

Romans 2:17-24

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[0 : 00] We're in Romans chapter two, grab your copy of God's word and turn there.

And I think I believe that that it that it should that the truth that every person will be judged and found guilty should burn in me a desire to share, to live out a gospel centered life, meaning that every decision, no matter how mundane or how simple, is measured against and counseled with the gospel.

But I. I'm not moved, I'm almost frozen by these words and not compelled to move.

All people are going to be judged and found guilty and no one can free themselves from this judgment. In October of last year, 33 miners in Chile were rescued from being 2000 feet underground for 69 days after the mine they were working in collapsed.

The miners needed a rescue. They needed somebody to come and to dig them out. That was their situation. No one in the mine said, no, I'm good.

[1 : 43] Don't come get me. I've got a spoon. I'm going to dig myself out. It would be impossible. We know the reality of this judgment to come.

We need to be telling others that is the situation. People are destined and doomed to eternal destruction without Christ.

They're going to be judged. And they're digging out with a spoon and it's impossible. An average of 2.4 million people die every year in the U.S. alone.

2.4. How many die with a spoon in their hand? How many die trying to dig themselves out? I believe that there needs to be repentance this morning.

And of course, that starts with me. My apathy and my numbness. I have repented of and I continually need to repent of it.

[2 : 48] We need to ask God to etch in us, to burn in us these words. So that when we read them and we read about God's wrath and God's judgment, we are compelled, as 2 Corinthians tells us, to go.

What good is knowledge of the text when we don't live it outside of this building? What good is the ability to teach when we don't live it outside these walls?

What good is teaching against something when we ourselves do the very same things we teach against? This is our text this morning.

This is where we sit in Romans chapter 2. Verses 17 through 24 is about hypocrisy.

The context is that of the Jews, but it certainly, and I pray that I do a good job this morning, applies to you and to me.

[3 : 49] So let's read it. I'll pray and then we'll dig in. Verse 17. But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God and know his will and approve what is excellent because you are instructed from the law.

And if you are sure that you are self, you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law and the embodiment of knowledge and truth.

You then who teach others, do you not teach yourself while you preach against stealing? Do you steal you who say that one must not commit adultery? Do you commit adultery?

You who have bore idols, do you rob temples? You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law for as it is written, the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.

Let's pray. Father, this is your word and we thank you for it. God, we ask that this morning that your spirit would move, that it would convict.

[5 : 05] God, that we would convict us of apathy, convict us of hypocrisy. God, that we would be obedient in repentance and confession.

God, that this morning that you would be honored by not just the hearing of the words and not just the speaking of the words, but the actions that follow. God, I pray that you speak to us this morning, that your words come out of my mouth.

What is written down on these pieces of paper, God, if it's not true, don't let me speak them. God, move in a mighty way this morning in Jesus name. Amen. I want to I want to I want to be clear this morning that when I when I say and use the word Jew, I'm not indicting all Jewish people.

I'm using the context of our text this morning where Paul is addressing the Jewish religious leaders or the legalists. Those who are Pharisees, those those guys, those who are addressing, those who are Pharisees, those those guys, those who are addressing.

So I'm not making this blanket statement talking about Jews. That would be ridiculous. So when I say Jew, I'm talking about the religious people this morning.

[6 : 16] It's just too much to write Jew, the religious people every time I have that come up. So within the text, we find a lot of things that Paul lists as actions of the Jews.

I'm just reading the list off. Paul says rely. They rely on the law. They boast in God. They know his will. They approve what is excellent. They're instructed from the law.

They're a guide to the blind. Light to those in darkness. Instructor of the foolish. Teacher of children. They preach against stealing. They speak against adultery.

They abort idols and they boast in the law. I want to be that guy. I want that list. I want to be filled with these traits. But see, Paul is not giving this list to then give the Jews an award for good living. In fact, he's doing the opposite. He's accusing them. He's indicting them. And what we have here is not a list of a good follower of Christ. But a good religious guy who is a hypocrite.

[7 : 24] The definition of hypocrisy from a dictionary. A pretense of having a virtuous character. Moral or religious beliefs or principles. That one does not really possess.

So somebody who acts. And you guys know the definition. I'm not telling you anything you don't know. Person who acts one way and lives another. Person who is trying to be something that they really aren't.

We all can name one, two or ten hypocrites that we have seen. Maybe this week or that we continue to see. The Jews, the legalists were really good at looking at the outward.

Looking good outwardly. And judging somebody outwardly according to how they looked and acted. But see, the gospel requires us to look inward.

Instead of outward. That's what Jesus taught about. Check out. Turn to Matthew 23. And go ahead and mark it. Because we're going to flip back and forth between Romans 2 and Matthew 23.

[8 : 24] A good bit this morning. Let's go. Jesus is speaking to a crowd and his disciples.

And he basically just dishes out a butt whooping on the Pharisees. Just talks horrible about them. But talks truth. And tells everyone how bad they are.

And in verses 2 through 7, we kind of get this definition of a hypocrite as Jesus would define it. Speaking about the Pharisees.

The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat. So practice and observe whatever they tell you, but not what they do. For they preach, but do not practice.

They tie up heavy burdens hard to bear and lay them on people's shoulders. But they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger. They do all their deeds to be seen by others.

[9 : 25] For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long. And they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues. And greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others.

Outward things. Outward things. The appearance of being something that they are not. In Romans chapter 2, we have characteristics of a hypocrite.

Now, although Paul, again, like I've said, is addressing Jewish religious people, the characteristics are the same for you and for me. So as we go through this text, ask yourself if you have been or are being a hypocrite.

Compare this text to your life. Ask yourself the hard questions. Be honest and dig down deep. And ask the Holy Spirit to lead you to reveal hypocrisy in your life, to confession and to repentance.

So, this morning, the first truth, the first characteristic of a hypocrite. A hypocrite has knowledge of the truth. For this context here, they have knowledge of the truth.

[10 : 40] Look at verses 17 and 18 of chapter 2 in Romans. But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God and know his will and approve what is excellent, because you were

instructed from the law.

Now, a foundation, if you're building a house, a plumb line is important in building. You have to get the foundation right. It has to be measured correctly, laid properly and level.

A plumb line will help you in all three of those. It ends up being the reference point to the building project. So, when there's a question, when there's a problem, you go back to the plumb line and check the measurements.

You measure it off to see if the foundation or the wall is laid properly. For us this morning, for the hypocrite, for the Jew here, their plumb line is the knowledge of truth.

Their reference is the knowledge of the law, not the law itself. Not the word of God, not the teaching of Jesus Christ, but the knowledge of the law.

[11:50] By this word, they rely on the law. For them, the law has become so works-based. I have to do these things that having knowledge of the law is the pinnacle of life.

It's the... They've reached it. This is what I strive for. Know the law. Understand the law. Be part of the law. Memorize the law. And then they can boast in God, is our next line in our text this morning. They can boast in God. Now, on surface level, this sounds healthy. Yeah. Boast in God. Absolutely. God is good. Let's boast in Him. But that's not the context here.

It's not boasting in God. It's boasting in their knowledge of God. It's boasting in their ability to know God. It's boasting in their bloodline.

Not boasting in what God has done. Kind of like Luke 18, where you have the Pharisee and the tax collector. You remember when the Pharisee is praying, God, thank you that I'm not this guy and this guy and this guy.

[12:54] And I'm not like that tax collector over there. He's boasting in who he is and not who God is. A hypocrite has or can have great knowledge of truth.

But their lives are as shallow and dead as if they had no knowledge at all. The next phrase, they've been instructed from the law or the next sentence or the next line.

And because they haven't been instructed from the law, they know his will and can approve what is excellent. Again, two phrases that we should strive for.

But for the Jews, they know the law without any life behind them. They know the law without any obedience. I have four kids, five kids living with us right now.

And I think every single one of them, I've had to talk them into trying something where they have sworn to me they don't like it without even trying it. I've tried to finagle and it might be something full of sugar and goodness.

[14:04] And they'll still say, no, I don't like that. And so I have to try to manipulate them and try to talk them into trying it. And then as a parent, you have this giant victory when they like it because they've tried it.

They've done what you said and and they like it. Well, saying or knowing the law and not having action after it, not having obedience with it, not having life in it is like my kids words.

I don't like that without having tried it. It's worthless. I don't believe them because they haven't tried it. They don't know if they like it or not. They just don't like how it looks or or they don't like the color or they don't like that.

That it's got coconut on it or something silly. Their words are are worth nothing because they haven't tried the food. And for the Jews here, their life is worthless because they have no action behind what they say.

They have no obedience and no life behind their words. A hypocrite knows these things. They know the truth. They have knowledge.

[15:12] But they don't live it out. Flip back to Matthew 23. Matthew 23. Verses 13 through 15.

Jesus says, but woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's face.

For you neither enter yourself nor allow those who would enter to go in. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte.

And then he becomes a proselyte and you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourself. You teach them empty knowledge.

You teach them something that doesn't get them anywhere. Verse 23. Look at their actions. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you tithe mint and dill and cumin and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy.

[16:18] And faithfulness. These you ought to have done without neglecting the others. You blind guides straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel.

What words from Jesus? I wonder how many of us have been like this hypocrite or been like this person here that Jesus describes and how Paul is laying out the Jewish religious leaders. We say one thing, one. Maybe it's one life shattering truth. But God is sovereign. Big thing. And we do nothing about it. It has no impact on our lives. How many of you are acting differently than what you say? Or what you say you believe.

It goes back to what was said a couple of weeks ago that the gospel changes a heart. But more importantly, it changes a life. It's a bigger thing than just giving you a new heart.

[17:23] You have a new life. You want to's change. Instead of being self-exalting, you're now Christ-exalting. Instead of living a life that leads to death and destruction, you're living a life that leads to eternal joy and life with God through Jesus Christ.

That is a new heart. The hypocrite has some level of knowledge, some level of knowledge of truth. But their lives look like they've never been changed.

Their lives look like they've never had a new life change. So another characteristic for us this morning is found in verse 19 and 20.

A hypocrite teaches. Romans chapter 2, a hypocrite teaches. Now, I know what you're thinking. I know what you're going to go say. Chris said that teachers are all hypocrites. I got it.

My wife's a teacher, so take that. Take that to the bank. 19 and 20. And if you are sure that you yourselves are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth.

[18:37] So the hypocrite teaches. They're a guide to the blind, a light to those in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children. Some of you might be thinking, didn't Jesus teach us to be light in the dark, to heal the blind, to instruct and make disciples?

Yes, he did. But the Jewish people did it out of a superiority issue. They thought that they were better than everybody else. The Jews look down on the blind.

There must be sin in the family somewhere for them to be blind. John chapter 9 has Jesus' disciples, verses 1 and 2.

Jesus' disciples say, Jesus, they see a man who was born blind. They ask, who sinned for this man to be born blind? Him or his family? The Jewish people believed that something was wrong with those who are blind, those who had ailments, those who were sick, something.

They were less of a citizen. They were less of a person. So those who haven't been enlightened, like the like the most religious, were less a citizen than those who were enlightened and had great knowledge.

[19:50] Matthew 23, again, verse 4 says, they tie up heavy burdens. They, talking about the hypocrites, the Pharisees and the scribes.

They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders. But they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger. They tell them things that they should do.

This is how you should live. Let me teach you. Let me show you how you should live. Let me lay it out for you. And that they don't do it themselves. Any hypocrite today or in this time here in Romans chapter 2 are always trying to teach.

They're always trying to teach because they always have an audience. They're always doing it for someone. Now, it might not be a classroom setting. But they're always trying to impress or sway someone to think they are different than they are.

So instead of acting and doing things for an audience of one, the Lord Jesus Christ, they act for a multitude of people and all for personal gain or self-promotion.

[21:04] So a hypocrite teaches. Guide to the blind, a light to those in darkness. But thirdly.

And this is the most obvious one. A hypocrite's actions never line up with their words. Verses 21 and 22. You then who teach.

Do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? You say that one must not commit adultery. Do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols.

Do you rob temples? Now, in the English language, we have question marks. The Greek doesn't have punctuation. And these are actually rhetorical questions. Paul is asking the question and giving the answer at the same time, knowing who the religious people were and how they acted.

So another way to read it is you then who teach others. You don't teach yourself. While you preach against stealing, you steal. You who say that one must commit adultery.

[22 : 08] You commit adultery. You abhor idols. You rob temples. It's a simple truth. Known by all of us that hypocrites don't do what they say.

Their actions don't line up with their words. And see, Paul here is able to lay this out to them and just hit them with this because Paul himself was a Pharisee.

Paul himself knew the actions and knew how Pharisees acted. In Philippians chapter three. Paul gives us kind of a rundown of his resume.

He says, circumcised on the eighth day of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, as to the law, a Pharisee, as to zeal, a persecutor of the church, as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

So Paul can speak with authority about the religious Jewish leaders, about the Pharisees and the hypocrites that he sees because he knows.

[23 : 14] How they act. Back to Matthew 23. Paul is saying, you do this, you say this, but you don't or eat or you do what you preach against.

You say this and you don't do it. And Jesus lays it out for us as well. Twenty three, verse four, the second part of verse four. But they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger.

Verse 14. Second part of 14. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in. And twenty seven and twenty eight. What do you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites?

For you are like whitewashed tombs which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

Jesus lays it out for us. Paul lays it out for them. A hypocrite. Says one thing and does something totally different and a lot of times the opposite for us.

[24 : 33] How often do you do you have. Tainted motives. When doing things. How often do you say you love everyone? I love all people, but you don't with your actions.

How often do you say only by God's grace? Only by God's grace am I here. Only by God's grace can I do this. But you pursue the law and works for forgiveness.

How often do you say God is good? You quote Romans 8 28. But blame God for the loss or for the struggle that you have. How often do you say I love God?

But don't tell anyone about Jesus during your week. Now there's people in here and I'm sure some of you are like me and I'm one of them who too often get the mindset.

Just trying to get by to the next season. I'm just trying to get by. Just get through this and see what happens next. See what where we're headed next. Get to the next stage in life. And then we might with with our words say say God is sovereign.

[25 : 44] But our minds are trying to figure out how to get out of this situation. Instead of trusting Romans 8 28 for God. God works all things for good for those who are loved and called accordingly.

If we proclaim Christ is Lord. Our words and our actions have to line up. Otherwise, we might as well not believe any of the Bible.

Our words and actions have to line up. Look back to to Romans chapter 2 verses 23 and 24. And we see we see the result of this life.

We see the result of of hypocrisy. Paul writes you who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law. For as it is written, the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you. A hypocritical Jew who boasted in the law, who was proud of being a Jew, proud of their bloodline, proud of their knowledge, proud of their teaching.

[26 : 55] Broke the law by not following it themselves. What followed those rhetorical questions was the indictment of guilt. For the hypocritical Jews, they are guilty and Paul leaves no room to wiggle out of.

And guys, God's word leaves us no room to wiggle out of either. If we break the law, if we sin, we sin against God alone and dishonor him.

Not not not our pastor, not our mom, not our dad, not our friend, not a people, the person we sinned against. We dishonor God alone.

Psalms 51. I've referenced this before. Fifty one verse four. Paul writes this right after his adultery with David, with Bathsheba. And he says against you, you only have I sinned and done what is evil

in your sight against you.

You only. David understands that he sinned against God alone. Verse 24.

[28 : 09] The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you. Now, for us, if you if you claim to be a Christian, if you claim to be a follower of Christ and you carry the name of Jesus Christ wherever you go and whoever you speak that to.

So when you fall into sin, your witness is ruined and the name of the Lord is drug through the mud. Quiz.

How do you know if you're blaspheming the Lord Jesus Christ? How do you know if you're blaspheming the Lord Jesus Christ? The answer is, are you living in sin? Another question.

Are you living in sin? Then, yes, you are blasphemous. Then, yes, you are a blasphemer. And the creator God is slandered by you because of your sin.

Because in your life, there is no difference between your standard of living and that of the world.

They're the same. And because of that, the Lord's name is blessed is blasphemed if you claim to be a follower of his.

[29 : 19] In politics, slandering or blaspheming occurs way too often. When someone makes false accusations about a person or a candidate, that that slander or blasphemy.

When we continue in sin and we are making false accusations about Jesus Christ. False accusations like he is not Lord.

He is not just. He is not worth it. He is not holy. He doesn't care how we live. He cannot do anything about my life. He doesn't care about me.

We proclaim this when we continue in sin. So here's some more practical negative effects of hypocrisy for us.

Hypocrisy deforms the gospel. Hypocrisy deforms the gospel. God created everything we see. He created everything for his glory.

[30 : 22] And he gave it to Adam and Eve to be managers of. Adam and Eve chose to eat the one thing that God told them not to. Because they believed in the lie that said that they would be like God.

And in so doing, they've cursed all of mankind. So since that fall, we have been separated from God by sin. And all of mankind has been dead.

Some people want to say they're sick. No, not just sick, not just injured. We have been dead. And God in the father and his sovereignty and love for his creation, sent his son, Jesus Christ, down to earth to live, to breathe and to grow up.

While growing up and living on earth, he lived a sinless life. Meaning, he did nothing wrong. Ever. He was completely man and completely God.

He lived a perfect, sinless life so that he could do something phenomenal. When the time came, at 33, he died a gruesome death on a cross for all of mankind.

[31 : 31] He was beaten, whipped, abused, spit on, cursed at. All for our sin. God is just. And because he is just, we, being dead, were also condemned to eternal death because of our sin.

God's wrath was to rain down on you and on me. But on the cross, that wrath was completely and totally directed at Jesus Christ.

Because he lived a sinless life. He is the perfect sacrifice for our sin. Jesus Christ felt the father's wrath for our sin and followed through with it.

He finished it. But that's not all. They buried him in a tomb and three days later he rose again. So not only did he bore the wrath of the father for us, he also showed all of creation that even death itself was defeated at the cross.

So now, sitting here and standing here this morning, if we trust and believe in his birth, his death, his resurrection, our sin has been wiped away.

[32 : 40] Death no longer is the end but the beginning. All because of his love for his creation. Notice, you and I did nothing. It is God's action on our lives and we respond by repenting and believing.

Now, if that is the gospel, hypocrisy deforms that into thinking there is no need for a savior. If we go back to Romans 2, it is no longer by grace that we are saved but by works.

A hypocrite does everything to achieve something. To gain something. And so for that person, that hypocrite, and for those watching, salvation can be earned.

Because they claim Jesus or some form of him but only have to act it out in front of people. They only have to do certain things. Sing certain songs. Pray certain prayers. The gospel is 100% based on God and his work and has nothing to do with you or me. But see, a hypocrite says otherwise.

[33 : 52] A hypocrite says otherwise. And they deform the gospel. But not only do they deform the gospel, a hypocrite changes the focus. The focus goes for what God has done through Christ and what we can do.

This is kind of repetitive, but follow me. You may be a Christian, but if you're trying to impress someone, then your gospel is you and not Christ. Do you know why Moses didn't get into the promised land?

I just saw this this week and I'm really embarrassed to say that out loud. It did not click with me. In Exodus 17, we have the first account of Moses hitting the rock with his staff for water to drink. And he does exactly what God says in numbers, chapter 20. We have the second account this time. Instead of God telling him to hit the rock with the staff, he tells Moses to speak to the rock in front of all the people and it will bring forth water.

Moses doesn't do it. Instead. I'm going to read it to you. Numbers 20, verse 10 through 12. Write it down. You can turn there if you want, but I'm I'm jumping right in.

[35 : 07] Then Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock, the same exact rock as before and said to them here now, you rebels.

Shall we bring water for you out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock with his staff twice. Water came out abundantly and the congregation drank and their livestock.

And the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, because you did not believe in me to hold me as holy in the eyes of people of Israel. Therefore, you shall know not bring this assembly into the land that I have given them.

See, God tells Moses to go and to speak to the rock, bring water out of the rock, speak to it, and I will bring water. And Moses, first thing he does is he insults the people.

Hear now, you rebels. He insults them as if he were the judge, as if he were judging them. He then says to them, shall we bring water from out of this rock?

[36 : 15] He's elevated himself with God. Shall we bring water for you out of this rock? Moses exalted himself with God instead of leaving God the one exalted.

Moses took the focus off of God and put it on himself. Standing there in that moment, took the focus off of God and put it on himself by being judge and by claiming to be with God.

Elevating himself. It was slight. It was simple. But the outcome was big. And the punishment of not going in the promised land was just.

See, hypocrisy does the same thing. Hypocrisy. It might be slight. It might be small. It might be simple.

But within that moment, the focus is turned to you instead of God. A hypocrite is all about me. Not me, Chris, but me.

[37 : 19] You. Me. Hypocrite is all about us. The gospel is all about him. So not only does it change the focus, not only does it deform the gospel, but hypocrisy transforms the mission and not in a good way.

If you are focused on yourself, then the way you live your life is focused on you as well. So for us as believers, we have a mission.

God has given us a mission to go and make disciples. Matthew 28. What kind of disciples are we going to make when we are self-focused? When it's all about us?

When we're trying to tell you how to live your life based on how I live it? What kind of disciple are we going to make? I'll give you a clue. Look on television. Look in magazines.

Look at all the ridiculous videos on YouTube. All of these are filled with self-focused disciples. They attend the church of self.

[38 : 28] Our mission is different. And what we have before us is big. The task is sometimes overwhelming. And we have no room for hypocrites to be walking around.

So my encouragement to you is check yourself. Examine yourself. Confess. Repent. And follow Christ. Check yourself.

Examine yourself. And follow Christ. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.