



ROMANS

The Gospel of God

The Gospel and Confidence!

Romans 2:17-29

Message #5 of 33 – S1128

Sermon given on November 17, 2024



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

The Gospel and Confidence!

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Opening Comments

- Open your Bibles to **Romans 2**
- Today, we continue the series through the letter to the Romans – **The Gospel of God!**
- Let's open this time in our service with a word of prayer. - **Pray**

Teaching

- **The Gospel and Confidence!**
- It is likely that everyone here is a believer.
- One of the things we hope for as believers is heaven.
- If I were to ask you if you are going to heaven, most of you would say yes with great confidence.
- And you should be confident in that.
- You should have no doubt that you are saved and going to heaven.
- One of the dangers the lost face is that they do not know they are lost.
- This is especially true of those who are religious and lost.
- Religion has never saved anyone, but religion is very good at blinding people to the fact that they are lost.
- Many religious people, like Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists will stand at the White Throne of Christ and be surprised that Jesus will reject them (**Matthew 7:22-23**).

Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'

²³ And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

- And there will be some who claim to be Christian but are not.
- And this is not just about religious religions.
- Some people believe in things in a manner that some might view as religious.
- Climate change zealots fall into that category.
- Paul begins by highlighting the privileges they claim as Jews.
- **Romans 2:17-18**
- To the Jews, there was nothing higher than being a Jew.

- They believed they had been set apart by God and were therefore better than everyone else.
 - They had the Scriptures, and they knew God's will.
 - When they compared themselves to the Gentiles, they were far superior.
 - Well, that is what they deluded themselves to believe.
 - Paul goes on to challenge their false confidence.
 - **Romans 2:19-20**
 - They were guilty of spiritual blindness (**Matthew 23:16**).
- Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged to perform it.'**
- They boasted about their relationship with God and their knowledge of His Word and will, but they were far from Him (**Matthew 15:8-9**).
- These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. ⁹ And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.**
- Spiritual blindness also leads to spiritual pride.
 - **Romans 2:20**
 - might be easy to imagine that you are spiritually superior to those ignorant masses that surround us.
 - Especially in a church like this one where we emphasize knowing God's Word.
 - There are many people who have a superior knowledge of God's Word, maybe even understanding the Greek or Hebrew it was originally written in, and yet have hearts of stone, unfeeling to the things of God.
 - The big problem of this spiritual blindness is the spiritual pride it produces.
 - We as Bible-believing Christians need to watch out for spiritual egotism that comes from a growing knowledge of God.
 - Just because you might know more about the Word of God than someone doesn't make you superior.
 - Paul goes on to describe how this spiritual pride might show up in someone's heart.
 - **Romans 2:21-23**

- The privileges God bestowed upon the Jewish people should have produced godly saints.
- Instead, it produced self-righteous hypocrites.
- They looked at the sins of others and judged them as guilty and did not see similar sins in their own hearts.
- We are not guilty of sin only after we have committed that sin (**Matthew 5:27-28**).

You have heard that it was said to those of old, *'You shall not commit adultery.'*
²⁸ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

- The seeds of sin germinate in the heart before they bear fruit in our lives.
 - That is why the Proverbs tells us (**Proverbs 4:23**).
- Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.**
- Turn to **Luke 18**.
 - If ever, we as Christ-followers, start to believe we are superior to others, even unbelievers, we are in grave danger.
 - Jesus described the self-righteous attitude of the Pharisees of His time.
 - **Luke 18:9-14**.
 - Humility is a sign of true faith. Turn back to **Romans 2**.
 - Before we judge the world around us, we must shine the searchlight of God's Word on our own heart.
 - If we all did that more, we would be more gracious to those around us, including unbelievers.
 - Paul then tells us why we should care about this.
 - **Romans 2:24**
 - This is a quote from Isaiah 52:5. The same thought appears in several other places.
 - Usually, when God's people are experiencing the consequences of not being faithful to God.
 - When a Christ-follower is hypocritical or commits a sin publicly, the world not only denounces him, but also their church, and God.
 - The more influence someone has in the world, the more they must strive for holiness and purity in their life.

- We have all heard of pastors with large congregations who were caught in adultery or some other sin.
- Unbelievers are quick to point and claim that all believers are like that, and that God cannot be real if that is what His people do.
- It also causes believers with weak faith to stumble.
- Christ-followers are not perfect, but they should always be conscious of the fact that they are on display before the world to draw them to God.
- When we sin in a public way, it diminishes God in the eyes of the world.
- Paul then goes to a topic that might not seem to connect to us.
- **Romans 2:25-27**
- The sign God gave them Jews to mark them as part of the Jewish community was circumcision.
- Many Jews that had developed the wrong belief that just because they were Jews, they were okay with God.
- This wrong doctrine even went so far as to say that circumcision kept them out of hell.
- Circumcision is a symbol.
- It is a symbol of a relationship between the circumcised person and God.
- It carries with it the promise of faithfulness.
- God promised to be faithful to the Jewish people and He expected them to be faithful to Him through obedience to His Word.
- In the same way, a wedding ring is a symbol.
- By wearing a wedding ring, I am bearing a symbol of my marriage.
- It symbolizes my commitment to my wife to be faithful to her for the rest of my life.
- Adultery would be a betrayal of the covenant I made with her before God and would render my wedding ring meaningless.
- My wedding ring cannot save my marriage.
- The symbol is only meaningful as long as the covenant remains intact.
- The symbol is meaningless, if the covenant is ignored or rejected.

- This is to say that the external factors they might use to declare themselves right with God did not prove they were right with God.
 - It is like asking someone if they are a believer and them replying, ‘I am a Catholic’ or ‘My parents were Christians’, or ‘I was baptized as a baby, or as an adult’, or ‘I attend Calvary Chapel French Valley’.
 - None of those things make you a believer – a Christ-follower.
 - In the same way sin springs forth from the heart and manifests in the things we do, so does salvation.
 - Salvation does not come from outside of me.
 - Acting and looking like a Christian doesn’t save you.
 - **Romans 2:28-29**
 - God is not fooled by mere outward expressions of piety or religious practices, no matter how spiritual they may look.
 - God sees the heart.
 - If you were asked, ‘Are you saved?’
 - We should be able to confidently answer, ‘Yes!’
 - But where does that confidence come from?
 - If your confidence is your church attendance or service, or your knowledge of God’s Word, then you are deluding yourself.
 - Salvation does not come from what we know or what we do, it comes from what we believe (**Romans 10:9-10**).
- ... if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.**
- Believing what God said in His Word is what makes us right with God.
 - It is the Word of God that has the power through the working of the Holy Spirit that can transform our lives (**Hebrews 4:12**).
- ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.**
- As the Holy Spirit is doing that work, we should rest in the knowledge that it is God’s work, not ours, that gives us confidence in our salvation.
 - My confidence is in the finished work of Christ on the cross.

- My confidence is in the fact that through faith my sins have been forgiven and my guilt washed away by the blood of Christ.
- My confidence is on the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that empowers me to live a life that glorifies God, blesses others, and grows faith.
- My confidence is God's power to overcome anything that comes into my life.
- My confidence is in the love of God that fills my heart and overflows into the lives of others.
- My confidence is in the promise of Christ's return to get me and bring to be with Him forever in heaven.
- Brothers and sisters, be confident!
- Let's pray and ask God to help us with that.
- **Pray! Last Song!**