

The Eternal Point of the Divine Example
Romans 3:19 et al

I. The Benefits of a Good Example

A. Bread Dough Window Pane Test

B. A good example provides a guide to good success

C. God uses examples to guide our pursuit of Him

1. **God sets an example in the lives of others, a living example, so that we might know Him, understand Him, put our faith in Him, live for Him, in Him, and with Him, now and forever.**
2. Knowing God as He knows Himself to be is so precious, so valuable, so worthy a goal for our lives that God intentionally points us to His work in the lives of others and directs us to learn.
3. Why?
 - a. Why
 - (1) does God tell us of Eden and Adam and Eve and fruit and serpents and the fall from grace?
 - (2) So we will learn of God from their example.
 - b. Why
 - (1) does God tell of Sodom and Gomorrah and fire and brimstone and world-loving glances back and pillars of salt?
 - (2) So that we will learn from their example who God is, how God is, and what God requires of us.
 - c. Why
 - (1) do we read of Moses on the mountain and tables of stone and ten commandments and golden calves deadly plagues?
 - (2) So that we will learn of God from their example
 - d. And why
 - (1) do we read of kings and prophets and disciples and Jesus and crosses and tombs and bright resurrection mornings after the darkness of devilish crucifixions?
 - (2) So that we might learn from their examples to know the sovereign God who rules in every life and in all the world, one way or another.

II. Four Examples

A. Romans 3:19 The Example of the Law

1. 3:19-20 conclude the section begin at 1:18
 - a. Paul begins to describe the value of the gospel by describing the universal need for the gospel
 - (1) The wrath of God is coming upon sinners
 - (2) Every one— every Gentile, every Jew, every man, woman, and child—all are sinners
 - (3) Everyone who sins stands guilty before God and in need of justification. None are excused.
 - (4) The gospel

- (a) describes God's saving, justifying work of grace in Christ:
 - (b) God's wrath-satisfying, guilt-erasing, reconciling mercy in the life, death, and resurrection of His Son, Jesus
 - (5) Everyone needs the gospel and through the gospel the grace of God in Christ Jesus.
 - b. Paul concludes this section with a final closing argument:
 - (1) God gave to the Jews a revelation of Himself in the covenant Law
 - (2) Despite the holiness and adequacy of the Law, they could not sufficiently meet its demands to save themselves from the wrath and justice of God.
 - (3) God made the Jews and the Law an example to the whole world for our good so that we might learn from them of God.
2. Whether by general revelation in nature or special revelation through the covenant Law we discover every human being is by nature and choice a lawbreaker.
- a. Every mouth is shut
 - b. There can be no objections or protests
 - c. All are proven guilty and subject to God's justice, God's wrath
 - d. By works of law, general or specific, no one is justified
 - e. We need another salvation, another Savior
3. God provides the example of the Jewish people and the Law to show by their example
- a. that no one can save themselves through their own efforts.
 - b. Everyone is universally accountable to God, guilty, and in need of a Savior, as the gospel declares.
4. The gospel has come
- a. The Savior we need is Jesus Christ.
 - b. **Jesus is good news for everyone who understands and accepts in faith the example God provides.**
 - (1) Jesus lived for us the life God requires; a life with no lawbreaking, a perfect, innocent, sinless life
 - (2) Jesus willingly and lovingly and intentionally gave His life to death on the cross in our place, taking our sin upon Himself and suffering the wrath of God upon our sin in our place for our benefit.
 - (3) God is right. God is just. God justifies through the life and death of Jesus every sinner who puts their faith in Him and trusts Him with their life.
5. It may be difficult to come week after week for these last few months and hear again and again about sin and wrath and justice and judgment.
- a. I get it.
 - b. But the problem in our nation, our community, our families, our world; the problem in our own hearts that most needs our attention is the problem of sin which God sent His own Son to the cross to resolve.
 - c. The biggest problem we face is not lack of education.
 - (1) It is not poverty or the disproportionate distribution of wealth.
 - (2) The problem is not lack of diversity, equality, or inclusion.

- (3) The real problem is not overpopulation, plastic pollution, inadequate healthcare or any of the other very real challenges the world sets before us.
- (4) **Those problems are all real but they camouflage the real problem: sin!**
- d. Someone has said, “The heart of our problem is the problem of our heart.”
 - (1) That remains true today.
 - (2) The example of the Jews and the Law demonstrates that whatever we believe God’s Law to be we cannot, despite even our best attempts at compliance, satisfy the requirements of holiness and a holy God on our own as we are.
 - (a) We need help.
 - (b) We need grace.
 - (c) We need mercy.
 - (d) We need Christ!

T.S. The Bible says, “In the mouth of two or three witnesses a matter is established.” Let me give you three other witnesses to the personal benefit of God’s examples.

B. Romans 15:1-4 The Example of the Scriptures

- 1. Romans 15:1-4
 - a. When Paul gets to Romans 15 he is dealing with the ethical concerns in the Christian life:
 - (1) how we are to live together as believers and followers of Jesus.
 - (2) He expands on Jesus’ command that we love one another
 - (3) He speaks of the strong and the weak, of neighbors, and of Christ.
 - b. Then, he writes of the Scriptures and you realize the Bible is the record
 - (1) of our strong God bearing with the failings of weak humanity,
 - (2) of God, like the Good Samaritan in the parable Jesus told, doing good to his unworthy neighbor
 - (3) Of Christ taking upon Himself the reproach we deserve
 - c. **And he tells us we find hope when we follow the example Jesus set for us of goodness, grace, and love for God and others.**
 - d. A divine example of compassion, mercy, patience, endurance is set before us in the Scriptures
 - (1) That example is intentional
 - (2) It is there for a purpose: “for our instruction.”
- 2. We have an example of the character and conduct of God.
 - a. **We have, in this example an inherent invitation to believe and to imitate the example set before us.**
 - b. The Scriptures, every single word of the Bible sets before us instruction through example that through endurance and encouragement of this word, we might have hope.

C. 1 Cor 10:1-11 The Example of History

- 1. We also have the example of history
- 2. Buying a used car
 - a. Fairly worrisome

- b. Never confident about what I have NOT been told
 - (1) What's not good?
 - (2) Why is the previous owner not still driving it?
 - (3) What is the accident history?
 - (4) What do I expect the day after the limited warranty expires?
 - (5) I want to know it all!
 - (a) The good, the bad, the ugly
 - (b) The truth
- 3. That's the example God gives us in history: the truth.
- 4. Why? So "that we might not desire evil as they did."

D. 1 Timothy 1:12-16 The Example of Transformation

- 1. One final example to note for our benefit this morning: the example of transformed lives.
- 2. Paul, the worst of sinners, is an example of God's mercy
 - a. He is an example of transforming grace even upon the most resistant opponents
 - b. He is an example of God's power of persuasion even in the life and heart of the most ignorant unbeliever
 - c. He is an example of God's perfect patience as He extends the call to faith in Jesus in the lives of all He chooses
- 3. Look at Paul. See the divine example in Paul's life
 - a. **See the example of saving grace and know you are not so far from God, so far from Christ, so far from grace, so far from faith, so far from worthy as Paul was AND God saved him!**
 - b. God will save you as well as you put your faith in Him.
 - c. Paul does not call himself the foremost saint but the foremost sinner. He identifies himself as one most deserving of wrath over all the others AND Christ saved him.
 - d. **If Paul, then certainly you!**

III. Conclusion

You are not a bigger, worser sinner than Paul. Christ came into the world to save sinners. Sinners like Paul. Sinners like me. Sinners like you. God sets Paul as an example of grace so you will trust Christ to save you.

Stop objecting. Stop resisting. Stop making excuses. Stop putting it off. God gives you all the examples you need for your benefit. Trust Him. Learn from the examples. Commit your life to Him.