

Housegroup Study Notes – 2nd November 2016

Romans 2: 17-29

Day 2

The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you.
Deuteronomy 31: 8

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Focus - Ladies' Bible Study group

St Jerome's Parish, Kibera, Nairobi

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Introduction



Where is Paul?

Corinth on his third missionary journey.

Who is he writing to?

Christians in Rome. A combination of Jews and Gentiles.

Why is he writing to them at this time?

Prepare the way for his planned visit to Rome.

Present the basic message of salvation to people who had never had the teaching of an apostle.

Clarify the relationship between Jews and Gentiles.

What did we learn in Chapter 1: verses 18-31.

God's righteous wrath.

What did we look at in Chapter 2: verse 1-16.

Does this mean that we can achieve immortal life by being good? Do the Jews have an advantage?

“First for the Jew then for the Gentiles”

Read the passage.

What does Paul suggest is the Jews' assessment of themselves in relation to God? To what extent is it justified?

v17: They rely on the law and boast in God.

v24: God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.

What is Paul's argument against the privileged Jews? How does he apply the principle of verses 12-13?

v12: ALL who sin under the law will be judged by the law.

Circumcision was the badge of membership for the Jews. What does Paul say is the implication of their disobedience?

v25: Circumcision (only) has value if you observe the law; if you break the law it is as if you had not been circumcised.

What is a true Jew, according to Paul? How do Jews in general fall short?

v29: One who is one inwardly, circumcision is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code.

v29 again: “by the written code”

Looking back what is Paul's purpose in this chapter?

A wake up call to the Jews and a reminder to everyone.

Look at Psalm 14v2-3:

The LORD looks down from heaven on all mankind to see if there are any who understand; any who seek God.

All have turned away, all have become corrupt, there is no one who does good, not even one.

What would Paul say to people who make claims such as the following, and who think they will escape judgement?

→I'll be okay, I've never murdered anyone!

Look back at chapter 1: verses 29-31. God's standard is impossible to attain.

→I'm a Jew, I am one of God's people!

Look back at chapter 2: verse 9. God does not show favouritism.

→I've been baptised. I come from a Christian family. I go to church!

Look back at chapter verse 17: This sounds like relying on the law and boasting in God.

What would be Paul's verdict on Gandhi, Hitler or us?

We are all in the same position. Condemned by our inability to measure up to God's standards. We can all be rescued by God's Grace.

A contrast. We see Hitler as an out-and-out villain beyond redemption.

Is it fair that a thoroughly good man like Gandhi should be condemned for lack of faith in Jesus?

BUT .. Do we really know Gandhi and Hitler's relationship with God at the end of their lives?

What have you learned about God's judgement from this passage?

Romans 2: 17-29

	NIV	ESV	Amplified Bible	New Living Translation	The Message
	THE JEWS AND THE LAW	GOD'S JUDGEMENT AND THE LAW	THE JEW IS CONDEMNED BY THE LAW	THE JEWS AND THE LAW	RELIGION CAN'T SAVE YOU
17	Now you, if you call yourself a Jew; if you rely on the law and boast in God;	But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God	But if you bear the name "Jew" and rely on the Law [for your salvation] and boast in [your special relationship to] God,	You who call yourselves Jews are relying on God's law, and you boast about your special relationship with him.	If you're brought up Jewish, don't assume that you can lean back in the arms of your religion and take it easy, feeling smug because you're an insider to God's revelation, a connoisseur of the best things of God, informed on the latest doctrines! I have a special word of caution for you who are sure that you have it all together yourselves and, because you know God's revealed Word inside and out, feel qualified to guide others through their blind alleys and dark nights and confused emotions to God. While you are guiding others, who is going to guide you? I'm quite serious. While preaching "Don't steal!" are you going to rob people blind? Who would suspect you? The same with adultery. The same with idolatry. You can get by with almost anything if you front it with eloquent talk about God and his law. The line from Scripture, "It's because of you Jews that the outsiders are down on God," shows it's an old problem that isn't going to go away.
18	if you know his will and approve of what is superior because you are instructed by the law;	and know his will and approve what is excellent, because you are instructed from the law;	and [if you claim to] know His will and approve the things that are essential or have a sense of what is excellent, based on your instruction from the Law,	You know what he wants; you know what is right because you have been taught his law.	
19	if you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light for those who are in the dark,	and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,	and [if you] are confident that you are a [qualified] guide to the blind [those untaught in theology], a light to those who are in darkness,	You are convinced that you are a guide for the blind and a light for people who are lost in darkness.	
20	an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of little children, because you have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth –	an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth—	and [that you are] a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the [spiritually] childish, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth—	You think you can instruct the ignorant and teach children the ways of God. For you are certain that God's law gives you complete knowledge and truth.	
21	you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal?	you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal?	well then, you who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal [in ways that are discrete, but just as sinful]?	Well then, if you teach others, why don't you teach yourself? You tell others not to steal, but do you steal?	
22	You who say that people should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?	You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?	You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who detest idols, do you rob [pagan] temples [of valuable idols and offerings]?	You say it is wrong to commit adultery, but do you commit adultery? You condemn idolatry, but do you use items stolen from pagan temples?	
23	You who boast in the law, do you dishonour God by breaking the law?	You who boast in the law dishonour God by breaking the law.	You who boast in the Law, do you [repeatedly] dishonour God by breaking the Law?	You are so proud of knowing the law, but you dishonour God by breaking it.	
24	As it is written: 'God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.'	For, as it is written, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you," just as it is written [in Scripture].	For, "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you," just as it is written [in Scripture].	No wonder the Scriptures say, "The Gentiles blaspheme the name of God because of you."	
25	Circumcision has value if you observe the law, but if you break the law, you have become as though you had not been circumcised.	For circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law, but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision.	Circumcision [the sign of the covenant of Abraham] is indeed of value if you practice the Law; but if you habitually break the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision [it is meaningless in God's sight].	The Jewish ceremony of circumcision has value only if you obey God's law. But if you don't obey God's law, you are no better off than an uncircumcised Gentile.	Circumcision, the surgical ritual that marks you as a Jew, is great if you live in accord with God's law. But if you don't, it's worse than not being circumcised. The reverse is also true: The uncircumcised who keep God's ways are as good as the circumcised—in fact, better. Better to keep God's law uncircumcised than break it circumcised. Don't you see: It's not the cut of a knife that makes a Jew. You become a Jew by who you are. It's the mark of God on your heart, not of a knife on your skin, that makes a Jew. And recognition comes from God, not legalistic critics.
26	So then, if those who are not circumcised keep the law's requirements, will they not be	So, if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not his	So if the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his	And if the Gentiles obey God's law, won't God declare them to be his own people?	

	regarded as though they were circumcised?	his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?	uncircumcision be regarded [by God] as circumcision?		
27	The one who is not circumcised physically and yet obeys the law will condemn you who, even though you have the written code and circumcision, are a law-breaker.	Then he who is physically uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the law.	Then he who is physically uncircumcised but keeps [the spirit of] the Law will judge you who, even though you have the written code and circumcision, break the Law.	In fact, uncircumcised Gentiles who keep God's law will condemn you Jews who are circumcised and possess God's law but don't obey it.	
28	A person is not a Jew who is one only outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical.	For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical.	For he is not a [real] Jew who is only one outwardly, nor is [true] circumcision something external and physical.	For you are not a true Jew just because you were born of Jewish parents or because you have gone through the ceremony of circumcision.	
29	No, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a person's praise is not from other people, but from God.	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.	But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and [true] circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by [the fulfillment of] the letter [of the Law]. His praise is not from men, but from God.	No, a true Jew is one whose heart is right with God. And true circumcision is not merely obeying the letter of the law; rather, it is a change of heart produced by the Spirit. And a person with a changed heart seeks praise from God, not from people.	