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Romans chapter 3 verses 1 through 4. These are God's words. What advantage? Then has the Jew or what is the prophet of circumcision. Much in every way chiefly because to them more committed. The oracles of God for? What if some did not believe? Well there are unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect.

Certainly not Indeed. Let God be true. What every man a liar. As it is written that you may be justified in your words and may overcome when you are touched So far, the reading of God's inspired and and Aaron tort

Well as the apostle has been telling us how happy he is to preach the gospel and how eager he is to do that when he comes to Rome even in a church that knew the gospel. Well, One of the reasons is because in the Gospel, the righteousness of God, has been revealed from faith and forefaith.

And that is over against the wrath of God, which had been, which is revealed against all unrighteousness. And ungodliness of men. And for some Jewish believers who were hoping not in the same hope that we'll find David their king hoping by the end of verse 4. But we're hoping instead in the fact that they were Jews or the advantages that they had had or the sign of circumcision or the instruction that they had received and they were as we heard and verses 17 through 24, confident in themselves.

And so, one of the things that the apostle is working at here, is to make sure that these Jews too know that the only righteousness they could ever have as that righteousness from God. That is revealed and given in the Lord Jesus Christ. And so. So they needed to be told that their outward circumcision and their outward membership didn't do them any good unless they had been made alive by God, to have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And if and it would only do them any good to have the external sign in the external membership, if the Lord had given them also to go with it. The internal reality, that corresponds to those things, even telling them that there could be Gentiles whom the Lord brings to into spiritual life, regenerates, them and brings to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And they start and they're walking by faith to walk according to the righteous requirements of the law. And that such Gentiles would judge even then and that's the portion that we had last week at the end of chapter two in verses, 25 through 29. So he began with for circumcision is indeed profitable.

If you keep the law and we took that to heart, I trust by the spirit's help. And as we prayed and asked him to do we, we hope that he will keep making us to take this to heart that we do have real advantages. And it is a great mercy of God that we have the sign of the new covenant with Jesus Christ as the risen and ascended and enthroned.

Mediator, who has poured out his spirit to wash us and to unite us through Him by faith, which is the way that his Spirit washes us, by uniting us, to the Lord Jesus in faith. That the having a sign of this is a great blessing. Being a member of his church.

As a great blessing is, we will consider in a moment But it's only a great blessing. If we look to the Lord for that inward work, if we look to him who gave the sign for the Spirit whom he pours out to give us that life in our hearts and that faith and our arts so that we would be saved by grace through faith and, and not boast, but rather rejoice to be his workmanship.

And then to walk in. Good works. To be those keepers of the law who are actually profited by all of the external advantages. We have as members of the church of our Lord Jesus Christ, But he comes now to answer the question. If it's the internal work that ultimately matters.

Then what value is there in being a Jew or in having circumcision? What value is there in being a member of Christ's church or having the sign of membership in his church? Any ask that question verse 1, what advantage? Then has the Jew or what is the prophet of circumcision and the answer is much in every way and so in the first place tonight, we'll see that Jews had real advantages.

And of course, being the Israel of God being the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now the household of God having moved from you, remember, hopefully in the morning sermon a couple of weeks ago, the from the age in which it was the commonwealth of Israel that had light and had God in this world.

And now it's that household of God. That if you're not in it, you are you are without hope. And in darkness and that transition that if Ephesians highlights for us. So there's much application to us here, even though we're asking about being a Jew or circumcision because the same is true about being a member of the household of God or as they were first called an Antioch.

We heard just a couple of days ago, being a Christian, Remember of Christ's church. There is real advantage for being a Christian and having baptism. And so in the first place, we'll hear that there are real advantages. But then there's the question If the advantage is real, then how come so many people are not saved who have these advantages?

And it's not like that was just a question for the Jewish Church. Many of us have had experience in churches, in which there were many who did not give in the life evidence of a heart made new and made to believe in Jesus Christ and united to him did not give evidence of being a new creature who is his workmanship created in Christ Jesus to walk in.

Good works, Indeed. The Lord Himself tells us in Matthew chapter 7. There are many, who will say to him in that day. Lord Lord in your name. Did we not? And they give three in your name. Did we not showing that they are as it were what we would call, reforms Christians.

Those who know that salvation is only in the name of Jesus Christ. And that the things that they did were evidences not earnings of righteousness, from God, but evidence of righteousness, from God, Matthew 7:21 in there. And so Jesus himself says that there will be many who we presume with their doctrine are baptized members of the church to whom.

He says depart from me. I never knew you you workers of Lawlessness. In other words, whatever they did. It was not that which proceeded from faith. That proceeded from a new heart that which proceeded from Union and union with Christ. And so he describes the same sort of situation with Christians.

That Romans 2:25-29 did with with unbelieving Jews. And so What about that? And well, in that case, it is men who is unfaithful? And it is man. Who is the lawyer? Not God? God is faithful and God is still true and will consider that in a second place. And then in the third place as he uses David, as a marvelous example of one who knew that, if he perished God would have been true.

God would have been faithful. God would have been righteous and it would have been him. David who was the liar and that God would have been justified to condemn him. And so, David doesn't come and say, but I'm a member, and I have science, he comes and he says, have mercy upon me, which of course, is what?

Those signs teach us about, isn't it? The mercy of God. And hopefully we have time by the time we get there to look at Psalm 51 and the relationship between sacrifices and repentance, even in the end of the song. The apostle under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Having some expectation that we know not merely the portion of Psalm 51 that he quotes but the doctrine of the Psalm as a whole.

So in the first place we have real advantages and they are big ones. And there are many of them much. They are big ones In every way. There are many one of there are. Many of them. And yet, he only names one in this place chiefly because to them were committed.

The oracles of God are the sayings of God. And there are many words that can be translated oracles or sayings. This is one that comes from the same root as logos, which you don't ordinarily. Use a Greek or Hebrew words in public preaching but that's one. That's pretty well known.

Because that is the word for word that is in John chapter 1 describing even the Lord Jesus himself. And so they had the sayings of God and how much more than you who are Christians for. If the benefits of being a Jew or having circumcision were much, they were big and many, there were many of them in every way.

Then how much more for you, who have not just the 39 books, but the 66 who have the apostolic writings, the chief blessing that the Jews had was they had the Bible and not wanting to how, you know, participate in the same spirit as a child on a playground saying, well, I have more Bible than you do.

We can we can still say If that was the chief of the much. In every way, blessing of the Jew and of the circumcised man than shouldn't, we marvel at the greatness of our blessing? You have even more Bible than they did. Certainly, their Bible taught them of the triune God and of the Lord, Jesus Christ, and of His salvation, and of the need of forgiveness.

And righteousness, only by grace, It, taught them of all those things. As we'll see, when the Apostle has has finished. Declaring that at the end of chapter 3 and he launches into studying Abraham and studying David and how this is the same gospel that they had, But do we not have?

It told us more clearly and more fully than they did. And so if that's the chief of the advantages, then truly we can say much in every way about ourselves. How could someone say? Well sure they had the sayings of God, But it didn't save them. So it wasn't a real advantage.

No, it was a real advantage and that's what's going to provoke. What the Lord says in verse 3 and 4 But we have we have the much in every way. Now they're much in every way. Included some things that some of us don't have Well at least of whom are the fathers according to the flesh and from whom according to the flesh.

Christ came Romans 9 verse 5. The apostle is going to pick up this idea again later in the letter. What are the some of the advantages the Jews had? And just as with the scripture that they had the sayings of God that they had? We also can say how much more in chapter 9 If there are Israelites we are the household of God, not just the Commonwealth of Israel.

To use the language of Ephesians chapter 2 To whom pertain the adoption that God would tell Pharaoh let Israel go for. He is my firstborn son, but for us, we can say how much more for God. The Son has poured out his spirit and God, the Father Galatians 4 describes.

He sent His Son in the fullness of time because we are children has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts. And he is the spirit who there in Galatians 4, and here in this. Also, in this letter in Romans chapter 8 where we hear that the Spirit makes us call God our Abba, our Father that each one of us knows a personal adoption in our personal union with the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so with their adoption in verse 4 of chapter 9, we could say how much more we the glory knowing that the glory had come down and inhabited the tabernacle and the glory had come down and inhabited the temple. And yet there was never They display of the glory of God like there was in the Lord.

Jesus Christ, the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld. His glory Gloria is of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth. In fact, he has not just a display of God's glory. Hebrews one tells us, He is the brightness of God's glory that the Lord Jesus in his glory is the intensity of the glory of God who are Israelites to whom pertain adoption glory the covenants.

And we more, of course not. Now just the administrations that led up to Christ, but that glorious final administration. With the enthroned Christ, the giving of the law, the law came through Moses as John Grace and truth through Jesus Christ. Not that the law didn't tell us about grace and truth.

But when Jesus came grace and truth arrived in a person, not just in written form in promise form, but in fulfillment, and in fullness. And so we we come and we could keep going. I think we'll do at least Hebrews 6 made mention of this at the end of the Sabbath school and on the Lord's Day morning, just describing some of the prophet, some of the advantages of being a member.

Now of the Church of Jesus Christ because in this how much more, here's some of the, how much more Hebrews chapter 6, beginning in verse 4, Ferta is impossible for those who are once enlightened and have tasted the heavenly gift and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come.

If they fall away to renew them Again to repentance since they crucify. Again, for themselves, the Son of God and put him to an open. Shame.

And then he says, a couple of verses later, but beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you. Yes, things that a company salvation that we speak in this manner. Now, this is one of those things. Not really ever having been baptistic that. I just don't know how I could handle a towel.

I could imagine my way through the, what, Hebrews chapter 6 teaches kind of, like, I don't know how our minion pastors survive, who do not know that God is bringing to himself. Everyone for whom Christ died and, and that there are not going to be those who, who perish because I was not the one who could persuade them, or they refuse to be persuaded.

I don't know how our our minions survive, those things mentally and emotionally psychologically. I don't know how someone who's baptistic can reason through Ephesians 6 verses 4 through 9 Well unless they were our minion. But if you know If you know that that

someone who has been regenerated and believed and made righteous in Jesus and repented. If you know that that person can never fall away can never be made.

An unbeliever can never become a in a final sense. Unrepentant impossible to renew again to repentance than what do you do with this? If you believe that there is only a regenerate church membership then what do you do? With people who have been enlightened that is they were in the light.

They were, they were given the light of the Word of God. They were given some understanding of it. They have tasted the heavenly gift, a big part of, which is to be in a member of the assembly, in which the spiritual gifts are given. And in each one, whom the Lord, whom the Lord redeems, He gives gifts Ephesians 4.

The resurrected and descended Savior has given gifts among men, when they have become partakers of the Holy Spirit. Yes, members of the assemblies on earth and which the Holy Spirit is working powerfully and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come. That is their surrounded by people who were saved by grace through faith, not of themselves.

And those who are around them, who are in Christ. Our new creations, They belong to the age to come, and the power of the age to come, are already at work. And then You see, dear, covenant children, Hebrews chapter 6, verse 4, and verse 5. When it describes advantages is describing advantages that you have as members of the church of Jesus Christ and whether you're a child member or an adult member, you may be in the same danger of having these advantages and not responding by looking to Christ alone for your salvation.

Not having your heart made alive by the Spirit. And softened by the Spirit to repent, to turn from your sin and to trust and the Lord Jesus Christ. And there are other lists of advantages. We won't take the time, we really do. Want to get to Psalm 51, but you see them in your outline.

If you have these advantages, then repent and believe look to God to work in you the better things that accompany salvation because there is a great danger, not just a great tragedy, but a great danger and being hardened by being a member and growing up in a church where the gospel is preached.

And people believe and the spiritual and the Holy Spirit is dwelling in the people around you. And he's in investing them with gifts, for the building, up of the church and you hear the gospel preached week by week. And hopefully the Bible also opened day by day in the home.

And you see what a Christian should be, but you only ever imitated outwardly and think that 12 because I've been a member of the church. And because I had the sacraments and because I learned to imitate outwardly what the other people in the church do. And then you fall away from that because repentance can't be sustained by outward.

Imitation The unchanged man is still dead in his sins and that death is going to overflow out of the heart and from the mouth. And in the life and there are many who grow up in church and discover that what is in them and what comes out of them is still the death of the first Adam and not the life of the second, the life of the last.

And these are the ones who are impossible to renew again to repentance. Because, as you with your reformed doctrines of grace, at least recognized, when you're in, Hebrews chapter 6. Oh, renew again to repentance must mean, they never did truly repent.

So you have real advantages and if you have them, then repent and believe because God who has brought you into His church, Whether through bringing you into contact with other believers so that you thought church membership was something desirable and you heard the gospel preached and it made it made intellectual theological sense.

And so you came to agree with it as a set of truth propositions or whether it was you were born into a Christian family and came up in the church. God who brought you into the church to give you? Those advantages to make you hear those gospel, His gospel.

He genuinely offers himself to you and Jesus Christ.

The offer of the gospel is true in the preaching and it is just as true in the baptizing And in the showing forth of his death of the table week by week in the supper, we're not hyper-calvinists, we don't say that. God is disingenuous. When the reprobate, those who aren't elect?

Hear the preaching of the gospel? No to genuine offer of a genuine gospel and if they would believe they would be saved.

But how much more reason do you have to believe who are members of his church? Because he not taking you aside to himself made you one of his people whom. He calls saints marks as holy apart from the world and he calls you to repentance and faith by this.

And that's why as we come to the second point, we see in this passage that if If someone has these advantages but does not believe It is the man who has been unfaithful. Not God For what if some did not believe? Again, It's an understatement. Isn't it? You don't read the Old Testament and come to the conclusion.

That just some in Israel did not believe. It seems to have been a remnant even even throughout the Old Testament and it is a remnant. Now, as we'll get to in chapter 9 but for what if some did not believe will their unbelief, make the faithfulness of God without effect?

Does the fact that a that some of them or a great multitude of them, even didn't come to faith, didn't come to the cutting away of the foreskin of the heart and the the giving of the heart of flesh. Instead of the heart of stone, all of those things that they knew that they needed, even from their own sign, even from their own Scriptures, If they didn't come to those things, Does that mean that God was somehow untruthful or insincere in offering those things to them?

Well, they're unbelief make the faithfulness of God. Without a fact, those who have been baptistic and are and come at some point to hear the biblical view of children in the church, preached from Scripture, One of the great problems for them, is that nagging question. But what about all?

Those baptized babies who grow up and go to hell to which you can say and I hope it doesn't come off a snarky. But what about all? Those baptized adults who are already grown up and go to hell. The main question is If some who have these chief in, in everywhere, these much in many ways, or much in every way.

Sorry, I confused. All of that. Let's start again. If those who had these much in every way advantages still don't come to faith. Does that make God? Unfaithful. Does that make the advantages themselves? Less advantageous. You would hope that if you ask someone does that make God unfaithful? They would answer like that.

Four-year-old, did and family worship? No, certainly not. But there are many who when they hear about the sign and the membership and the advantages that it has, whether you're talking

about Jews or talking about Christians, They think that that would make God unfaithful. You can understand why they would resist a doctrine that to them makes, it sound like God is unfaithful.

But the apostle here says, that is not what happens. In fact, he goes on to say, if every single circumcised Jew ever had been retrobate. God would still have been faithful. Certainly not indeed, let God be true. But every man a liar, not just some of them, You see your need for the life of God, from Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit to be worked in.

Your heart is so complete and so great. That if every single one of you were to perish in your sins, God would be just and righteous and indeed. He would have been merciful to announce his gospel to you and it will have been against that goodness and against that.

Mercy that you refuse to believe. But in that mercy, he tells you that he is the one who can give you to believe And so if you don't know, if you've come to faith, if you're unsure about yourself, you can claim the advantages. But not presumptuously, thinking you're saved because you have them, but looking to the one who gave them to you, knowing that it was a mercy that he gave them to you and asking him for that decisive mercy of working in you according to the word that you hear preached working in you, according to the sign that he has caused to be put upon you working in you according to those powers of the aged to come that, you know, are at work in others in his church working in you by those gifts that he has put in all of those people around you, working in you by the preaching of his word, which you are receiving right now, and which you have every scriptural expectation, and reason to ask him come by your spirit and make the Word that I'm hearing produce the reality in me.

You see the fact that many are lost. Despite their advantages doesn't say anything against the faithfulness of God. It just shows you how great is the deadness of man and the wickedness of his sin. And the power of its sin was not the sign of circumcision or the sign of baptism is not one of the things that it teaches is the greatness of our need for grace.

And so if we turn out to have been dead. Dark hard, wicked. Sinners who don't believe We're still proving some of what the sign shows that we needed cut away that we needed life that we needed to be washed. The grace is truly offered and exhibited in every case.

And if you're familiar with our, with our confession, it is yet only conferred upon those to whom such upon such as to whom it belongs. That might be word for word. It might not but you get the idea, it's always exhibited. It's always offered. But the grace only comes for the elect and when he comes back to this question in chapter 9, that's what he's going to say.

God truly says, this is the salvation that can be yours through faith. And if a man doesn't come to faith, even though he said he believed, even though he said he was a member or even though he had a membership, then it is the man who is the lawyer and it is the man who has unfaithful, and God is just to condemn him.

If God has shown you mercy already, by making you part of the visible church and perhaps you've had these conversations with people who say, well, you only believe that because you were born into a Christian family, you only believe that because you were born in America in the 20th century.

I said, yeah. And God who wanted to save me as the one who picked the family that I would be more than into. He's the one who picked the geographical location that I would live and the century that I would live in. He's also the one who put you in front of me right now so that you could hear about.

Jesus from me. He's the one who has given me my advantages, I completely admit that But if he's the one who has given you that external election and sanctification placing you in his church, separating you from the world than doesn't it make sense for you to look to him for the internal to?

We can admit that you only ever come to be part of Jesus's church by the providence of God. And so that should encourage us to remember that, you only ever come to have life and believe in Jesus, by the providence of God by his giving that to you in the heart.

In other words, as chapter 9 is going to treat it length. Just because they had the election of being Israelites. According to the flesh, didn't mean they had election unto life as vessels of mercy.

But you can look to the one who gives the first because you the outward to give you the inward. If God has brought me into the church, We're salvation from him. Alone is genuinely exhibited and offered. Then let me never look elsewhere then from him for my repenting and believing and if he has brought me into the church, that announced this to me that I must repent and believe in that.

He's the one who gives preventing and he's the one who gives believing and look to him to give you repenting and to give you believing. Because even in the church, salvation is a divine mercy. Not a divine obligation. This is the end of verse 4, as it is written.

That you may be justified in your words and may overcome when you are judged and he's quoting here from Psalm 51 and probably a Greek translation of Psalm 51 and it's David. When Nathan, the prophet has come to him. After he's gone into Bathsheba and that's a very brief title, but, you know, David not only committed this sin with her, but went to great lengths to try to cover up his adultery until he had even murdered Her husband.

And so you see, David has who had more advantages Then David If we are members of the church, he had not just membership. But he was, he was anointed and he was the king, he was the one from him. The Christ was to come David recognized that if he was going to be forgiven, it was not because God was obligated to because he was David, If he was going to be forgiven, it was because God was merciful to him.

David says, have mercy upon me. God according to your steadfast love, according to the multitude of your tender mercies blot out my transgressions, some mercy that the Holy Spirit uses this, as the example. Because usually, when, when the question that the Jews raised or that those who are baptistic, often, raise about.

Well, one of those who had the membership and had the sign and they perish, they're usually not talking about themselves, right? They're talking about those people over there who had it and who got baptized and they didn't believe and they went to hell. But what do you do with yourself when you've been baptized?

However, you got there and sin comes out of your heart, that makes you wonder. Can someone like me be saved?

And David's answer is yes, but only by someone like God. You see, he didn't rely on the fact of his being set apart to God, The fact of his being a member of of Israel, the fact of his being anointed as the king, the fact of the sacrifices that he has offered.

So many times, He fell back on the God, who gave those sacrifices and the mercy that is exhibited in those sacrifices. And even that, God would be the one who gave him a right spirit

that all of the things that God had given him externally pointed to a God who has full of steadfast love and whose mercies are a multitude, and who forgives transgression, and who washes, his people from sin, and who creates clean hearts in them, and gives them a right spirit and gives them joy of salvation.

And so when we say, improve your baptism or make use of your baptism, we're not saying look back in time to a point at which you got baptized and say I know I was saved because I got baptized we're saying look to the God who gave you that? Baptism.

Look to the look to the Christ who commanded that baptism. Look to the spirit whom he signifies in the pouring in that baptism, ask him to give you that life inside you from. Jesus ask him to give you that faith in Jesus Christ that unites you to Christ, so that you will have not just his name upon you, but his likeness even in your heart.

Once we have the Spirit given heartwork without the sign. Sorry, without the heart work, the sign does no good. You look later in the Psalm. You do not desire sacrifice or else. I would give it. You do not delight and burnt offering, the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken in a contrite heart, these o God, you will not despise.

So, So he says the outward sign doesn't do me any good until you've given me the inward reality. But then he says in the last verse, Then you shall be pleased with sacrifices of righteousness with burnt offering and whole burnt offering. Then they shall offer bulls on your altar.

You ever read or some Psalm 51 and thought. Well, if God doesn't want sacrifices, why are they giving them to him? Isn't that very similar to the if it's the inward reality, not the outward Jewishness or outward circumcision. What's the point in having it question? The end of Romans 2 in the beginning of Romans 3.

And the reason is because those sacrifices testify to the saving work that God would do in Jesus Christ. And the bringing of them with a new heart that has been given for Christ's sake, pleases God, He does delight in those burnt offerings and whole burnt offering and sacrifices You see you have external advantages but if God brings you to faith and Jesus Christ, you trust in Him and you belong to Him, those advantages will be increased and blessed to you all the more

See the one who never comes to faith, even if he has received God's sign, he just shows the truth of the sign. Not that the sign is a lie. God is still just if he judges that man, some foolishly say that if the ones who have received membership and its sign are not saved, then God has somehow fallen short or that he's not sovereign.

That he's being overruled by man and the apostle will deal with such foliate greater length in chapter 9. But here he has shown that the advantages were real and they were the kind of advantages that made the Jews ongoing need of saving grace. All the more evident as he will have proved.

By the time we get to chapter 3 verse 23, all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Let's pray. Father, thank you for this word. We pray that you would write its truth in our hearts so that we wouldn't just have the external advantage of having heard it, but the saving advantage of your spirit having written it on our hearts For.

We ask it in Jesus name, Amen.