, then we don’t need faith.

Galatians 2:16 *“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ,* ***that we might be justified by the faith of Christ****, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”*

Four, because if we could get righteousness by keeping God’s commands, then we don’t need the Old Testament message.

Galatians 3:11 *“But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for,* ***the just shall live by faith****.” [*OT Quote: Habakkuk 2:4 *“…the just shall live by his faith”].*

And five, because the purpose for the Law was to bring us to Christ for His free gift of salvation.

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

1. Why? Because then there was no need for Jesus to die.
2. Because there would be no need for God’s mercy.
3. Because then we don’t need faith.
4. Because then we don’t need the Old Testament.
5. Because the purpose was to bring us to Christ.

“Now we know.”

Can you see why God sent His law to us? It was so that we would know that we are sinners. Thank God for the law because without it, we’d have no recourse; no reason to become burdened by our sin and then, no reason to look to Christ for His salvation. The law brings you the knowledge of sin.

Romans 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.”*

“The law itself shows us our need of grace. Far from putting us right with God, the law shows that we are wrong with God; and that we need to be put right with God, but that we can’t be put right ourselves, or in ourselves, or by ourselves.

In the light of this situation, the law itself functions to reveal to us our sin, to convince us of our sin, and to show us that we need an escape from sin which we can’t provide.” [Found on www.alfredplacechurch.org “Every Mouth Stopped and the Whole World Guilty” by Geoff Thomas May 2014].

Now we know.

First, the purpose of the Law is to show us that we are sinners.

Second, no one can be saved by keeping the Law.

Folks, the law is plain. “Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not commit adultery,” etc. But, anyone who sees themselves honestly must say to themselves at some point “The burden of my sin is too heavy to bear.”

You can rejoice today if you feel the burden of your sin. Why? Because you’ve come to the place where you feel like you’ll never be able to get out from under that burden. Then, and only then, will you see the reason for Jesus dying on that old cross. And, until that day, you’ll keep trying and trying and trying to overcome your sins, trying to be a better person, promising God you’ll do better the next time.

Folks, this is the reason the prostitutes and the tax collectors will go into Heaven ahead of the rest of us. Matthew 21:31 *“… the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.”*

You see, the drug dealers and the pimps of this world, the prostitutes and the slave traders know the depths of the burden of their sins upon them. It’s a heavy burden.

Here’s that wonderful paragraph from *“The Pilgrim’s Progress”* once again.*“He ran thus till he came to a place somewhat ascending; and upon that place stood a cross, and little below in the bottom, a sepulchre. So I saw in my dream, that just as Christian came up with the cross, his burden loosed from off his shoulders, and fell from off his back; and began to tumble, and so continued to do so until it came to the mouth of the sepulchre, where it fell in, and I saw it no more.”* [From “The Pilgrim’s Progress” page 47 (Chapter nine)].

You see, the Law shows us our sin and the Cross shows us where we can find forgiveness. Look at the Law and you see your sin. Look at the Cross and you see where forgiveness is found.

Romans 10:12 *“For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.”*

So, everyone, Jew and Gentile, is a sinner in need of a Savior Who is rich to all who call upon Him. And God has sent Jesus into the world to be our Savior. He’s the Savior for both Jews and Gentiles.

John 3:16 *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (17) For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”*

And God is not willing that any should perish. II Peter 3:9 *“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward,* ***not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance****.”*

In the matter of salvation, are you among those who have repented and believed on Christ? If not, why not? What is holding you back from exercising faith in the LORD Jesus as your Savior?

And He will save anyone who comes to Him with simple faith in Jesus; anyone, Jew or Gentile, lots of sins or a few sins.

So, today, is your day of surrender. Today, you need to deal with yourself, your sins, and the Savior today. What do you need to do? See yourself as a sinner condemned by the law, but loved by God so much that God sent His Son to die as your Substitute. Then, repent and to believe.

* To Repent = I change my mind about God, Christ, my sin, and God’s free gift of salvation.
* To Believe = I simply trust Jesus Christ alone as the One Who paid the entire penalty for my sins.

Here’s the Salvation Prayer*. “LORD, I admit that I am a sinner and deserve judgment for my sins. I believe Jesus died in my place on the Cross to remove that judgment. Please save me and give me your free gift of righteousness. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.”*

Shall we pray?

Now let’s sing Hymn # 329 “There’s Power In The Blood”