

Intro: Court Room. "Closing arguments." Popular Netflix docu-series several years ago. "Closing arguments are the opportunity for each party to remind jurors about key evidence presented and to persuade them to adopt an interpretation favorable to their position." Last 3 weeks, Paul has been laying out his case against sinners, since **Romans 1:18**. His goal is to show us why we sinners must be justified by faith in Christ alone. In this passage, he's going to bring this all to a close by citing the OT Scriptures as evidence in support of his position that all humans are sinners, regardless of background, they are all condemned under the law as sinners, who cannot be justified through obedience or by being good."

Thesis: "Only Sinners need the Gospel."

I. All are Under Sin (9-18)

- A. **v.9a** - Jews had advantage, but they aren't any better. Now we have an advantage because of grace, but it doesn't make us any better. Judgmental, Self-righteous, hypocritical, Christians.
- B. **v.9b** - All - Jews & Greeks - are under sin. Guilty. Condemned. Unrighteous. Evidence. Charged.

ILLUSTRATION: Press Charges. Reliable testimony. Reliable witness. God has pressed charges through His Word - the Law - and his testimony is very reliable. In our sin, we are guilty of all charges.

- C. The Evidence is against us. **Paul's Closing Argument.**
 - 1. **v.10-12 - Ps. 14:1-3. 53:1-3.**
 - 2. **v.13** - "Tongue/Throat open grave" **Ps. 5:9**, "Poison on tongues" **Ps.140:3**
 - 3. **v.14** - "Mouth full of curses" **Ps.10:7**
 - 4. **v.15** - "Swift for violence." **Prov.1:16, Is. 59:7**
 - 5. **v.16** - "Ruin and Misery in their paths." **Is.59:7**
 - 6. **v.17** - "Don't know the way of peace." Can't be peaceful. **Is.59:8**
 - 7. **v.18** - "No fear of God before their eyes." **Ps. 36:1**
- D. **What about all the good things people do?**
 - 1. **All are created in the image of God. Still worthy of respect and dignity.**
 - 2. **"All are sinners and sufferers. Weak and Wounded. Sick and Sore."**
 - 3. **"Whatever doesn't come from faith is sin" Rom.14:23.**
 - 4. **Total Depravity. We are not as bad as we possibly could be, but God by his grace, keeps us from being what we might otherwise be. And His image in us, restrains the sin of our hearts.**
 - 5. **You can't comprehend how bad it is, how bad you could be, and what you are capable of, what you would do if it wasn't for God and His grace.**

APPLICATION: Ever witnessed a loved one in court/trial? Helpless! Scary! Devastating! Lost. Guilty!

II. The Gospel is for Sinners (19-20) "Good People don't need Jesus."

- A. **v.19** - *Every mouth Silent!*/Stop mouth. Accountable to God/Judge. **Legal imagery. Courtroom.**
- B. **v.20** - **No one will be justified by works of law.** B/c already broken. Law shows sin. Can't save.
- C. **"The only thing we contribute toward our salvation** is the sin that makes it necessary."
- D. "Lack of faith in the gospel is the only unpardonable sin, b/c it is **sin against the very remedy.**"
- E. **"Little sinners only need a little cross."** "Big sinners, need a big cross with a Big Savior and a whole lot of grace." And **that's what we get in the Gospel. GOSPEL CHANT!**
- F. **"The law says guilty!" "Jesus says: finished!" "God says: Forgiven/Justified!"**
- G. **"Come ye sinners.** If you wait until you're better, you will never come at all."
- H. **"Rock of Ages"** the Double Cure of Sin: It's **guilt** and **power. ONLY PEOPLE IN HEAVEN.**

ILLUSTRATION: Kid on Christmas. Going through all of their stuff. Old stuff. Used stuff. Broken? Scraps? They just want to give you something, so they feel like they can pay you back. Show you they love you. That they did something for you. God says: "Stop going through all your stuff to try to earn my grace. Trying to pay me back for I have given you freely." "Come. Receive without money/cost." **Is.55:1.**

APPLICATION: How do we try to earn salvation? Deserve it? Pay Him back for it?

- **Obedience from fear or obligation, not obedience from faith.** Obedience from faith is as a response to His free grace and love. And we follow him, trust him and obey him, because He loves us and we love Him. If you love me, you will keep my commandments. Not "obey me, so I know you love me."

CONCLUSION: "Abide in my love. Know that I love you. And you will love me. And when you love me, I will help you obey me. Because you will want to, not because you're afraid not to. Or feel better by doing it. And when you mess up, fail and disobey and blow it, I'll still love you. You can't out-sin my grace."

ILLUSTRATION: "Just Mercy" - Bryan Stevenson. **Equal Justice Initiative. Walter McMillian. 6 years. Death row. Advocate.** Difference between and us...we are guilty. But we have been forgiven. Advocates. God doesn't save good people, b/c there are no good people. *But He does make good people.*