



7/16/25

If I ask you, "Do you want to hear the good news first, or the bad news first?", which do you want to hear first? Apparently, Paul was the type who wanted to hear the bad news first. The first several chapters of the book of Romans are the bad news... we have no hope without Jesus. But so much of Romans is the good news... Jesus came to give us forever hope. I would say this is definitely one of those cases where the good far outweighs the bad, wouldn't you?

*Blessings,
Jonna*

Romans 2:22-29

I feel like I have to get a running start with this passage because vs. 21 is really where Paul started this line of questioning. I think he really pushed the point about salvation for the Jews, or lack of salvation for them, because he understood something really important about "religious" people. In many ways, it is harder to reach an unsaved religious person for the gospel than an unsaved person who has never gone to church, because the religious person thinks he's doing all the right things. But salvation doesn't start with MY doing... It starts with GOD'S doing. God the Father sent His Son. Jesus Christ the Son came willingly to be my replacement payment. The Holy Spirit comes to dwell in me so that I can obey the Lord because He knows that I have no power to obey Him in my own strength. That's the horrific nature of sin. It blinds. It corrupts. It replaces truth with plausible wisdom. It uses all the words about God and attributes them to man. And it's a lie.

Paul is speaking harsh reality in this chapter... but it's better to hear the harsh reality so that we can be rescued from the lie, than to hear illusions and delusions that make us feel good in the moment but leave us dead in our sins.

In this passage, Paul really calls out the Jews BECAUSE, at the time of his writing, they were standing in the way of the gospel reaching both Jew and Gentile. Who is the one who truly loves me? The one who tells me the harsh truth of my sin so that He can rescue me and free me from condemnation, not the one who just tells me what I want to hear.

Vs. 21-24 ~ Paul called the Jews out for speaking the word with their lips, but living according to the very things they were condemning in others. When Jesus was on the earth, preaching the good news of the gospel, He called out the harsh realities of what the leaders of the Jews, the Pharisees and scribes, were doing. He said in Matthew 15:8, "This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me."

They preached against stealing, adultery, and idolatry while they were themselves stealing, committing adultery, and using stolen idols from pagan temples. They lifted up the law but dishonored God by rebelling against it. That is the epitome of legalism. Their apathy to true worship and obedience of the Lord set the tone even for the Gentiles. The Gentiles would look at them and say, "Well, you don't really honor God. Why should we? He's like any other pagan god... just use Him for what you can get."

It's been 2000 years since Paul wrote this letter. The Jews are no longer viewed as someone Gentiles should look to for a relationship with the Lord because they as a race deny Jesus as the Messiah. But let me not forget... all the writers of the Bible were Jews... not to mention my Savior, Jesus Christ. So, I have something to learn from them.

In this day and age, I see the same thing happening with some people who preach the word well, but later it's discovered that they never really followed the word themselves. That can be devastating to the mind of a young believer or a person who has not yet put his or her faith in Christ. Some preachers teach things that go completely against the word, but speak with such authority that the person who doesn't know the word is deceived. Some preachers speak the truth of the word but then live a lie. God is not afraid for the truth to be exposed. He can't be blackmailed or manipulated. He will always allow the truth to come out in His timing. I pray that I will stay so close to Him that I won't be guilty of leading anyone away from Him by any means. O Lord, let me speak AND LIVE Your truth!!!

Vs. 25-29 ~ Circumcision is not something reserved only for the Jews anymore. Parents circumcise their Gentile baby boys for health reasons now. So it's always kind of weird for me to think about. But it was a mandate that all Jewish baby boys would be circumcised on the 8th day to show that they were part of the chosen people of God. Circumcision, like so many of the commands of the Old Testament, was a symbol of something greater. Colossians 2:17 speaks of all the rituals from the Old Testament as being "a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ."

Circumcision involved a cutting away of flesh. And that flesh would never grow back. Colossians 2:11 speaks of salvation as being "the circumcision of the heart, by the circumcision of Christ." Through Jesus, all who confess Him as Lord are circumcised in heart, having the flesh that is hostile to God cut away, never to grow back again. In Christ, my flesh is dead... it just doesn't know it yet... but when the Lord takes me home, my flesh will be gone forever. God has declared it... and anything He says that WILL BE is as good as done.

For the Jew who rejects Jesus, he is banking on his circumcision as being his ticket to heaven... but what he's missing is that he has to live by every rule of the law in order for his physical circumcision to mean anything. Paul said, "If you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision." No person who relies on works of the law for salvation gets to heaven on his own merits.

The fact is... Anyone who obeys the requirements of the law of God, whether Jew or Gentile is considered "circumcised" in the eyes of God. The problem with that is... No one can keep God's law perfectly... except Jesus. If a Gentile did keep the law perfectly, his obedience to the law, even though he isn't a Jew, would condemn the Jews who have the written word but don't obey it.

Paul really blew the minds of the people at the time because he showed them that the physical bloodline does not make a Jewish person exempt from the gospel. In Galatians 3 he said that Jews were not "sons of Abraham" unless they lived by faith in Christ. (Abraham was promised by God to be the father of many nations.) And John said in 1 John 2:22-23, "Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also." This had to be such a mind blowing concept for both Jew and Gentile to grasp at the time... Jews cannot claim their elite status with God by blood, but only through faith in Jesus.

Here's the bottom line. Circumcision means nothing unless it's the circumcision of the heart. That only comes by the Spirit dwelling in us through faith in Jesus... not just the letter of the law. Lots of people know what the word says... but if they don't have the Spirit of Christ in them, they just have words. Even the devil knows the word of God, but he's definitely not a follower of God and he doesn't obey His word.

Why do the Jews or the Gentiles who aren't saved speak the word even if they don't live the word? They do it for the praise of man... to be looked at by man and to be put in places of honor. But Jesus said in Matthew 6:1, "Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven." And He said in John 5:44, "How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?" But Paul said the only praise that matters is the praise of God. It is only from the Lord that these words matter have eternal value... "Well done, My sweet child." And that praise from God comes as I put my confidence in Him and draw near to Him in worship. The only works of value are the ones done in faith in Christ from a heart of worship.

Father, to use Your word in order to draw glory to myself is not only dishonoring to You, but it's deceiving to my soul. It has no lasting value. Please help me to represent You authentically. I pray that the only honor I will seek is the honor that comes from living genuine faith in You.