

Lent Day 7

Wednesday March 8, 2017

Reading: Romans 3:1-8

Reflection

I feel like I told this story last year, but it works here as well. There was one birthday when my brother and mother told me to stay out of the kitchen because they were getting my birthday stuff ready and it was meant to be a surprise. Then a little game broke out where I would come toward the kitchen and they would chase me away. It was fun until they got tired of the game. I didn't know when to pull back and as a result I entered the kitchen and spoiled the surprise.

Now, a surprise is nice, but they could have been upset by my ruining it (they were) and that could have led them to cancel the birthday stuff (they didn't). So, in some ways we could say that my goofiness highlighted their generosity even more than if I didn't ruin the surprise. They would have just been 'regular' generous. If that's the case then shouldn't my goofiness be considered a good thing because of the result? Of course not.

That's the type of thinking Paul is heading off in Romans. Now in his context he's created a hypothetical conversation. However, we could stretch the text to say, if God's people fail to represent him appropriately, that is they sin grossly, but he keeps his promise even in light of that, then does our sin aid in God's purposes. In short, does our evil become good? No! In fact, that's demonic thinking.

For those who are determined not to face up to their sin, this is terrible news. Their sin will be rightly judged. However, for those who can hear the logic that just because our sin highlights God's mercy it doesn't make our sin virtuous. The even better news, though is that once faced — meaning confessed and repented of — God frees us of this sin through Christ. This means rather than facing judgment our sin is forgiven and not held against us.

So if we set this good news back into the birthday illustration. Not only would the party move forward, it would be a better party than was originally planned.

Prayer

Father, thank you for your mercy and grace. What great news it is that salvation does not depend on our faithfulness but yours. Amen.