

## **A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED ON PAUL'S LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN ROME**

### **A CATENA**

Romans 3:10 "As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one;" (Read Romans 3:10-18)

Michael Middendorf in His commentary on the book of Romans says that Romans 3:10-18 is "a catena." He writes, "the technical term for splicing together a series of related passages is a catena." Paul in Romans 3:10-18, spliced together at least seven (7) Old Testament passages to discuss the fact that all human beings are sinners. Actually, Paul could have quoted many more Old Testament passages that have this same message.

The same can be said for the New Testament. There are at least 27 passages in the Old and New Testaments that say all human beings are sinners. There are at least 19 passages that say the penalty for sinning is death. The message of God's word is abundant and clear that all human beings do not measure up to God's expectations and they will die.

What a bleak picture the Law of God paints for humanity. In a world where we see guilty individuals find ways to "wiggle" their way out of punishment for sins they commit through the aid of sharp attorneys, sympathetic juries and the like, God's Law does not provide such escape.

There is another word of God beside His Law found in the Bible. It is the Gospel. Depending on the English translation, 99 or more times the word gospel is found in the Bible. Then there are related words, so the number is far greater than the 99. The message of the gospel is quite simple, out of God's undeserved love He sent His Son Jesus to take upon Himself God's punishment of the sins committed by humanity. Jesus' death was sufficient to pay the price God demanded for every sin committed.

This payment Jesus made is paid against your account with God for the sins you have committed. This payment becomes yours through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, the power of the Gospel and your eating and drinking of the bread and wine/body and blood of Jesus in the Sacrament of Holy Communion. By God's grace, through the faith the Holy Spirit works in your heart to accept Jesus' payment, God declares you free of all sins, guiltless, and a saint. God applies Jesus' righteousness, sinlessness, and holiness against our account.

Prayer: Jesus, Savior, wash away, all the sins I've done today. In Your holy name.  
Amen.

Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness My beauty are, my glorious dress;  
Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed, With joy shall I lift up my head.

Bold shall I stand in that great day, Cleansed and redeemed, no debt to pay;  
Fully absolved through these I am From sin and fear, from guilt and shame.

Lord, I believe Thy precious blood, Which at the mercy seat of God  
Pleads for the captives liberty, Was also shed in love for me.

Lord, I believe, were sinners more Than sands upon the ocean shore,  
Thou hast for all a ransom paid, For all a full atonement made.

When from the dust of death I rise To claim my mansion in the skies,  
This then shall be my only plea; Jesus hath lived and died for me.

Jesus, be endless praise to Thee, Whose boundless mercy hath for me,  
For me, and all Thy hands have made, An everlasting ransom paid.  
(LSB 563)