

# Guilty as Charged: When Hypocrisy Takes the Stand

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[ 0 : 00 ] So, for the rest of you non-junior church members, please turn in your Bibles to Romans chapter 2.!

Before I get there, I want to make a few announcements. Whether you know it or not, we have this merger that's gone through and we actually have two properties that we have the responsibility of stewarding.

And one of the properties, we are looking to gather a team to do some cleaning and organizing. So, that's going to be happening on the 24th. You can get further information from the front desk.

I know Murray will be heading that up with Andy King, helping organizing that cleaning crew and making sure that is prepared for future ministry.

And my second announcement, listen, some of you might think this is the perfect Mother's Day sermon. It's on hypocrisy. It's not aimed in that way. That's just going along with the text.

[ 1 : 24 ] But I'm glad you're here visiting with us, with your family. So, feel free to use this, children, to reflect on your mom or mothers on your children as the word should hold.

So, let me just open up in prayers before we go any further. Dear Holy Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for the fact that your will is known to us through this eternal word that you have given to us through your Bible, Father.

I give you thanks that we do not have to wake up guessing, groping around in the darkness, trying to figure out what you have for us. Father, it is easy to acknowledge that there is a God, but this world struggles with what did this God say?

What do you have for us? And we have your words in the Holy Scriptures here, O Father, which is why we study them. Father, we trust your words to lay our souls bare.

We trust your word to be honest with us. We trust your words to challenge us. We trust your words to inform us of the great God that has created this world and that we have this opportunity to serve.

[ 2 : 47 ] And on this day, come and worship together in one voice with one mind just coming under you, O Lord. So, we give you thanks for this word.

I pray that you would give my voice clarity. There is an incredible message to be found in this sermon. And I pray that you would hear the words that Paul spoke.

And I pray it would be easy for us to understand. We ask these things in the most holy and precious name. Amen. This morning, as you know, Carl read the passage that we are going to get into this morning.

If you were with us last week, you would understand that the scenario that I want us to envision is kind of a law and order, a courtroom scenario.

And we have God as a judge and the apostle Paul as the crown attorney. Or if you watch a lot of American TV, the district attorney who are bringing the charges against all mankind.

[ 3 : 58 ] And that charge is that all humanity stands guilty before a holy God. Paul cites his case in Romans 1.18.

It says, For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all godliness and unrighteousness of men.

The question that most people ask is, Who are these charges being laid against? If you will notice the word all that is there, that is a word that encompasses everyone, both Jew and Greek, Jew and Gentile, believer, unbeliever.

It is an all-encompassing term. It is for those that are inside the covenant, those who are outside the covenant, those who are considered insiders, those who are considered outsiders.

And it's also meant for the pagans as much for the religious. What Paul has been doing is he's been exposing rebellion inside this court, the willful suppression of truth, which has led to idol worship, sexual sin, and moral depravity.

[ 5 : 10 ] His first accusation comes against those who are outside of religion, the Gentiles. The Gentiles have responded to Paul, We did not know.

We did not have your word to instruct us. Paul responded, But creation told you. The Gentiles responded, While we followed our instincts, Paul responded, You rejected your conscience.

The Gentiles spoke again. We're not as bad as others. Paul simply stated, You are without excuse. The judge has handed down his verdict.

It is guilty. The Gentiles are found guilty in God's court of law. The courtroom spectators nod in approval. There are even shouts from the gallery, Justice, justice, we're finally getting justice.

The Jews agree. They nod in approval. You are right, Paul. They are guilty. But then Paul does something shocking.

[ 6 : 26 ] He turns around and he says, Your Honor, there are others in this courtroom who are guilty as well. And they are here.

You can imagine the hush falls from the crowd. Paul simply says, You who call yourself a Jew, please stand and come to the defense table.

Those that were nodding, those who were shouting words of approval that the Gentiles were guilty are now being put on the bench.

Paul will argue this morning that even with all your knowledge, all your scripture, all your rituals, you are not exempt from God's judgment. You are just as guilty.

You are not guilty for the same reasons, Paul will argue, but for a more dangerous reason. And that reason is you knew better. You had the law.

[ 7 : 39 ] You had the covenants. You literally had God speak to you. You have the sign of circumcision. Yet, you allowed your pride to come over you.

And rather than reflecting humility, you sought self-serving. So this morning, this is where today's sermon is going. This sermon is not directed at the world.

This sermon is directed to the religious. This sermon is not directed to the obvious sinner. This sermon is directed towards the well-taught one who believes that they're safe because they've memorized the rules.

So this morning, I'm asking you to join into this courtroom once again. And we're going to see Paul masterfully present the proof before the court of where the religious, the Jew, stands before God.

I'm going to present to you four exhibits. The first one is exhibit A, which will be the religious resume. Exhibit B will be the contradictory life.

[ 8 : 59 ] Exhibit C will be the public fallout. And exhibit D will be the false security of rituals. And finally, we will look at Paul's final argument.

What is the true standard of righteousness? So please, I need you in your Bibles today because I want you to see this from the text itself.

This is not me making these things up. These are Paul's arguments that he is bringing. So we're in Romans chapter 2. If you do not have a Bible, please, even though we put verses up on the slides, I want you to have a text for yourself.

If you do not own a Bible and you would want a Bible, we have some. Just take one of the pew Bibles home with you. One of our greeters, ushers at the back, would gladly furnish you with one.

So let's take a look at verse 17. This is Paul's opening statement. It says, But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God and know his will and approve what is excellent because you are instructed from the law, and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, the teacher of children, having the law, the embodiment of knowledge and truth.

[ 10 : 23 ] So Paul's kind of setting them up. What he's describing here are not bad things. So notice it begins, But if you call yourself a Jew.

Now you need to understand, being called a Jew meant something. It meant that you are one of God's chosen people. That meant you belong to the covenant community of God.

That you were in fact marked out, set apart from every other nation in the world to be the nation that God would demonstrate his glory to the world through.

This is no small thing, my friends. This is massive. Now the reason they were called Jews is because if you remember in our Old Testament study, there was a division in Israel.

Northern kingdom, southern kingdom. The southern kingdom was made up of Judah. And this is where the word the Jews came. The word Jews indirectly carries the meaning of one who praises God.

[ 11 : 29 ] If you notice in verse 29 of our text, it says, His praise is not from man, but from God. That is essentially what a true Jew is supposed to be.

Notice the next statement, and rely on the law. So, but if you were called a Jew and rely on the law, they had the book, right?

God wrote a book, not just any books, but the God, the word of God, that God delivered through Moses. This was their national treasure.

They wore it like an armor. They trusted it like a safety net. The reason we're good with God is I believe this. I believe this, so this must mean I am good with Him.

Notice the next phrase. And boast in God. Now what he's saying here is that there's nothing wrong with boasting in God. What is wrong is if you boast in your privilege of being a Jew, as opposed to boasting in the privilege of God, of who the person of God is.

[ 12 : 45 ] The distinction I make here is it wasn't enough to know about God. As we all know, there are plenty of people who brag about knowing God. The issue is, do they know God and someone who knows God understands that they submit to God.

You with me on that one? If God is all holy, He is the great creator, the maker of all things. There is only one true response to this God, and that is to worship Him.

And that is what complete surrender is. So here's this group of people who were Jews that God had set aside. They relied on this book and they boasted in God.

What Paul is doing here, he isn't trashing these blessings. He's going to show them how they misused these blessings. The blessings that God had meant through to come through the Jew was to point to salvation.

But the Jews made them idols of security. And now one of the most important points, verse 18, and know His will and approve what is excellent.

[ 14 : 01 ] Do you guys understand how important that statement is? And I made reference this in my prayer. To believe in God is not enough.

But to know what God's will is, that's something wonderful. That is knowledge. You guys all know, you guys have had jobs. How frustrating it is to have a job when you don't know what to do.

You don't know, and there's been no direction, no instructions. Here, build a house. I don't know how to build a house. Teach me. What's the plan? How do I go about doing these things? See, the fact of the matter is, there's power in knowledge and knowing right from wrong.

And I will argue that there's freedom in knowing right from wrong. There's freedom in knowing God's will. Psalm 19, verse 7, it says, the law of the Lord is perfect.

It revives the soul. What that means is the word of God, this law, gives life. It changes the heart of man. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

[ 15 : 16 ] Simply means, brings wisdom. Knowledge is applied. Wisdom is applied knowledge. And that's what God's word does. It's sure. There's no ambivalence to it.

There's no uncertainty to it. Do I turn left or I turn right? No, you just go. Because God's word says this, the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.

Another word for rejoicing the heart is joy. To know God's will is to be joyful. We have the wisdom. We have the knowledge. It transforms our life.

And notice it says, the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. And that means it's clear. It brings clarity. So Paul's intent in making the statement, and know his will, and approve what is excellent.

The only way we can know what is excellent, be clear about his excellence, is to know God's word. Amen? It's to know what the creator wants and says for us. Now what he's saying to these people is, Paul is building his case on that they know, not just what is right from wrong, but they know what transforms your life and what doesn't.

[ 16 : 37 ] The fact of the matter is, you can spot compromise from a mile away, he's saying. You've got opinions on theology, culture, and politics, and you literally have a verse for every situation.

And that's great. But notice in verse 19 it says, you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those in darkness.

Now it's not just what you know, it's what you think you are. So he labels these four issues, a guide to the blind, a light in the dark, an instructor of the foolish, and a teacher of infants.

This is how the Jews saw themselves as the spiritual leaders of the world. But they never stopped to ask if they were actually following the God they claimed to represent.

We kind of know the rules, but do we love him? And this is where it hits us at home. Perhaps you've grown up in the church.

[ 17 : 50 ] You know your books of the Bible. You've been on mission trips. You've attended, maybe even led Bible studies. Praise God. But here's Paul's question to you. Are you presuming on your privilege?

Are you presuming on your great mother who loves Jesus, who reads you the word every single day? What Paul's doing is he's pressing into the person of Christ.

Do you know the will of God, but ignore the Spirit when it shines into areas of your life you do not want exposed?

That's what Paul is setting up in this courtroom this morning. Now he brings out exhibit B, the rebuke. Notice in verse 23, 21, sorry.

Exhibit B is entitled The Contradictory Life. You then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal?

[ 18 : 56 ] You who say, one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? Temples. You who boast in the law, dishonor God by breaking the law.

This is Paul the lawyer pressing in. This is Paul the lawyer walking over to the witness stand. Paul's point is very simple, that the most dangerous lies are the ones we tell ourselves.

He looks at the defendant, the religious hypocrite, right in the eye and begins his cross-examination. You then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself?

Translation, you know how to preach it, but do you practice it? We know you're good at spotting someone else's sin or spotting sin in someone else's life from across the room, but what about your own?

You've got 20-20 vision for everyone else's compromise, but you're blind to your own duplicity. And now Paul leans in, firing the questions almost like in rapid shots.

[ 20 : 15 ] While you preach against stealing, do you steal? You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?

Each question slices deeper. However, the fact is they were calling out sin, but still compromising in secret. They were shouting truth, but living lies.

They were holding others to the law, but breaking it themselves. To put it plainly, they were hypocrites.

Let's be honest. The word hypocrite is probably one of the greatest accusations someone can make against us. You can call me a liar.

I'm all right with that, but call me a hypocrite. That hurts even more. You can call me a thief, but whoa, call me a hypocrite. Just kind of stings deeper, doesn't it?

[ 21 : 16 ] What it means is you've compartmentalized your life. God lives here, but he does not live here. You with me on that? I've surrendered this area to my God.

Hey, at church, hey, I'm all about God, but at work, maybe not. Maybe my language does not adhere to what the Bible talks about.

Let's be honest. When someone calls us a hypocrite, it cuts right to the heart, doesn't it? What Paul is pointing out to them is what is called religious hypocrisy.

Like I said, it's called behavioral compartmentalization. It's preaching one life and living another.

It's a life that raises your voices in worship and then use those same voices for gossip. It's when you feel led to help others study God's word, but you will not deal with the bitterness in your heart.

[ 22 : 27 ] You are great at commenting and condemning the world's immorality, but you choose and recoil when someone brings up a much lesser offense in your life.

You call out compromise in others, but the fact is you're negotiating with your own sin behind closed doors. This is what Paul is getting at.

They had the truth on their lips, but it was not in their hearts. They were experts at the form of godliness, but absolutely denied its power.

You understand that's one of our biggest problems as Christians? We give lip service to the power of God through the power of Holy Spirit, but we deny that it can actually literally change and transform us.

In fact, Paul warns Timothy in 2 Timothy 3.5, he says, for people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless.

[ 23 : 49 ] Here's an interesting one, unappeasable. You ever meet someone when they go to the restaurant and nothing is great, right? It's complaints about the waiter. It's complaint about the chef.

It's the complaint. That's an unappeasable heart, and that is a dangerous heart. To be too particular and to demand perfection everywhere we go in every relationship we have is an unappeasable heart.

My friends, that is a dangerous place to be. To be slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, and here it is, having the appearance of godliness but denying its power.

Notice those sins, my friends. They're not scandalous sins. Those are the sins that we brush over in our lives and in the lives of our loved ones. And my friend Paul and I are not getting at the point that God demands perfection.

What Paul is pointing out, this is about pretense. Here's the thing. It's one thing to struggle and confess our sin.

[ 25 : 14 ] You know who does that? A disciple. A disciple of Jesus Christ admits that they struggle and admits that they, and they confess that sin.

But, to not admit the sin and not confess it and to pretend you don't have that sin, that's the hypocrite.

That's the dividing line between a disciple and a hypocrite. In verse 23, Paul moves in with the coup de grace.

He simply says, you who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law. You see, by pretending, they thought they were making God look good. Think about that.

we often, when we try to put on an appearance of holiness, of religiosity, our deepest hope is that we hope that God, people might see God in us.

[ 26 : 19 ] That we would be reflecting well to God. And they thought that. They thought they were literally making God look good, but in fact, their lives were actually dragging the name of God through the dirt.

This isn't doctrinal flaw, it's called spiritual fraud. I quote R.C. Sproul here, he says, we are so hardened in our sin and so accustomed to our corruption that we give our attention not to the law of God, but to the social customs of our culture.

And we measure ourselves in conformity to those customs rather than against the standard of God's perfect righteousness. You with me on that?

We develop our own set of righteousness here in Squamish. I kind of grew up in a church background that was a little bit tighter on things.

I, Joey Locke, will tell you if I'm a liar or not, you know, if you were to preach, you had to wear the tie. Right? You had to wear the tie. The tie was the holy mantra.

[ 27 : 35 ] It didn't matter if that tie was a \$3 tie you picked up at the used tie shop. It didn't matter if the tie didn't match the suit or you had white shoes on with a dark suit.

It didn't matter as long as you had a suit and tie on. I remember as a kid thinking, man, that looks really bad. I can't believe they think that's a form of godliness but had gotten in their minds that they wanted to appear right before God.

What that's called is called cultural Phariseeism and then you doing that's not bad but judging others by that standard, your standard, is where it's wrong.

You with me on that? You might have a standard, I don't do movies. That's fine. But when you start judging other people on their liberties in Jesus Christ, therein lies the problem.

So for a little bit of time of honesty here, are you preaching a gospel, my friends, that you do not live? Are you teaching others but never applying that truth to yourself?

[ 28 : 44 ] Do you speak against sin more fluently than you repent of it? And do you speak against a form of pride but profit from it?

Notice the line it says, you who abhor idols, do you rob temples? That is a, in our scripture, it is a sentence of much debate.

But what we need to know, this is written to a group of people who were in Rome and as I stated last week, the Jewish community was quite big in Rome and they were either merchants or slaves.

That was the two divisions of Jews that lived in Rome. And what they would do because there's temples to all those gods, Rome had all the gods they would bring in every god from every nation that they conquered and people would break into their temples, steal these idols and then sell them kind of like on a black market kind of thing.

So you who were not supposed to touch the idol, I'll take that idol in and make a few bucks off it. That's what they were doing. The courtroom is now silence for the witnesses exposed.

[ 30 : 02 ] But here's the thing, Paul is not finished. We move on to exhibit C. And Paul is now getting to the implications of hypocrisy.

And my friends, I will tell you now, this is a devastating verdict. Because Paul isn't just saying hypocrisy is personally destructive.

Paul is saying that hypocrisy is publicly damaging to the name of God. You with me on that?

this is serious. It just doesn't ruin your integrity, but your hypocrisy profanes the name of God.

Notice verse 24, for as it is written, the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you. Let that sink in for a moment.

[ 31 : 06 ] Your hypocrisy just doesn't cost you. it discredits God. What Paul is doing, he's quoting Isaiah 52, 5.

Isaiah said that because of Israel's sin, they were sent into exile, and as a result, the pagan nations mocked Yahweh.

Now, we all know, if you know your Old Testament, God purposely had his nation being chastised by being captured by Babylon.

But to the foreign nations, what it represented was that God was weak. That their God was nothing.

that Yahweh could not even prevent his people from being overrun.

[ 32 : 07 ] To the pagans, it was a testimony to how weak their God was. If their God is so holy, why do they live lives like everyone else?

So that's Yahweh's people. Doesn't look like Yahweh is protecting them now. Let's be honest.

We've heard these words. If that's what Christians are like, count me out. They say Jesus changes lives, but they act like everyone else.

They talk about truth, but live in compromise. They put Bible verses online, but explode with rage at the drive-thru. Or they say they follow Christ, but they don't look a thing like him.

Paul is saying, God's name is blasphemed because of you. My friends, this is terrifying. And it's true.

[ 33 : 18 ] When Christian leaders fall, headlines erupt, God's name is mocked. When church goers are caught in scandals of hypocrisy, the world laughs at our gospel.

When we say Jesus is Lord, but we live like he doesn't tell us, we hand the enemy all the ammo he needs to shoot us dead.

Do you handle adversity and suffer well? Or do you complain and murmur against God?

Do you somehow know more than God? Do you use your money and your time like a servant of Jesus Christ, or do you use it like the world?

Don't miss this. This is exactly what Satan wants. He doesn't just want your downfall. Satan wants God's name to be discredited through you.

[ 34 : 32 ] The fact of the matter is the church has never been in greater danger than is filled with truth tellers than who are truth doers.

Do you love Jesus? We've talked about that. If you love that vertical, you love others. Do you love your church?

You say you're a Christian, then you are actually wearing the name of Jesus. Are you caught up in corrupt talk?

Do you swear and speak more like the world? Who do you think that reflects more on? You or God? So when you lie, when you gossip, when you lash out in pride or lust or slander, you're just not misrepresenting yourself, you're misrepresenting Yahweh himself, Elohim, the God creator of this world.

And my friends, this is the fallout of hypocrisy. It's not that you just look like a fraud, but it makes God look like a fraud.

[ 35 : 52 ] That's why Paul is pressing so very hard here. God is pressing us not to shame us, but Paul's goal here is to wake us.

Because if your life and my life are giving the world a reason to blaspheme instead of believing in God, something has to change. Amen? We've got to change, and we need to know it's possible to change.

change. This leads us to exhibit D, the false sense of security found in ritual.

Here, Paul turns his focus to the ultimate Jewish ritual, which is called circumcision. Verse 25, for circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law, but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision.

Translation, your religious ritual doesn't protect you from the wrath of God if your life doesn't match it. Now, what Paul just said was like a nuclear bomb going off in that courtroom, because if there was one ritual that the Jews held above all else was circumcision.



[ 37 : 13 ] You might argue the law with Moses, but circumcision goes all the way back to Abraham. When God called Abraham out of Ur, to be his people, that mark was to be circumcision.

So if you were circumcised, I'm great with God. That's the great shield. I'm fine. I'm a child of Abraham. I wear the sign. king. What's interesting, it even holds forth, if you know your history before the New Testament and Jesus arrives in around 166 to 160 BC, Greeks actually ruled over Israel at that time.

And what we read about in history is the Maccabean revolt. It's where the Jews threw off the yoke of the oppression from the Greeks. But one of the things that set them off, there was two things.

One, the guy went into the temple, Antichus the fourth, and he sacrificed a pig in the Jewish temple. That was so bad that the priest went and killed them all. All right?

It was so vicious. The other thing that the Greeks tried to do is they outlawed circumcision. They actually made it a capital offense. So for the Jew, for us to be Jewish, we need to even hold true to this right even more.

[ 38 : 36 ] Otherwise, it's a complete annihilation of our background. So after 166, this whole idea of circumcision became even further ingrained in this Jewish mindset.

one author writes, his historian, he says, against this background then, we can understand why circumcision was so central and emotional an issue in the debates between Jews and Christians and between Judaizers and other Christians in the early days of the church.

It was hard for them. Allowing Gentiles to become God's people without being circumcised was tantamount to denying the Jewish faith.

This was a massive issue that Paul is attacking. So that badge you wear, he's essentially saying, means nothing if your life is lawless.

The ceremony doesn't save you, but obedience from a changed heart does. God's You want to trust the sign?

[ 39 : 47 ] God's not looking for a sign, God's looking at the soul. Verse 26, so if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?

Now what Paul is saying here is not hypothetical, it's terrifying. I'll tell you why. Because he's saying to the Jew, the person you thought was on the outside is actually more on the inside than you are.

You who thought you had that special relationship with God and had nothing to fear, the outsiders are now more insiders than you.

because the real issue isn't what's been done to your body, but what's been done to your heart. And I want you to pay attention to what Paul says next here.

He says, then he, verse 27, is physically uncircumcised, but keeps the law, will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision, but break the law.

[ 41 : 03 ] the courtroom would have erupted. This was a scandalous thought. The court would have gone crazy hearing this.

Good thing we have on record that the bailiffs were archangels on that day. But Paul is flipping the courtroom. The Gentile you look down on will be the one who stands in judge of you.

So let's bring it forward to today. What does that mean for me right now?

One, hey, baptism is good, but if your heart is hard, it's just a public bath. Church attendance matters, but if you live like the world Monday to Saturday, it's just a holy cover-up.

You can have a wonderful Christian Spotify playlist, a study Bible, a verse in your Instagram bio, but you can still be completely lost.

[ 42 : 06 ] You see, religious ritual without repentance is idolatry. What that means is you're trusting the form instead of the faith.

Charles Hodge once wrote, whenever true religion declines, the disposition to lay undue stress on external rights increases.

What that means is as your heart grows cold, your religious activity goes up because you're trying to make up for that cold heart. But God wants a warm heart that's renewed by him, and these works are a reflection of that heart, not trying to make up for that heart.

You with me? a living heart brings forth life. A dead heart brings forth death. We see it all the time.

People don't want real holiness. We don't want real surrender. We don't want real obedience. They want to check the boxes and make sure we keep up the right appearances, but Paul is not having it.

[ 43 : 16 ] He simply says your ritual doesn't save you, your signs don't seal you, and your symbols don't shield you. But here is the good news.

Only faith in Jesus Christ, confirmed by a transformed life, saves. You are not saved because of a single prayer.

You are not saved because you were baptized or your parents had you baptized. You are not saved because you come to church and agree with what I say.

You are saved only through faith in Jesus Christ, confirmed by a transformed life, truly, saves.

Now we move on to Paul's final argument. He explains to us in verse 28 and 29 the true standard of righteousness. the courtroom is now silent.

[ 44 : 18 ] The religious defendant, so confident at the start, has nothing left to say. And Paul here rips off the mask.

For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. You may have the name, you may have the tradition, you may have the family tree, you might have the rituals, but if it's all on the outside, it doesn't mean a thing.

You see, God isn't interested in outward compliance. God is interested in inward transformation. That's why in verse 29, he says, but a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart by the spirit, not by the letter.

My friends, this is the gospel in legal terms. You do not become righteous by what you do. You become righteous by the work Jesus does in you.

You with me on that? There's nothing you can do to make yourself righteous in the sight of God. It is God who does the work in you.

[ 45 : 42 ] It's not about what you can produce, it's about what the spirit produces. And Paul is saying, you can't fake this. You can't memorize, you can memorize the rules, keep up appearances, fool your friends, fool your pastor, but you cannot fool God.

As we covered last week, God sees everything. He is Elohim, the creator. Nothing escapes his sight. His judgment is righteousness because he is grounded in his character.

And we know that God's judgment is impartial for he shows no favoritism in his courtroom. What that means is God sees right through our performance.

He sees us behind this smile, he hears the silent thoughts, and he truly knows who we really are. And here's the question at the end of verse 29.

His praise is not from man, but from God. My question to you is, is the same question that Paul asked on that very day.

[ 46 : 54 ] Whose approval are you living for? The hypocrite wants the praise of people. The hypocrite wants the seat of honor.

The hypocrite wants the recognition, the image. But the true believer lives for the praise of God, even when no one sees, and even when it costs everything.

God's sin. So my questions to you this morning are clear. Is your religion a performance or posture of surrender?

Are you more concerned about what people think or what God sees? Are you wearing the name of Jesus but denying his lordship in your life?

God's faith. Because only one kind of faith will stand on judgment day. And it's not the kind of faith that plays the part. It's not the kind of faith that memorizes the answers.

[ 47 : 57 ] It's the kind of faith that has been cut to the heart and changed by the spirit of God. So with this, the apostle Paul lays down his case.

the courtroom has gone quiet. The Gentiles have been already found guilty. The religious, the well taught, the privileged, the church attenders, everyone else knows here in this courtroom that they are found guilty.

Not because they didn't know the truth but because they knew the truth and didn't live it. Not because they lacked access to God but because they used God's name without submitting to his authority.

You say that you are a Christian? Prove it. Not with your words but with your heart. Not with your knowledge but with your repentance.

Not with your rituals but with your obedience. The fact of the matter is God is not impressed by credentials. He's not swayed by family history or theological accuracy or even church attendance.

[ 49 : 11 ] The fact of the matter is God sees the heart. And God is seeking a transformed life. A heart cut by conviction, softened by grace, and a soul surrendered to Jesus.

Romans 2, this section ends with no one left standing in their own righteousness. righteousness. And that's exactly the point that Paul and I are trying to make for you.

At this point in our understanding of Romans, we need to understand that we have no righteousness to offer God. In fact, Paul will reiterate it in Romans 3.10.

There is none righteous, no not one. Romans 3.21. But now the righteousness of God has been manifested. So here's the gospel.

You don't have to live a lie. You don't have to pretend. The fact of the matter is, Jesus was condemned in your place so you could be declared righteous in his.

[ 50 : 18 ] So I ask you, I plead you, step down from your performance. Step down from your platform of pride. Come to Christ, not with a resume, but with a repentance and a need for his righteousness.

And I'll pray you'll understand the words that he will later say in Romans that there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

Let us pray. Amen. Father, talk about being cut bare, opened up. This is a simple text that challenges us on so many different levels.

The true warning of the passage is that our hypocrisy leads to the blaspheming of your name.

what a charge. I cannot think of a worse accusation being made against me. Father, I just confess to you and I pray that we all confess before you, our father, our sins of hypocrisy.

[ 51 : 43 ] Father, I pray that we would freely admit even as we come to this table today that you're not here to accept hypocrites, but you're here to accept those who repent and trust and put their faith in you.

Lord, forgive us for counting on our own righteousness, our own religiosity, our own rules, thinking that if it does not earn just more righteousness with you, it makes us look better than our neighbors.

What a cruel lie we've been told. Father, I pray that we would ponder upon this text and this sermon for this week.

May you not let it escape our minds. Father, forgive us for blaspheming you in our actions and in our words.

Thank you, Jesus. Amen.