

Sermon or Lesson: Romans 3:23 (NIV based)
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Corrupted And Thereby Locked Out Of Heaven

INTRO: Suppose you have a brand new full jug of milk, and you learn that a malicious person put one drop of sewage water in your milk jug. What would you do with the milk? You would have to throw out the entire jug because it is polluted and entirely useless to you.

Whether we like it or not, God is completely pure, holy, and righteous to perfection and to the extreme - so much that these qualities seriously affect how He regards and treats us imperfect sinful humans. Let's study our next Bible verse to learn about a major serious impact our sins have on how God treats us.

TRANSITION (and review):

- - From our study in Romans 3:9c-22, God starkly informs us humans that our committing of sins causes us to automatically be in the predicament that we are rejected by God and unable by our own actions or means to make ourselves qualified to meet God's perfect righteousness requirements for being accepted by Him.
- - Furthermore, observing the Old Testament Law produces no result of solving this predicament.

- - But now God is offering only one way to escape this predicament - through faith in Jesus Christ.

- - Let's look at the role and effects our sins have on the process by which God has made a way to escape this sin predicament we all face.

READ: Romans 3:23, with verses 20-22 for context

[Theological Definition: 'RIGHTEOUS' - conforming to God's moral standard]

[Lesson Question: What is sin, and from the context, what effect does sin have on God's requirements for us?]

SECTION POINT: Every person commits sins, which corrupts us from the perfect righteousness that God requires of us.

"for all have sinned"

- - We all have committed sins, transgressions against God's law and violations against the perfect righteousness He requires of us.

- - We commit sins in our thinking, speaking, and actions - i.e. sins of commission. (vv.13-18)

- - Also, we commit sins when we fail to do good - i.e. sins of omission. (James 4:17)

- - No person is exempt from the adverse condition of engaging in transgressions against God's law and violations against the required perfect righteousness.

- - We all sin, "missing the mark" or the bull's-eye of perfect righteousness. (Strong's #0264)

[Lesson Question: What effect does sin have on our relational standing with God?]

SECTION POINT: Our sins cause us to be disqualified for entry into the glory of God in heaven.

"and fall short of the glory of God,"

- - Because of our having committed sins, on our own we are unable to attain the glory of God.

- - Our sins cause us to "fall short" or be "inferior and deficient". (Strong's #5302)

- - We do not measure up to the perfection of God.

- - We do not measure up to the qualifications for entering into the glory of heaven, where God and His glory are present in a tangible way and form.

- - Our efforts to make ourselves measure up are likewise utterly and totally deficient in attaining for us entry into the glory of God.

- - Furthermore, any religiousness and supposed goodness we think we have are determined by God to be invalid and completely useless for entry into the glory of God. (vv.9,12)

- - In reality, our sins and the corruption from our sins cause all of us to be disqualified for entering heaven on our own merits.

- - Thus, we enter this life and live in the default state of being rejected and locked out of heaven.

- - "For" or because we all judicially stand on equal footing before God, being totally depraved and corrupt from sin, we all fall under the same perfect righteousness requirements from God, we all are subject to being held legally accountable for our sins or violations against perfect righteousness, and we all are comprehensively deficient in our own efforts to enter the glory of God and thereby avoid facing the eternal severe consequences of our sins.

- - These realities, which comprise the disastrous predicament all of us humans face, motivate, drive, influence, and shape how God has formulated a remedy to our predicament. (see vv.24-26)

- - The perfect righteousness we need must come "from God" (v.21) and cannot come from ourselves (v.10).

- - So God has arranged that the perfect "righteousness from God that comes through faith in Jesus Christ" completely solves and remedies this predicament problem we have of our sins locking us out of the glory of God in heaven. (v.22)

- - But notice that there is a catch or restrictive condition here - only those individual persons "who believe" or have "faith in Jesus Christ" are recipients of "this righteousness from God", which gains for that believer entry into the glory of God in heaven.

BIG IDEA: Due to our having committed sins, every person fails to meet God's requirements that we be perfect in righteousness to get into heaven.

APPLICATIONS:

- - How do you regard your sin problem?
 - - Do you admit that you have a sin problem and regard it as seriously as God does?
 - - Do you understand that your sins cause you to be disqualified for entry into heaven?
 - - Do you also understand that you do not have the ability in and of yourself to get rid of your sin problem nor to generate perfect righteousness that God requires of you?
 - - That is the bad news - now, the good news.
 - - God is offering you the perfect righteousness you need to meet His requirements for getting into heaven.
 - - As we have learned, this perfect righteousness comes from God, which He makes available to every person who places his or her faith in Jesus Christ. (v.22)
 - - Come back next time to learn why and how Jesus is the one through whom we can acquire the perfect righteousness we need to be accepted by God and get into heaven.
 - - Meanwhile, think about whether or not you want this perfect righteousness from God so that He will accept you and let you into heaven.
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Works Cited:

Bible. "The Holy Bible: New International Version." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

"Strong's Greek Dictionary." *The Bible Library CD-ROM*. Oklahoma City, OK: Ellis Enterprises, 1988.

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