

**Nov. 3, 2019**

**Speaker:** Eric Naus **Series:** This I Believe – The Book of Romans

**Passage:** Romans 3:9-20

## Community Group Questions: "The Trouble with Sin"

1. Read Romans 3:9-20 aloud as a group. This passage is Paul's "closing argument" as he makes the case that all humanity stands guilty before God, deserving his judgment, and in need of a savior. Compare this passage as a whole with our culture's understanding of "sin." How do people in our day explain what's gone wrong with human beings? Do you think most people are even comfortable calling it "sin"? Why or why not?
2. In verse 9, Paul insists that both Jews and Gentiles stand condemned before God's law because of their sin. Then, Paul drives the point home by quoting several Old Testament passages in a row. Major Bible translations have footnotes next to each quote, informing the reader from where the quotation comes. Take a moment and look up each reference in its original context. Notice that in most cases, the original Old Testament author is describing the *enemies* of God's people: the wicked, the fool, the unrighteous, etc. Yet here, Paul takes these quotes and applies them to *all people*. Why is that so significant for our understanding of sin?
3. In verses 10-13, Paul insists that sin is universal. Notice his use of phrases like "none" and "no one" and "not even one." In what sense is it true that everyone has "turned aside" from God and "no one does good"? How would you describe this concept of universal sin to someone who was really struggling to understand the reality of this Christian doctrine?
4. Verses 13-18 speak to the issue of "total depravity" – the idea that sin infects our lives through and through, and no part of us remains unaffected by sin. What parts of the body does Paul list in these verses, and how are they engaged in sinful behavior? Why is it so important to understand how extensive sin is? Is it necessary to properly "diagnose" the problem of sin in order to embrace the true solution of the gospel? How so?
5. Verses 19-20 say that, left to ourselves, every mouth will be "stopped" in guilty silence on the day of judgment because God will hold us accountable for how we've lived. In light of this, what kind of savior do we need?
6. Read Romans 3:23-24. "Redemption" is a word from the world of ancient slavery. It means to liberate a slave through payment of a price. How is Jesus the redeemer for all who put their trust in him? (see 1 Peter 1:18-19, Mark 10:45). How should it change everyday life if we clearly comprehend the price that Jesus paid to free us from our sin?

7. **Prayer suggestion:** Spend time in corporate confession of sin as a group, and then spend time in thanksgiving for all that Christ has accomplished for us in the cross. Use 1 John 1:9 as a guide.