

Romans 3:23

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/rom/rom-3/romans-323/>

All humans have sinned and fall below God's standard.

The sentence continues, making the point that righteousness (Greek “*dikaiosune*”) is not something we as humans can achieve apart from faith. The competing Jewish “authorities” are arguing against Paul—they are saying that keeping the law is necessary to achieve righteousness. However, they do not keep the law themselves, as Paul pointed out in chapter 2. These competing “authorities” have slandered Paul’s message of good news (verse 8) and are slandering God’s name in word and in deed (Romans 2:24).

However, after Paul pointed all this out, he made it quite clear that he is no better (verse 9). In fact, Paul calls himself the chief of sinners (1 Timothy 1:15). He now makes a universal statement that includes himself: *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God* (v 23).

So *all* here includes Paul. *All* includes Jews as well as Gentiles. *All have sinned*.

The goal is righteousness; a life that lines up with all that is true and right so that all is as it should be. Righteousness means all things are working in harmony with God’s good design for the world. The obstacle is sin. Sin is living apart from God’s good design. Sin is living to extract and exploit one another rather than living to love and serve one another.

Without dealing with sin, we cannot achieve righteousness. Because of sin, we will not be in harmony with who God created us to be. We cannot be fulfilled because of sin; we will not be able to have social harmony with family, friends, and our community. Sin is that which takes us away from what is true and right, the way everything was created by God to work in perfect harmony.

The competing Jewish “authorities” have a solution: “Keep the law.” This is a solution that does not work.

Paul has a different solution that is “apart from the law” (v 21). The solution is God’s grace. The receipt of God’s grace comes through faith and faith alone. When we receive God’s grace, we also receive the power to overcome sin in our daily living.

Biblical Text

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,