

Introduction

- **diatribe** - a style of ancient written argument where questions or objections to what you are saying are put into the mouth of an imagined critic, to then be answered by the person making the case
- **Romans 1:1-17**, Paul gave a general introduction and his basic message was **this gospel message I proclaim is not something to be ashamed about - its the power of God for the salvation of all who believe**
 - a grand assertion, but one he wants then to demonstrate and explain
- So in **Romans 1:18-32** Paul goes back to the beginning and explores what the human problem is - this world has rebelled against God and faces his wrath
 - we used to analogy of a doctor's surgery, and Paul diagnoses the human condition as facing the deadly consequences of our rebellion against God - this is the cancer diagnosis, with the intention that we seek treatment

But I'm OK!

- This whole chapter is Paul's response to the imagined objection:
 - "but I'm OK - I'm a Jew - I'm one of God's people - I've got the Law of Moses - I've been circumcised..."
- How did the Jews think of themselves?
 - **separated, marked out, special, distinct, those who knew God, superior**
- How does Paul meet their "I'm alright"?
- **1.** If you judge others (**v.1**), you'd better apply the same divine standards to yourself (**v.2**) - and if you do, you'll come up short (**v.3**)
 - Jews too were rebels against God, not perfect in their devotion and obedience
 - this theme is returned to in more detail in **vs.17-24**
 - what is the purpose of God's kindness, tolerance, patience (**v.4**) - to make us think we are OK in our behaviour? **NO!** to give us chance to repent, to turn from sin we are all guilty of and look to God for help
- **2.** Have you done what God requires? (**v.6**)
 - explore this verse, and how we might mis-interpret it, as it quotes from **Psalms 62**
 - see esp v.2 and 7 - where his salvation depends on God alone
 - the "**work of God**" is to **trust in the one he has sent**
- **3.** God is even-handed (**vs.12-16**) - Jew and Gentile alike are treated fairly before God's judgement
 - the advantages you have are taken into account
 - what is the intent of the Law - to point people to the one God has sent, to show our need of him, not to make us think we are OK!
 - not to make you feel superior, but aware of sin and ready to repent - ready to place trust in the one God has sent
- **4.** Paul's final response to this imaginary oponent's self-satisfied "I'm alright" is an appeal to inward and outward signs of faith (**vs.25-29**)
 - circumcision - outward sign of an inward reality
 - like a security pass - meant to to demonstrate that you have been vetted, that you can be trusted - but can be deceptive, or can be stolen - the pass isn't the important thing, that to which it points is the important thing

Written to Jews - Applicable to the Church?

- Do we look down on others?
- Have we done what God requires?
- Are we conscious that just because we have are in the church we won't be treated any less fairly by God?

- Does our inward reality match our outward profession - whether it is baptism, profession of faith, attendance?
- Paul will come to the **how** of salvation in due course:
 - **how is it that God has saved those who place their trust in Jesus Christ**
 - **but for now he wants to make sure that none are under the illusion that they are OK in God's eyes without that trust in Jesus**