

10/15/18

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

There's a dead racoon lying dead on the side of the road. Poor guy. He must've been hit by a car. One day he's as alive as a raccoon can be, doing whatever it is raccoons do and the next, he's gone.

Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. Romans 3:19-20

I mention that lifeless critter because I think it can help us understand what the apostle Paul says here in Romans chapter 3. See, if I stopped my car and started yelling at that raccoon to get out of the road, people would think I was crazy. Yelling at a dead raccoon isn't going to help. It won't move away from the road because it can't. It's dead. But spiritually speaking, that's how we are too! Dead in sin—that's how the Bible describes all people. By nature, we're dead to all things spiritual and therefore unable to do anything spiritual. Attempting to obey God's law in order to earn his love and salvation is simply impossible. Is there any possibility a dead raccoon will jump up and run away? No. Is there any chance for us to win God's love and a place in heaven by obedience to the will of God? No. We're spiritually dead and completely incapable of such a thing.

That's what Paul is talking about when he writes, "Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law..." The purpose of God's law isn't to show us what to do to get to heaven; God's law shows us that we can't get to heaven on our own.

Our Savior wants us to understand our helplessness and hopelessness only so we depend on him alone for rescue. The Lord makes us conscious of sin so that we look to the only One who can take our sin away. And Jesus doesn't disappoint! Where there is only death, Jesus not only takes away our sin, he gives us life.

Lifeless, dead, and unable to help ourselves—that's us. "Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law." Jesus alone gives us life... and hope and joy as well.

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, help me to look to you alone for forgiveness, life, and salvation. Amen!*

(WELS E-Devotion, adapted)

...See you in worship.

Keep looking up because the Lord is always looking down – Psalm 121

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