

God's Great News for Humanity's Great Problem *Paul's Letter to the Romans*

Exhibit C: The Jew Examined in the Courtroom of God *Romans 2:17 – 3:8*

Exegetical Outline

- ¹⁷But if you bear the name "Jew" and
rely upon the Law and
boast in God,¹⁸ and
know His will and
approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law,¹⁹ and
are confident that you yourself are
a guide to the blind,
a light to those who are in darkness,
²⁰a corrector of the foolish,
a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment
of knowledge and
of the truth,
²¹you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself?
You who preach that one shall not steal, do you steal?
²²You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery?
You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?
²³You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God?
²⁴For 'The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,'
just as it is written.
- ²⁵For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law;
but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.
- ²⁶So if the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law,
will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?
- ²⁷And he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law,
will he not judge you
who though having the letter of the Law and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law?
- ²⁸For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly,
nor is circumcision that which is
outward in the flesh.
- ²⁹But he is a Jew who is one inwardly;
and circumcision is that which is
of the heart,
by the Spirit,
not by the letter;
and his praise is
not from men,
but from God.
- ^{3:1} Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision?
² Great in every respect.
First of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God.
- ³ What then? If some did not believe, their unbelief will not nullify the faithfulness of God, will it?
⁴ May it never be!
Rather, let God be found true,
though every man be found a liar,
as it is written, 'That you may be justified in your words, and prevail when you are judged.'
- ⁵ But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say?
The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is He? I am speaking in human terms.
⁶ May it never be! For otherwise, how will God judge the world?
- ⁷ But if through my lie the truth of God abounded to His glory, why am I also still being judged as a sinner?

⁸ And why not say
as we are slanderously reported and
as some claim that we say, "Let us do evil that good may come"?
Their condemnation is just.

Introduction: A Man on Trial

In 1960, Israeli undercover agents pulled off one of the greatest kidnappings in history. They discovered the South American hideaway of one of the masterminds of the Nazi Holocaust, a man by the name of Adolf Eichmann. Eichmann had presided over the slaughter of millions of Jews in the hideous Nazi Final Solution. Furthermore, he had personally executed a number of Jews himself. The undercover agents brought Eichmann to Israel to stand trial. Adolf Eichmann's deeds were well known to the Jews in Israel in 1960, when his trial took place, and a long line of witnesses were brought in to testify against him. As Eichmann sat in a small bulletproof glass booth, prosecutors called in a small, haggard Jewish man named Yehiel Dinur, who had miraculously escaped death in Auschwitz. Dinur, ready to testify, stared at the former Nazi mass murderer behind the glass, and the courtroom was silent, waiting for what Dinur would say about Eichmann, who was responsible for the deaths of his friends and beloved people. But no one was prepared for what happened next. Yehiel Dinur began to shout and sob, collapsing to the floor. What happened? Was he overcome by hatred? By horrible memories triggered by some evil in Eichmann's face? No. Dinur later explained in a '60 Minutes' interview that Eichmann was not the demon he expected. Instead, he was an ordinary man just like you and me. And in that moment, Yehiel Dinur came to the realization that sin and evil are the human condition. He said, 'I was afraid about myself. I saw that I am capable to do this...exactly like he.' There is sin in every one of us. Then Dinur concluded with a statement that shocked the world then and it shocks the world today: 'There is Eichmann in all of us.'

Context

Similarly, for the past three weeks, Paul has introduced us to God's hospital. He has informed us of God's diagnosis of humanity: that there is Eichmann in all of us; there is SIN in all of us. As evidence, Paul has examined two Patients. First was the Control Freak who was totally self-centered and was doing whatever he pleased. Next Paul called up the Judgmental Moralizer who was in denial that he was sick. But that man also was also infected with sin.

Now Paul sets off this new section by the word BUT in v. 17. And by this short conjunction, Paul turns and gives the next Patient. And his next Patient is identified in v. 17 as the Jewish person. Now it seems politically incorrect to single one ethnic group to see if there is sin in them. But we have to understand the historical context: the Jewish community did indeed have a special relationship with God. That is what the entire Old Testament is about. And Paul, the author of this examination, is not anti-Semitic; he is a Jewish person who believes that the role and destiny of Israel is bound up with Jesus.

Now why is this relevant? I considered skipping this section and just moving on because I think almost all of you are not Jewish! But then again, there are a few Jewish folks here at BC, and many more in New York where many of you come from, and I do think you should understand how to have a conversation with those in the Jewish community. Not only that, but if you understand this passage, you'll be better able to talk to Muslims, Jehovah's Witnesses, and atheists. Why? The larger question involves whether human beings can be changed by standards or laws that are external to us. They would say YES. That is what unites rabbinic Judaism, Islam, and Jehovah's Witnesses. If you take God out of the picture, then the best thing and perhaps the only thing people can do for people is to have good laws. So say the atheists. But the consistent answer of Jesus and every biblical writer is: NO. Humanity cannot be transformed by standards or laws external to us.

There are some Bible study guides that imply that the Jewish audience of the following verses can be any teacher of the Scriptures, or any Christian. Paul's logic in the passage is the following: he has brought the diagnosis of the bad man forward, and the good man as well; now he must deal with the best man. The man who has had a privileged relationship with God through history: the Jew. He is putting forward the case that there is the stain of sin in all of us, including the Jew.

The Self-Confident Jew's Boast in the Law: v.17 – 20

Now, why is the Jew regarded as a special case of humanity? In v.17, we see the basis of the Jew's pride and special position: The Law. In v. 17, they rely upon the Law. In v. 18, they are being instructed out of the Law. In v. 20, they have in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of truth. In v. 23, they boast in the Law. What is the Law? Basically, it begins with the Ten Commandments, and is the whole of the commands of God from Mount Sinai. And the Jew is unique in history because the Jew has had the Mosaic

Law from God, whereas other people did not. That is what makes the Jew distinct. In contrast to the Judgmental Moralizer in Paul's prior case, who knew or accepted only bits and pieces of the God's standards, the Jew KNOWS the HIGHEST standard that humanity had known at that time: the Law of God Himself. Thus, the Jew is the special case in history.

Here is the Jew's attitude regarding the Law. The Jew uses the Law to reinforce his special position--his privileged position--in history. The Jew BOASTS in the fact that he knows God and His will. He approves the things that are essential. He is instructed out of the Law. In other words, the Jew sides completely with God. Now, since he has the Law, how does the Jew see himself? Privileged. In v. 18-20 we see the effects of the Jew's view of himself.

Guide to the blind
Light to those in darkness
Corrector of the foolish
Teacher of the immature

When Paul went to graduate rabbinical school and took notes under Rabbi Gamaliel, perhaps he was told, 'You are a guide to the blind, etc.' These are very lofty titles. Any rabbi or teacher would have been proud to be called by these epithets. And we do need to appreciate the Jewish Law. Whereas the Code of Hammurabi said that rich people should be punished less than poor people for the same crime, the Jewish Law established equality under the law. It was a revolution in ethics. Do you want an argument for the divine origin of the Jewish Law? There you go. Or, take the vision for marriage. The Jewish Law in Genesis 2 says, 'A man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife.'

Look at the terms 'guide to the blind' and 'a corrector of those in darkness.' Those first two titles have to do with sight. Do you see reality clearly? And can you lead others? And certainly the Jews saw the world correctly: not as the playground of the mythological gods, but as the arena where Yahweh and human beings interact. So the Jews saw themselves as more enlightened than other people. This attitude is definitely not gone today. Even David Ben Gurion, the first prime minister of Israel when Israel was reborn on May 14, 1948, said that Israel was going to be a light to the nations. Many Hasidic or Orthodox Jews today think of themselves as a source of light.

So what kind of relationship did they take on with others? Positions of moral authority. This view has led to some interesting ideas. From the ancient Jewish Talmud, a tradition emerged among the Jews that the world is sustained by the presence of at least thirty six *tzaddikim*, or Jewish righteous ones. These righteous ones do their *mitzvahs*, or good deeds, quietly. And that if that number dips below thirty six, the world would cease to exist. It is an understatement to say that the Jews saw themselves as very different. They were morally superior, very proud that they were Jews.

So the Jew had in his hand the Law. But look at how quickly this turns into a matter of pride and self-confidence. Look at verse 19. Are you confident that 'you yourself' are all these things? And that reveals the reality in the heart of the Jew. He is confident in himself. He respects the Law, true. But he really is confident that he himself can live up to it and that just because he's a Jew, he's better.

Perhaps in the courtroom of God, as we compare the Control Freak, the Judgmental Moralizer, and the Jew, we can find a striking similarity. The Control Freak removes God from the central place of worship, and worships himself, becoming hideously self-centered. The Judgmental Moralizer shoves God off the bench, and installs himself as the Judge, judging others by his own bogus standards. The Jew truly boasts in himself, in his possession of the lofty Law of God. Each of these three men are consumed by the Self. That is what they have in common.

The Jew's True Position before the Law: v.21-24

Then in verses 21-23 he switches gears. In v. 21, Paul begins to argue that this distinguished group of teachers has missed a select audience. So, in v. 21, he asks the question that would have brought a serious silence to the smiling Jews in the courtroom: 'You therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself?'

Then, he goes on to give three examples of how the Jew should be teaching himself from the Law: ‘You who preach that one should not steal, do you steal? You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?’ Now, how would this have been received by Paul’s Jewish audience? And why did Paul use these three questions? This is really important for us to understand. How would God have convicted the hearts of Jews listening to Paul’s letter being read?

I’m going to offer four possibilities for what this means and then give you my opinion. 1. That Paul is speaking of things that are actually happening. The activities of stealing, adultery, and idolatry were historical realities and the Jews were doing them. While this might have been true, I don’t think this was the intention of the passage. If it were, it would have no universal application. 2. That Paul is speaking of these things as a matter of the heart ONLY. That in the heart, covetousness, adultery, and idolatry were the norm. While this is spiritually true, I don’t think this is what Paul is arguing because 1) In v. 24, there are Gentiles who blaspheme God because of the Jews. If Paul were speaking of sins only in the sense that they were of the heart, how would the Gentiles know, and how would that quote fit in? And, 2) Paul has been speaking about deeds in the earlier part of chapter 2 and it wouldn’t necessarily make sense for him to talk about sins of the heart. 3. That Paul is appealing to their collective, national identity in the sense that Israel as a nation committed these particular sins. And certainly they did. Again, this is an interesting possibility. But Paul has been dealing with individuals thus far and it wouldn’t necessarily make sense for him to start talking about communities. And, Paul is arguing that each and every INDIVIDUAL person has sinned before God. He is interested in showing how each INDIVIDUAL person is accountable before God for his or her own sin. 4. **That Paul is just citing three examples of breaking the Law as representative of breaking the whole Law. I see this as being the case. So the structure of this is, ‘You are teachers of the Law, but here are three examples of where This would make v. 23 a CONCLUDING STATEMENT. You who boast in the Law, you who boast in having this absolutely perfect standard that is above and beyond what the Judgmental Man was using to condemn others, YOU ALSO ARE CONDEMNING YOURSELF. Because by your breaking the Law, you are dishonoring God.**

Why is this true? Because what the Jew is arguing that because he holds higher standards (in fact, the highest possible standard at that time, though what Jesus taught surpasses that ethical standard), he is also somehow privileged when it comes to God’s treatment of his sin. The Jew claims that he is a better person than the other two Examples of humanity. But what Paul is saying is that having higher standards does not make you a better person at all! Having higher standards should only convince you that you need God’s grace more desperately.

Illus: I experienced this one summer during my college years. During one year in particular, I had a few people come to me to share their problems with me, and I was honored. It was the desire of my heart that I would be someone that my friends would feel comfortable doing that with. But I was also interested in why they came to me. And, out of my curiosity and partially out of my pride, I wanted to know. What they said was very revealing to me. They said, ‘Mako, it’s because you don’t say what you think about me right away. You don’t say ‘Well, you made a mistake there!’ You first empathize, and you listen.’ That meant a great deal to me and it warmed my heart. But over time, I came to be rather proud of the fact that people came to ME. What’s more, I began to be critical of the people my friends would tell me about who wouldn’t listen but would instead rebuke them right away. So I began to say to myself, ‘What a good listener I am! I think everyone should be like me! The nerve of these other people!’ This was the attitude I had, that whether one was a good listener made one a good person. And I held other people to this standard. But over the summer, one day my mom came into the living room where I was and started sharing her heart with me about all of the troubles she was having in her relationship with my dad. I had heard all of this many times before, I was tired of it, so without allowing her to get too far into it, I said, ‘Mom, that’s enough.’ She said, ‘I’m sorry,’ and went into the other room to cry. As I got up to follow her and apologize, I realized that having higher standards didn’t make me a better person. It made me a bigger hypocrite.

Paul is arguing that the Jews, out of ALL the peoples of the earth, should not have been confident in themselves or felt like they were better than others. They should have seen the great need for forgiveness. The Law was meant to reveal sin, even their sin. And the Law pointed them to a redeemer.

I think the best way to understand this is to picture the Jew holding a crystal clear mirror while other people have more or less distorted mirrors. The Jew then says, 'I've got a more perfect mirror than other people, so I can clean myself up more.' But had he really looked in, he would see that this perfect mirror just shows him more perfectly these glaring character defects that show up on the outside.

There are glaring character defects that pop up in us, too. Have you ever had your mom or dad or someone who knows you well say to you, 'You say you're compassionate and that all people should be compassionate, but look at how short-tempered you were here.' Paul says to the Jew in these verses, 'You say you believe this is right. But look at these incidents in your life...'

Paul is saying that the Law should have shown the Jew the deep, penetrating spiritual truths that his heart is sickeningly diseased (according to Jeremiah 17:9); that it's as hard and cold as stone (according to Ezekiel 36:26); that the Jews would not be able to serve the Lord (according to Joshua 24:19); and that there is Eichmann in all of us, according to Yehiel Dinur. They thought they could live up to the Law, but their best commentators on the Law said that they never could! What a tragedy of misplaced confidence.

This is the very thing illustrated by John in John 8:1-11. The Pharisees and the Jewish leadership dragged a young woman caught in adultery before Jesus. They dropped her in a mess in the dust, while she was clutching her clothes. The Pharisees then said to Jesus, 'The Law of Moses says we should stone her.' Jesus calmly turned the tables and said, 'Whoever is without sin among you may cast the first stone.' And every one of them left. One by one, they were gone. No one was righteous enough to stand before the Law of Moses because as James understood it in James 2:10, 'Whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.' The Law of Moses is one single unit. And everyone was guilty of breaking it, even the accusers of the adulterous young woman.

So we see a total reversal in v. 23 and 24 from what we saw in v. 17 – 20. Rather than being the guide, the light, the corrector, and the teacher, the Jew is now the charlatan that Gentiles snicker at for being a hypocrite. 'You who boast in the Law, through your breaking of the Law, do you dishonor God?' And then he punctuates this by quoting from the Old Testament: 'For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you, just as it is written.'

The Gamble of Circumcision: v.25-27

Now, the Jew standing before the bar in God's courtroom would have made another appeal. He's got another card to play: CIRCUMCISION. The Jew might have said something like this: 'But Paul, our father Abraham was given circumcision and Abraham was the father of the Jewish nation. Circumcision is the mark of the covenant between God and His chosen people. And perhaps God would have to honor the covenant because the Jews were circumcised. In other words, 'Hey God, You're legally bound!!'

Now, Paul could have dismissed this appeal easily by a number of means. Let me illustrate one before we get back to the text. Circumcision was given to Abraham and passed down to Isaac ONLY? No. Circumcision was also passed down by Abraham to Ishmael, the father of the Arabs. It was also probably passed down to Abraham's six other sons by Keturah. Does that mean that the Arab people and others occupy a special place in Jewish theology? Hmm...Interesting proposal. But clearly not true. Circumcision was only an outward sign of an inward relationship with God, just like a wedding ring is only an outward sign of the inward relationship between husband and wife. In and of itself, circumcision did not bind God to do anything in any way unless (in v. 25) you practice the Law. For indeed circumcision is of value, if you practice the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision, just like if you get married and commit adultery, your wedding ring no longer symbolizes faithfulness. Unless the two of you decide to renew your commitment together, in effect it symbolizes your hypocrisy.

Again, what the Law specifies within itself is that you must practice it moment by moment, and that you never screw up. Well, Paul has already gotten done showing that no one can live up to the Law, so circumcision is not an effective bargaining tool in this court!! What we see in v.26 is again the reversal of the privileged position the Jew thought he had. If therefore the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? And will not he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter of the Law and

circumcision are a transgressor of the Law? Notice the contrast with the beginning of the passage. There is a profound tragedy in the Jew's confidence in himself before the Law. He starts from a place of believing that he is a guide, a light, a corrector, and a teacher and goes to the complete opposite: One who is looked down upon by those he professed to be wiser than!!

The True Jew: v.28-29

Now at this point, the Jew Paul has been examining would have made another appeal, 'Objection, Your Honor! The apostle Paul has just said that to be a Jew means that you have absolutely NO PRIVILEGES before God! Unless you have the Law and circumcision, you can't be a Jew. I mean, those are the EXTERNAL things that define me as a Jew!'

Anticipating this interruption, Paul says in v. 28, 'For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, neither is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.' In other words, the external trappings do not make a person a Jew. It's the internal condition of the heart that makes a person a Jew. Verse 29 is a huge beam of light in the dark flow of sin described by Paul in Romans 1 – 3. The verse begins with the conjunction BUT. And that is a glorious conjunction, because here, we see the first rays of hope in this dark courtroom! Up until now, there has been no escape from the wrath of God for the Immoral Man who had no standards, nor for the Judgmental Man who had his own standards that changed occasionally and couldn't even live up to those, nor for the Jew, who had the Ultimate Standard and of course, couldn't come close! Who in the world can stand before God?

Verse 29 contains Paul's answer to this question. It is the one who stops relying on standards and other external things. It is the one who seeks to be right with God by a humble relationship of faith: 'But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter.' This is how God intended man to respond all along!! God has desired to have man realize that standards imposed from outside leaving man to his own strength just breeds failure and sin and death. We can't help these glaring character defects from coming out from within no matter how hard we try to wear the costume of a good person. We need to be changed from within.

But how do we become this kind of person INWARDLY? Paul answers that: But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart!! AHA! Paul reaches back into Deuteronomy for this. And you can trace the idea of circumcision through Genesis 17, Deuteronomy 6, and 30. Abraham was given circumcision as the external mark of his right inward relationship with God. Then in Deuteronomy 6, we have Moses contemplating this. He's noticed that Israel has lost their focus on their inward relationship, so he commanded Israel to circumcise their heart (OUCH!?!), because it's the heart that needed changing. The problem was that they couldn't change their heart. So in Deut.30:6, Moses looks forward to the time when 'the Lord will circumcise' their heart. The Lord will do it, and the hearts of the people of Israel will be changed, and devoted to God! Then, the prophets like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, in the midst of human injustice and oppression and evil, looked forward to the day when God would give them 'new hearts' (Jer.31:31 – 34; Ezk.36:26 – 36). How does that happen?

Illus: I love the original version of THE WIZARD OF OZ not just because it's fun but because it's a great social commentary on the same question of how can we change the human heart? As the lion, the scarecrow, and the tin man follow Dorothy to find the Wizard, they are all seeking something. Desperately!! The lion wants courage so that he could be brave. The scarecrow wants a brain so that he could be wise, and the tin man wants a heart so he can be loving! When they get to the Emerald City of Oz, the Wizard gives the lion not courage, but a medal. He gives the scarecrow not a brain, but a diploma. And he gives the tin man not a heart, but a watch that ticks and a testimonial with nice things written on it about him. You see, one of the things that the Wizard of Oz is pointing out is that what other people see is more important than what's really there!! And we're cursed to be that way, because man is absolutely powerless to change the fundamental inner things that are wrong with us!! All our world can do, all anyone can do, is to add to the cheap external decoration. We can try to make people believe that we're a certain way by adding to our facade, but on the inside, we could weep over the reality.

But that's not the way it is with God!!!! God redeems from the inside out! God effects fundamental change on the deepest level of who we are! It's not cheap external decoration like the Wizard of Oz. God's power is laser-beam focused on transforming the core of who you are! He took on fallen humanity in the person of

Jesus, and then acquired our disease, the disease of self-centeredness. Jesus then struggled against his self-centeredness from the moment of his conception, really. But he chose, every moment of his life, to be empowered by the Spirit of God to be a vessel of the love of God and not a vessel of human selfishness. He lived in continual dependence on God as a human being. Then at the cross he put his own humanity to death on behalf of the whole world, crushing the self-centeredness that was screaming at him constantly, not turning back but instead giving his life in the greatest sacrifice of all. And in his resurrection, Jesus was raised as a new kind of human being: a God-drenched, God-purified human being, with a humanity that no longer has any resistance to the love of God. So Jesus formed the new human heart in himself. What all the Law and the Prophets looked forward to God doing, Jesus did. And he can share his new heart with us by the Spirit.

If you're ever confused about how to describe your relationship with God, circle the phrases 'of the heart' and 'by the Spirit'. It is within and it is from God Himself. The Jews tried to externalize a relationship with God and make it smaller and shallower than it really is. The Jew might have said, 'I'm more spiritual because I was circumcised and because I pray in public three times a day.' That sounds so obviously silly, but so often, we as Christians do the same thing. How often do we measure how long our quiet times are? Or when we look at other people and say, 'I show up to church on time'? Those things are nit-picky and insignificant compared to what we're really called to be and do!! A relationship with God cannot be boiled down to something so external, so small, and so shallow. A relationship with God is of the heart, and by the Spirit. That makes a person a true Jew. That is also what makes you a true human being. You are not a Christian if you were born into a Christian family, or if you come to church every Sunday. You are a Christian if the Spirit of God lives in you so that the heart of Jesus overlaps onto your heart. This kind of relationship with God is deep, and it is rich!

And look at what happens! God is pleased with the fundamental internal change of heart by having Christ dwell by His Spirit in the believer. And for those in Christ, God the Judge can step down from the bench with a smile and say, 'I'm thrilled about who you are!!' And that's the last reversal that goes way farther than the previous others. The Jew began by thinking he'd be esteemed by men as a teacher but realizes that he's really mocked by men and looked down on. But this reversal brings not praise from men, but goes so far beyond that, it makes praise from men nothing!! It's PRAISE FROM GOD!! It's seeing a smile on His face and hearing, 'I am pleased with you!'

After I graduated from college, I went to live in East Palo Alto, CA, among Mexican immigrant families. In February of 1996, it was Nora's 10th birthday. Nora is the oldest of 5 kids, and because she's usually made to share just about everything, I thought a lot about getting her something that she COULD share with her brothers and sisters and something she could NOT share. So what did I get her? Really colorful hair clips, which she could share with her sisters. And also: a little book with a flower pattern on the cover that she could use for a journal. This is something that is hers alone. And on the inside, I told her that she is a little princess to me, because Nora loves the movie, 'A Little Princess,' by Frances Hodgson Burnett, and that when I think of princesses, I think of her. So the great day came and there was much cake and singing. And when I had a moment with Nora, I gave her the hair clips and the journal. Her eyes brightened and when she gave me a great big hug, I almost melted. Then she ran to her family and read out loud what I had told her about being a little princess. It was so exciting especially because Nora doesn't get a lot of positive feedback at home. But this praise has meant so much to her, she still takes out her journal and shows it to other people. That is exactly how God sees you and me. We are princes and princesses in His family, and that is His praise for us. Take this to heart and remember it always: God is thrilled about who you are in Christ.

Conclusion

That closes our diagnosis of Patient C, the best case of humanity: the Jew. And Paul begins his summary remarks which begin in verse 9, which I'll just read, 'What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin.' Everyone is infected and in need of healing from God. That includes everyone who thinks that humanity's problems can be solved externally, or through laws alone. But let's remember that this is not the end! The high point of Romans isn't the sin of man. It's the sliver of light peeping through the door. All of what we've been studying in the past few weeks has been the bad news. It is humanity's great problem. We only have one more week to go, as we hear the full diagnosis after these three patients in the Hospital of God.