

ROMANS

WHO'S ON TRIAL?

WEEK 5 | DAVE D'ANGELO

KEY POINTS

- Paul employs a rhetorical technique called the diatribe, anticipating objections from his audience in the form of a prolepsis, answering questions before they are asked.
- Being entrusted with the oracles of God as the Jewish people was a genuine privilege, but it did not guarantee automatic salvation or right standing with God.
- God's faithfulness is not nullified by human faithlessness; He remains faithful in spite of our failure.
- The suggestion that one should sin more so that God's grace might abound more is treated by Paul as absurd and deserving of condemnation.
- The legal term "under sin" describes the universal condition of every human being, inherited through Adam, meaning all are born already deserving of condemnation.
- There are no degrees of lostness; the more morally upright person and the most openly sinful person are equally lost apart from Christ.
- Modern thinking has subtly shifted humanity's posture from recognizing our need before God to treating God as if He must justify Himself to us.
- Our questions for God are valid and He can handle them, but questions must not become a distraction from recognizing our true position as defendants before a holy judge.
- The law's purpose is not to save but to reveal sin, stopping every mouth and leaving the whole world accountable to God.
- The only fitting response when standing before God is not a list of personal accomplishments or religious activities but humble silence and pointing to Jesus.
- Self-righteousness and a reliance on good works can be just as great a barrier to receiving grace as open sinfulness.
- Communion is a picture of God's faithfulness, grace, and love, reminding believers that salvation was never based on human effort but was placed upon us through Christ.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

Romans 3:1-20

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Romans 3 makes clear that God's faithfulness is not nullified by human unfaithfulness. In what area of your life do you most need to rest in this truth rather than letting your own failures define your relationship with God?
2. The image of being 'in the dock' as the defendant rather than sitting as the judge reframes how we approach God with our questions. How does shifting from cross-examination to appeal change the posture of your prayer life?
3. C.S. Lewis argued that modernity has caused people to put God on trial and demand that he justify Himself to us. In what subtle ways do you find this kind of entitlement thinking shaping your own faith?
4. Paul's argument in Romans 3 builds toward the idea that the only fitting human response before a holy and just God is humble silence. What would it look like practically for you to cultivate that posture of silence and awe in your daily walk with God?
5. Communion is described as a picture of God being faithful, gracious, and loving all at once. How regularly do you approach the Lord's table with genuine reflection on what it cost Jesus to move you from 'under sin' to 'under grace'?

***TO CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION,** check out the additional Week Five Discussion Guide under Small Group Materials in the North Way app under Romans.