

Romans 3:23  
“Roman Road”  
13<sup>th</sup> Sunday af. Pentecost

August 23, 2015  
Our Redeemer  
Rev. Brent Hartwig

Grace, Mercy, and Peace be unto you from Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior  
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

**[Introduction]**

Maybe you don't know... I love to vacation! And this summer, I had a vacation first. We traveled to Reno, Tahoe, and San Francisco. What was the first?

One road – One interstate – I-80. I-80 all the way.

The doctrine in scripture leads us down one road. Some call it: The Romans Road.

**[Romans Road]** The Romans Road is a pathway through the book of “Romans.”  
“Romans” is written by the Apostle Paul.

It is one of 13 written by the apostle.

13 of 27 of the New Testament books are written by Paul.

Romans stand out among Paul's many books, not simply because it is the first in line and length, but because it offers the most complete summary of Paul's thoughts.

Unlike some of his other epistles, Paul's purpose for writing “Romans” was not to correct or rebuke, but to give rich and practical instruction.

On this Romans Road, you hear the truth!

First – Romans 3:23 **“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”**

We have all sinned.

Theologically we can classify them: Original Sin, Sins of Commission, Sins of Omission, Habitual Sins, Occasional Sins, Individual Sins, and Communal Sins.

But these classifications do not lessen the truth – we all have sinned.

We were born with sin, and we sin daily, hourly... Does this give us permission to sin more? Paul would say, “μὴ γένοιτο.” (No way!!!)

These theological classifications do not lessen the truth – sin is sin.

And sin separates us from God.

Now, no particular actual sin offends God more or less than another. They all do!

Failure to fear, love, and trust in God above all things  
– the original and underlying sin – separates us from the Author of Life.  
Anyway you look at it; we – you and I – are sinners.

First – Romans 3:23 <b>“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”</b> Second – Romans 6:23a <b>“... The wages of sin is death ...”</b>
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Sin has an ending. It results in death.  
We all face physical death, which is a result of sin.  
But a worse death is spiritual death that alienates us from God.

The Bible does plainly teach that there is a place called hell.  
It is often described as a lake of fire where people will be in torment forever.  
It is the place where people end that remain spiritually dead.

To be clear, sin stems from Satan’s lies, from Adam and Eve.  
*“As God is not the cause of sins, so he is also not the cause of punishment or condemnation. The only cause of condemnation is sin, for ‘the wages of sin is death.’ Just as God does not will sin, and takes no pleasure in sin, so he does not will the death of the sinner and has no pleasure in his or her condemnation. For he does not want any to perish but wants all to come to repentance’ (2 Peter 3:9)” (Concord 653.81).*

Likewise, *“Sin cannot be allowed to go unrewarded, that is, unpunished. For a confirmed sinner to hope for pardon without atonement is to hope for the impossible, namely, that God will, in the end, prove unjust” (Popular Commentary, vol. 2, 34).*

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Salvation is a free gift from God to you! Free!

Such a concept in our society is unthinkable. Really, think about this for a minute.  
We expect nothing for free.  
We are always waiting for the “catch” or “the other shoe to drop.”  
We expect nothing for free. Maybe 50% off or buy-one-get-one free, but never free.

This concept seems to go against the very core of what it means to be American.  
When it comes to our spiritual lives, there is no working harder to get ahead.  
Salvation is given to **all** from God, the Father through Jesus.

When Jesus died on the cross He paid sin's penalty.  
He paid the cosmic price for all sin.  
Jesus paid the price for Original Sin, Sins of Commission, Sins of Omission,  
Habitual Sins, Occasional Sins, Individual Sins, and Communal Sins.  
Jesus paid the price for **all** of our sins. For **all** sins; given to **all**.

When He took all the sins of the world on Himself on the cross, He bought us out of slavery to sin and death! Jesus died so that we could live.

Through Christ we are slaves to righteousness. ***The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.***

[**Conversion**] Within Christianity there are differing views of conversion.

- Listen to Christian radio and you will hear something different than what you were taught in confirmation.
- Talk to a Baptist friend and you will hear something different than what you were taught in confirmation.

So, Let us pause a moment and explore different views of conversion as briefly as we can.

(1) One view of conversion, and I think you will know this is wrong as soon as I tell you, it is called Pelagianism and claims that man is 100% responsible for saving themselves – that man can stop sinning. God is completely denied.

And this is just completely wrong.

(2) Another view of conversion, and this is wrong, is that God decides who is saved and who is not. Theologically, this is called Double Predestination or Calvinistic. God saves some and damns others.

This is wrong because the Bible clearly says God desires to save all!

(3) Another view of conversion... Now, this is wrong but you hear it often, is that man has some small part in saving himself – Synergism. It sounds like this... “Just accept Jesus into your heart.” “When you hear the knock at the door, invite Jesus in.”

This too is wrong. Conversion is not accomplished by what we do, but by what God has done. Conversion is through Christ, through the Holy Spirit.

(4) So Lutheran Theology upholds that God desires all to be saved. Salvation is for all, and by grace through faith we are saved. ***The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.***

You see, as St. Paul says in chapter 5, ***“Since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...”***

Jesus died for you, and the Holy Spirit works to convert you.

Salvation is a free gift. Yet people respond differently  
– some need to hear it – some are indifferent – some deny.

God does not coerce or force conversion, but God works through means.  
He works through his church, you – the people of God.  
God works through His Word and through the sacraments.

So as you are leaning over that backyard fence, or pushing the shopping cart, or walking your kids to the first day of school, you can share the Romans Road. When someone asks what Christianity is, you can say:

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So say it with me....

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Then invite them to a worship service here at Our Redeemer  
– Saturday at 5:30 and Sunday morning at either 8:00 or 10:30 a.m. Amen!

Now you are the body of Christ, each one of you part of it! Amen!