

Rom 204 - **Religion or Relationship - Rom 2:17-29**

**Congratulations** - Mr. & Mrs. Hank & Breezy Palan  
& Mr. & Mrs Chris & Angela Keeler

Both of whom have been married since we were last together

Thank you **Jeff Bell** (& **Nick N.**) for covering for me

Quite a msg from **J. Bell** last week (pick it up)  
**True Repentance - Changed Life**

A msg that **fits perfectly** into this section of Romans  
& into what **God is doing** right now - in this church family

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back in **Romans** - we are in our 4<sup>th</sup> msg  
& in our 3<sup>rd</sup> straight msg dealing w/ **God's judgment** upon our sin

Pls **remember** - **IF** we do not **come to grips** w/ the fact  
that we **rightfully deserve** God's Judgment

Then we will **not be ready** to Receive  
**God's Free Gift** of Salvation in Jesus Christ

& beginning in the **very next Msg** - God's Salvation,  
His Divine Remedy for our sin **begins to unfold**  
& it **gets real good** from there

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However - there is **One More group** of people  
the Holy Spirit wants to address,  
**before** He moves on to God's Glorious Remedy for ALL of our sin

& this last group of sinners - are the **RELIGIOUS**

Those who **Trust** in Religious Precepts, Practices & Ceremony's  
but have **NO** personal "Response Relationship" w/ God

**Commentator Donald Barnhouse says;**

they have **Ritual** w/o **Redemption**, **Works** w/o **Worship**,  
the **Form** of Service w/o the **Fear** of God

They are those of **US** - who **Profess** a Right Religion  
w/o **Possessing** a Right Relationship

In the Gospels **Jesus** calls them  
Pharisees - Hypocrites - Whitewashed Tombs & even much Worse

& again - just like in our **last 2 msg's**  
it's critically important that we call these Religious Sinners - **US** !

**May God help us in this msg;**

See our own **Religious Hypocrisy**  
See our own **False Religious Security**  
See our own need for a **Right Relationship** with Him

& if we will Truly **See our Need** - then the rest of Romans will come  
like a Miraculous Healing Flood - upon our Fatal Wound of Sin

**Let's Pray**

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Is it possible to sit in church your entire life  
& **NOT** enter heaven . . . **YES**

Is it possible to be the *Most Religious Person* in the church  
& still **NOT** enter heaven . . . **YES** - Absolutely

Jesus addresses this very truth in **Mat 7:21**

### **Mat 7:21 - ESV**

***22 On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?'***

***23 And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'***

When Jesus says "***I never KNEW you***"

he uses the GK word for "***personal, intimate knowledge***" (Ginosko)

& when he calls them "***Workers of lawlessness (sin)***"

He's saying - they've done all these things in His name,

Yet they've **never been cleansed** of their sin,

& **Paul's point** today in Romans is - even the Most Religious of us  
**cannot** be cleansed of our Sin - by our Religion

& **once we accept** that

then we are ready to hear of God's Provision for our Salvation,

thru a Personal Relationship w/ Jesus Christ

in **Romans** today - the Holy Spirit is wrapping up the truth  
that we are **ALL** sinners (incl'd'g the most religious of us)

And we **ALL** need God's **remedy**

Which CANNOT be found in RELIGION  
no matter how OLD or seemingly "Right" that religion is

God's remedy for our sin comes only in a Right Relationship w/ Him,  
no matter How Religious we Think we are

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## Rom 2:17 - ESV (English Standard Version)

By the way - for those who may have recently joined us

We went thru a very Thorough - Critical Review Process  
of the Major Bible translations - which took well over 2 yrs

& I now recommend TWO Bible Translations  
the NLT (New Living Translation) for devotional, home reading  
the ESV (English Standard Version) for critical V-by-V study

NO - We are NOT Anti King James (or NKJ)  
& you'll find that the ESV reads very close to your NKJ

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## Rom 2:17 - ESV

*17 But if you call yourself a Jew . . .*

Paul speaks emphatically - if YOU call yourself a JEW

the term Jew is the religious name of God's people; they were,  
Hebrew by "Race"  
Israelites by "Nationality"  
Jewish by "Religion"

& actually - during the time of Christ - the term "Jew" came to imply  
the "Most Religious" of the Israelites

**To show** you just How Much the **Jews** came to trust in their Religion

let me **quote** a few Rabbinic sayings  
recorded long after Romans was written

See if you can "**Discern**" their Trust in their Religion

**Recorded Rabbinic Sayings:**

*"Circumcision is equivalent to all the commandments of the Law"*

*"To live in Palestine is equal to the commandments"*

*"He that has his abode in Palestine is sure of eternal life"*

This is a **Mis-Guided Trust** - in Religious Claims  
that (of course) are found **nowhere** in the Bible

**HOWEVER** - before you start "Pointing" at the Jews

Can you **think of Churches** in our culture today  
that strongly imply

that **belonging** to the right church - is what makes you **right** with God

The are **many today** - both in Catholic & Protestant churches  
who believe they are "**SAFE**" with God  
because they belong to the "Right Religion, or the "Right Church"

& (of course) **just like** the Jewish sayings  
that can be found NO WHERE in the Bible

& if we believe we are **OK** with God  
by **ANY** act of Religion, or belonging to any certain church

Then we **put ourselves** exactly in the place  
of the Jew that Paul is writing Romans to

So now - Paul is **going to list** the Religious Claims  
that lead to Pride & Hypocrisy - & to the fatal disease of Pharisaism

### **Rom 2:17-20 - ESV**

**17 But if you call yourself a Jew [most religious] and rely on the law and boast in God**

**18 and know his will and approve what is excellent, because you are instructed from the law;**

**19 and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,**

**20 an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth—**

### **Wow - the Hit Parade of Religious Confidence**

Rely on the Law

Boast in God

Know His will

Approve what is excellent

Instructed from the Law

A guide to the Blind

A light to those in Darkness

An instructor of the Foolish

A teacher of children (*the childish*)

Having in the Law, the embodiment of knowledge & truth . . .

**WOW** - How can **THAT** be bad ???

**All that** & a Big church too

well, that's got to be good, Right ?? (wrong)

The "**Religious**" ones that Paul is writing to  
are probably feeling pretty good right now (*yeah, that's me*)

**Unfortunately** - Paul is about to drop the **hammer** on them !

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But **before** he does - let me point out one thing

At the End of **V.20** it says;

***having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth—***

The **Embodiment** means - the "**Outward Form**" of knowledge & truth

**Kenneth Wuest** translates this Greek phrase;

***"having the rough sketch [outward form] of the experiential knowledge of the truth in the law"***

Paul's saying - you've got the "**Ruff Sketch**" the "**Outward Form**" of the "Truth of God"

**BUT** - you've stopped there !!

do you think having the "**Outward Form**" of Religion equals having the "**Knowledge & Truth**" of a Relationship?

I hope not - because **that would be** like trading in your Wife for a **PICTURE** of your Wife

***"No honey, I don't need you, it's OK, I have a picture of you, that's all I need"***

**I have** a "Ruff Sketch" - the "Outward Form" of you  
I don't really need a "Personal Relationship" with you

**That** is what it means - to have the "**Embodiment**" of the Knowledge & Truth of God

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So - Paul is going to say to the Religious;

You have ALL these **Religious Claims** . . . HOWEVER

**Are you not** Still SINNERS - in Need of A Savior ?

Have your Religious Claims - Actually made you right before God ??

Or **do you have** the

"Ruff Sketch" the "Outward Form" of Religion

**While lacking** the Life Changing "Personal Relationship" with God?

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Paul is going to "turn the guns" on the **Religious** here

but Please - **DON'T** misunderstand him

He's **not saying** the Religious need to get **MORE** religious

& **try harder** to "Clean-Up" that "Outward Form"

**Paul's point** here is;

The Most Religious among us - Are **EQUALLY** sinners with us

& they **Equally Need** a **Savior** - Just like the Rest of Us

This is the point Paul is proving in **Rom 2:21-22**

**Rom 2:21-22 - ESV** → →



## **Rom 2:21-22 - ESV**

**21 you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal?**

**22 You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?**

In our last **ROM** Msg (*Judged by Judging*)  
the Holy Spirit made it clear

that **by us judging** something in someone else,  
we were actually convicting ourselves (because of our knowledge)

& **that's Exactly** what Paul is saying here;

Do you preach against **stealing** - then steal (a little) yourself  
Do you preach against **adultery** - then lust in your own mind  
Do you preach against **idols** - then use those same idols for yourself  
(which is what "Rob Temples" implies)

Remember - Paul **is not trying** to get the religious  
to **Try Harder** to become MORE Religious

He's **showing them** that they are just as bad (or worse) sinners  
than **ALL** those that they are condemning

Guys - we are **ALL** lost in our sin (including the most religious)  
& so we **ALL** need a Savior (including the most religious)

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& maybe - those who are The Most Religious  
are actually in **greater danger**  
than those with only the simple knowledge of right & wrong

& we see that - in the next two vs's

### **Rom 2:23 - ESV**

**23 You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law.**

Now **THIS** really begins to get to the heart of the matter

***You who "boast" in the law dishonor God by breaking the law***

Do we **BOAST** in our **Religion** ??

Do we **BOAST** in our **Church** Affiliation ??

Do we **BOAST** in our **Efforts** on behalf of God ??

**If so** - then we need to be Greatly Afraid

because we may well be "***The Religious***" that Paul is talking to

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In the **FINAL** Vs's of Galatians

Paul writes **Gal 6:14** w/ his own hand

### **Gal 6:14 - ESV**

***14 But far be it from me to boast (NKJ=God Forbid) except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.***

The **MORE** Paul knew Jesus - the more he knew,

to **NEVER Boast** in his Religious Accomplishments

***God Forbid that I should Boast, except in the cross of Jesus Christ***

& **WHY is it** - that Paul warns us so strongly  
**NOT** to Boast in the law (our Religious Accomplishments) ??

Because of **what he writes** in the very next **Vs**

### **Rom 2:24 - ESV**

***24 For, as it is written, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."***

*Every one of us* - Either **IS** someone - or **KNOWS** someone  
who's turned their back on God  
because of some Religious Hypocrisy

I know someone **who's wife left him** out of the blue  
& his church told him there was no hope for him

**While many** in that same church  
were committing much greater sins than his Divorce

The **number one smokescreen** that unbelievers use  
to stay away from the church  
is that we're all a bunch of **Hypocrites**

But I promise you  
it's **NOT** our imperfections that label us as Hipocrites  
it's of our Religious Pride

Could it be that **THAT** is WHY Paul wrote;  
***God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of Jesus Christ***

## Or why Paul also wrote in 1Tim 1:15-16 - NLT;

**15 . . . “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” - and I am the worst of them all.**

**16 But God had mercy on me so that Christ Jesus could use me as a prime example of his great patience with even the worst sinners. Then others will realize that they, too, can believe in him and receive eternal life.**

Now **THAT** is the way - to **prevent** the name of God from being **Blasphemed** because of you (as **v.24** says)

**Recognize** that you are an equal sinner  
& boast **ONLY** in the power of the Cross

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Now - Paul is going to **end this section**  
by addressing the Jews **BOASTING** in their Circumcision

This would be the **Exact same thing**  
as **US** boasting in our "**Religion**" - or our church attendance

or the fact that we were  
**baptized**, **sprinkled**, **membered**, or **anything else**

## **Rom 2:25 - ESV**

**25 For circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law, but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision.**

**Circumcision** was given by God to Abraham  
as a **SIGN** of the covenant of faith - God made with Abraham

But the sign is **only of value** - **IF** the **covenant** is kept

The wearing of your **Wedding Ring** is only of value  
if you keep **the Vows** of your marriage

& if you are *breaking the vows* of your Marriage  
then your **Ring** - Don't mean a **Thing**

**& it's the same with your Religion**

it's **ONLY** of Value - if it's a **SIGN**  
of your **Right Relationship** with God

Otherwise - the **Sign of Religion** - *Don't mean* a Thing

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**Paul continues in Rom 2:26-27 - ESV**

***26 So, if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?***

***27 Then he who is physically uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the law.***

Now - Paul is **NOT saying** that we need **the SIGN** of Circumcision  
**AND** we must never *break God's Law*

He's saying **the SIGN** of Religion By Itself - Does **NO GOOD !**

**Even** in the Law of Moses

*Circumcision* was a sign of the **HEART**

**Deut 10:16 - NIV**

***16 Circumcise your hearts, therefore, and do not be stiff-necked any longer.***

## **Deut 30:6 - NIV**

***6 The Lord your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live.***

This is **NOT** something New  
Circumcision (Religion) is a **SIGN**

But there **MUST** be something **BEHIND** the Sign  
& that something is **NOT more Religion** - it is **a Relationship**

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& **THAT** is how Paul is going to end this Ch

He's going to tell us that **OUTWARD Religion** is *Useless*  
But an **INWARD Relationship** is *Everything*

## **Rom 2:28-29 - ESV**

***28 For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical.***

***29 But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.***

Paul says a **True Jew** (*follower of God*) is NOT one **Outwardly**  
Nor are the **Signs** - *Outward & Physical*

But a **True Jew** (*follower of God*) - is one **Inwardly**

& the **TRUE SIGN** - is a Matter of the **HEART**  
by the **Spirit of God**, not by the **letter of the Law**

& ***His praise is NOT from man - but from God***

**It's like this;**

**I ask**, "Are you Born Again?"

**You answer**, "Oh, I'm a catholic"

**I say**, "that's great, but do you know Jesus Christ"

**You answer** "I was baptized when I was 2"

**I say**, "do you know that you're going to heaven"

**you answer**, "I go to church don't I" ?

See - **THAT** is trusting in Outward Religion

Jesus Christ **Did NOT Die** - to give us an Outward Religion

He Died - to give us a Transforming Inward Relationship

**& the saddest thing in the world**

is when we begin to believe that our **Outward Religion** -  
will PASS - for an **Inward Relationship**

Are you Married to a **PICTURE** of your Spouse - or

Are you Married to the **PERSON** of your Spouse

If you are Trusting in your **Religion** Today

then your relationship - is w/ a **PICTURE** of God  
*but not God Himself*

Christ Died - to give you

a Personal **Relationship** - with a Real Living God

Don't Exchange that Offer of a living **Relationship** with God  
for the Masquerade of an Outward **Religion**

**Let's Pray**