

ROMANS

THE GRACE OF GOD: A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY IN THE BOOK OF ROMANS

The Jews and The Law

• Romans 2 : 17 - 3 : 8 •

Week 5

DEVOTION

Romans 2:17-29 describes the gross darkness of hypocrisy. The hypocrite believes they are “a guide to the blind” and “a light to those who are in darkness” when in reality “the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.”

Don't pretend with God - it is foolish. “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!...fools and blind...”.

The salvation of God is real and powerful and eternal. It is not something conjured up. It is not a masquerade. It is not something that can be achieved without Him. It is “a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter.” It is not fake, and doesn't require you to fake. God gives it freely; and it is received freely by those that have faith in Him. Therefore, as Jesus said, “Have faith in God.”

Physical circumcision was a “token” of the everlasting covenant between God and Abraham “to be a God unto you, and to your seed after you.” The physical expression without the spiritual reality (being reconciled to God, a worshipper of Him in Spirit and in truth) is of no account. Be wary of embracing a 'surficial' and false Christianity - accounting yourself to be 'good with God' because of outward religious things you do. God wants to be God unto you - seek Him too.

Chapter 2 ends with “whose praise is not of men, but of God.” Who is your audience? The hypocrite puts on a performance for people. Do you live before an audience of many, or an audience of One? The things you do in secret reveal this.

Chapter 3 begins with discussing what advantage the Jew has versus the non-Jew, the greatest being that the scriptures were committed to them. Some of you may not have been raised in Christian families, and feel disadvantaged when comparing yourselves to those who grew up in homes/churches where the Bible was read and taught. Don't be discouraged, God will be gracious to you and his righteousness and faithfulness will be revealed in you - He will be glorified in you if you have faith in Him.

God's righteousness and faithfulness will in fact be revealed in all scenarios, whether we are faithful or faithless, unrighteous or righteous, He remains faithful and righteous because that is who He is. Israel's unfaithfulness actually showed His faithfulness in a way that it would not otherwise have been revealed. Does this mean He is unrighteous to judge Israel's unrighteousness or our unrighteousness? Of course not. This was evidently being used as an argument to rationalize doing sinful things. Beware of rationalizing evil or taking pleasure in unrighteousness - both lead to damnation (2 Thessalonians 2:12).

Monday

Read: Matthew 23:1-33; Luke 12:1-3; 1 Timothy 4:1-3; James 3:17; Revelation 3:17-19; James 5:16

Hypocrisy: Hypocrisy is blinding. It sears the conscience. It is foolish. It spreads like leaven. In James we are instructed to confess our sins to one another and receive prayer so we can be healed. Growth groups are a place we can do this.

1. Test yourself – is there hypocrisy in your life?
2. If yes, is God prompting you to confess to your growth group so that you can receive prayer and be healed?

Tuesday

Read: Genesis 17:1-22; Deuteronomy 10:16; Deuteronomy 30:6; Jeremiah 4:3-4; Jeremiah 31:31-33; Ezekiel 36:24-28; Colossians 2:8-15; Philippians 3:3

Circumcision: The outward circumcision of the flesh in the law was looking forward to the circumcision of the heart – putting off the body of the sins of the flesh and walking in newness of life in Christ through His death, burial and resurrection. Although the nation of Israel has rejected this new covenant to this day, Jewish and Gentile believers by grace are now walking in it. One day the nation of Israel will receive it as prophesied throughout the scriptures. Circumcision of the heart is not merely a 'morally improved' version of your old self, it is "Christ in you," a "new creature."

1. Test yourself – have you received the circumcision "made without hands?" This covenant is for you!

Wednesday

Read: Galations 1:10; Philippians 2:21; John 5:44; John 8:29; John 8:50; Revelation 4:11

Audience (Who are we seeking to please?) Reflect on the verse "whose praise is not of men, but of God."

1. Do you seek praise of others, or of God?
2. Are there things in your life you know are not pleasing to God? What can you do differently that would be pleasing to God?

Thursday

Read: Matthew 21:23-32; Luke 7:29-30; Deuteronomy 32:21

Audience(What is God showing you?): Christian of many years, if you see God at work in others, (even those you would least expect), consider it – perhaps you are the audience and God is trying to get your attention. Gentiles walking as Jews were meant to walk, prostitutes and tax collectors being baptized by John the Baptist, etc., God may be showing you these things to inspire a godly jealousy that leads to repentance and growth.

1. Consider – is God trying to get your attention by showing you other people doing what He wants you to do?
2. Are there circumstances in your life where you "rejected God's counsel against yourself" like the Pharisees who rejected John's baptism? Will you now meet God in repentance?

Friday

Read: Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Isaiah 5:20; Jeremiah 4:22; Romans 14:12

Rationalizing Unrighteousness: God is judge, and we all must give an account to Him for the things done in this life, whether good or evil. "He that says he abides in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." "In Him is no darkness at all." "If you love me, keep my commandments." Have you settled for anything less than "Christ in you"?

1. Are you rationalizing anything in your life that is not Christ-like?
2. In the book of Revelation we are instructed to "hear what the Spirit says" - what is the Holy Spirit saying to you?