Romans 217-29 Religion Alone Won't Save You!

November 01, 2026

Overview

Pastor **Keith** delivers a sermon on Romans 2:17–29 regarding the false security of religious people.

Religious Deception

Keith explains that while pagans and moralists are clearly identified as sinners, the religious person—specifically the Jewish audience in **Romans**—presents a more dangerous target because they possess divine revelation and the law. He argues that many people today fall into this category by having intellectual knowledge of the Bible without undergoing spiritual transformation or being "born again."

- The religious man often relies on national identity, covenant status, and physical circumcision rather than true faith.
- Possessing the law is not equivalent to obeying the law.
- **Keith** warns that religious activity, church membership, and biblical knowledge do not equate to salvation.

False Confidence

Keith addresses the danger of spiritual pride among those who believe they are qualified to guide others while remaining spiritually blind themselves. He notes that the Jews in **Romans** were confident in their ability to teach and instruct, yet they failed to apply the truth to their own lives.

- Being a "teacher of babes" or a "guide to the blind" can be a source of great hypocrisy if one's own heart is far from God.
- Knowledge alone "puffs up" and can lead to a lack of accountability.
- True righteousness is an inward reality of the heart, not an outward display of religious credentials or titles.

Call to Repentance

The sermon concludes with a call for genuine repentance and internal change rather than mere outward conformity. **Keith** emphasizes that God looks at the heart and will eventually separate the wheat from the tares.

- Salvation comes only through genuine repentance and faith in **Jesus Christ**.
- Believers are called to be ambassadors of truth who do not cause others to stumble through hypocrisy.
- The ultimate question for every individual is whether they have been truly reconciled to God through Christ.

Outline

Romans Two Reading

- Speaker 1 reads Romans chapter two, verses 17 through 29.

- The passage discusses the Jewish people's reliance on the law and their potential hypocrisy.
- It emphasizes that true circumcision is of the heart rather than the flesh.

The Need for Bad News

- Pastor Keith explains that before understanding salvation and justification, one must understand the "bad news" of human guilt.
- He notes that Romans presents a courtroom scene where all humanity stands guilty before God.
- Every person, whether Jew or Gentile, requires the gospel because everyone is a sinner.

Three Categories of Humanity

- Pastor Keith identifies three groups within fallen humanity: the pagan, the moralist (self-righteous), and the religious man.
- The pagan lacks knowledge of God but can see His glory through creation.
- The moralist condemns others' sins while overlooking their own personal guilt.

The Danger of Religious Security

- Pastor Keith argues that religious individuals are often harder to save than pagans or moralists.
- He examines how Jews found false security in their national identity, covenant relationship, and possession of the law.
- He warns modern churchgoers that religious activity and Bible knowledge do not equate to being born again.

Indictment of Religious Hypocrisy

- The sermon highlights how individuals can have a form of godliness while denying its power.
- Pastor Keith provides an example of a church secretary whose family's lifestyle contradicted her religious position.
- He stresses that Jesus warned those who call Him "Lord" but do not obey Him will not enter heaven.

True Salvation vs Religion

- Salvation comes only through genuine repentance and faith in Jesus Christ rather than rituals like baptism or communion alone.
- Pastor Keith encourages believers to examine themselves to ensure they are truly in the faith as commanded in Second Corinthians 13:5.
- He asserts that God judges the heart rather than outward appearances or religious titles.

Dismantling False Confidence

- Paul's message in Romans 2 is described as dismantling every refuge people use besides Christ.
- The Jews boasted in knowing God's will, yet they failed to submit to it through obedience.
- Possession of divine truth does not guarantee conversion; instead, it increases a person's accountability to God.

The Peril of Misplaced Guidance

- Paul indicts those who consider themselves teachers and guides while remaining spiritually blind themselves.
- Being a "light to those in darkness" becomes impossible if one is actually leading others into error due to self-deception.
- Pastor Keith warns that having information about truth without being transformed by it leads to spiritual pride and dangerous leadership roles.