

The Gospel of God – Romans Series

Dangerous Security!

Text: Romans 2:17-29

Introduction:

1. Review context: In this section the Apostle is bringing the whole world to its knees condemned before a righteous, holy God. He is demonstrating the exceeding sinfulness of sin.
2. Having dealt with the Gentiles in chapter 1, Paul now turns his attention to the self-righteous Jew. He now exposes the shaky foundation the religious man is standing upon.
3. Illustration of false security:

In August 1969, in Pass Christian, Mississippi, a group of people were preparing to have a "hurricane party" in the face of a storm named Camille. Were they ignorant of the dangers? Could they have been overconfident? Did they let their egos and pride influence their decision? We will never know.

What we do know is that the wind was howling outside the posh Richelieu Apartments when Police Chief Jerry Peralta pulled up sometime after dark. Facing the Beach less than 250 feet from the surf, the apartments were directly in the line of danger. A man with a drink in his hand came out to the second-floor balcony and waved. Peralta yelled up, "You all need to clear out of here as quickly as you can. The storm's getting worse." But as other joined the man on the balcony, they just laughed at Peralta's order to leave. "This is my land," one of them yelled back. "If you want me off, you'll have to arrest me."

Peralta didn't arrest anyone, but he wasn't able to persuade them to leave either. He wrote down the names of the next of kin of the twenty or so people who gathered there to party through the storm. They laughed as he took their names. They had been warned, but they had no intention of leaving.

It was 10:15 p.m. when the front wall of the storm came ashore. Scientists clocked Camille's wind speed at more than 205 miles-per-hour (330 kms), the strongest on record. Raindrops hit with the force of bullets, and waves off the Gulf Coast crested between twenty-two (6.7m) and twenty-eight feet (8.5m) high (roughly 2-3 storeys).

News reports later showed that the worst damage came at the little settlement of motels, go-go bars, and gambling houses known as Pass Christian, Mississippi, where some twenty people were killed at a hurricane party in the Richelieu Apartments. Nothing was left of that three-story structure but the foundation; the only survivor was a five-year-old boy found clinging to a mattress the following day.

The Bible gives us the profile of a self-righteous individual in these verses:

I. His Religious Credentials (Vs. 17-20)

A. Confident in his Privileges (Vs. 17-18)

1. "thou art called a Jew" = reference to their racial and religious heritage, their special status as distinguished from other peoples. Paul's example, "*Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;*" (Phil. 3:5) Prayer prayed by Jews thanking God they are not Gentiles (refer Hester)

The Gospel of God – Romans Series

2. “retest in the law” = mere possession of the law thought to be sufficient to make one acceptable before God
3. “makest thy boast of God” = he feels he has a special relationship with God. This is different to giving praise to God. It is really a boasting in themselves (i.e. their unique privileges & blessings)
4. “knowest his will” = because of his advantage of having the Scriptures
5. “approves the things more excellent” = he is able to make choices based on his superior knowledge
6. “being instructed out of the law” = our word catechism is derived from this word. Jewish boys systematically instructed out of the law. Explains previous two clauses. Their knowledge of God’s will and ability to approve the right things was due to their grounding in the law of God.

B. Confident in his Prerogatives (Vs. 19-20)

Due to his privileges, this man feels he has certain prerogatives in relation to other people

1. He considers himself a guide (19)
2. He considers himself a teacher (20)
3. The Pharisees would compass sea and land to make one proselyte (Matt. 23:15)

II. His Real Condition (Vs. 21-24)

4 searching questions are now asked to penetrate beneath the surface veneer of this man’s religiosity:

- A. He is a hypocrite – “Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself”
 1. This man is a hypocrite. He affirms one thing in theory but lives another in practice
 2. Matthew 23:3-4 Christ said of the Pharisees, “*All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: **for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.***”
 3. Illustration: Corrupt police officials or judges, whose lives are in direct contradiction of the laws they have sworn to uphold and enforce.
- B. He is a transgressor – Specific examples of his hypocrisy are outlined
 1. Theft = dishonest monetary dealings
 2. Adultery = sexual sin. Many Jewish men tried to circumvent the Mosaic command against adultery by divorcing their wives and marrying another woman.

The Gospel of God – Romans Series

3. Sacrilege = making gain from pagan idolatry (e.g. plundering pagan temples) Acts 19:37 *“For ye have brought hither these men, which are **neither robbers of churches**, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.”*
- C. He dishonors God – he brings shame to the very God he boasts he has a special relationship with
- D. Titus 1:16 *“They **profess** that they know God; **but in works they deny him**, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.”*
- E. 1John 3:6 *“Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: **whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.**”*

III. His Ritual Confidence (Vs. 25-29)

- A. The insufficiency of physical circumcision (Vs. 25-27)
 1. A strong point of pride with the Jewish people. Judaism claimed that no one circumcised would go to hell!
 2. Major error circulated in the early church was the idea that circumcision was necessary for salvation
 3. Acts 15:1 *“And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, **Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.**”*
 4. Note: In chapter 4, it will be shown that Abraham was circumcised **after** he had exercised saving faith in God.
- B. The necessity of spiritual circumcision (Vs. 28-29)
 1. Circumcision in the flesh is something performed by man’s hands.
 2. Circumcision of the heart is something performed by God
 3. No external ritual can save a man from his sins and put him in right standing with God (e.g. baptism). God does a spiritual operation in the repentant sinners heart
 4. Col 2:11-14 *“In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;”*

Conclusion:

1. What are you trusting in for your salvation?
2. Have you come to Christ in simple faith, trusting Him to do the work in your heart?