

Introduction:

Good morning...Thank you for being here today...I am Byron Bradshaw I am privileged to be the pastor here today...We have several new members being introduced today...If you are interested in becoming a member here at Calvary...I invite you to see me following the service today...

It is great to be here with you...Thank you to all the mothers...I joke that if it were left up to men to give birth then the entire human race would die in one generation...

Watching the grace and dignity to which you carry yourselves in pregnancy, child rearing and in your glory years is an inspiration...

I read a fitting post on Facebook regarding mothers days...

“Every year my children ask me the same question. After thinking about it, I decided I'd give them my real answer:

What do I want for Mother's Day? I want you. I want you to keep coming around, I want you to bring your kids around, I want you to ask me questions, ask my advice, tell me your problems, ask for my opinion, ask for my help. I want you to come over and rant about your problems, rant about life, whatever. Tell me about your job, your worries, your kids, your fur babies.

I want you to continue sharing your life with me. Come over and laugh with me, or laugh at me, I don't care. Hearing you laugh is music to me.

I spent the better part of my life raising you the best way I knew how. Now, give me time to sit back and admire my work.

Raid my refrigerator, help yourself, I really don't mind. In fact, I wouldn't want it any other way. I want you to spend your money making a better life for you and your family, I have the things I need. I want to see you happy and healthy. When you ask me what I want for Mother's Day, I say "nothing" because you've already been giving me my gift all year. I want you.” Amen

Before we begin this morning let us bow in a Word of Prayer...**ME:**

Turn in your Bible to Romans 2...Romans 2...We are continuing our time in Romans...And the Book of Romans is all about the Gospel...So, if you feel like I am repeating myself....Well, I kind of am...It's because all 16 chapters of Romans centers around this one idea...

Today, I'd like to talk to you about responsibility...Specifically...the Responsibility of Christians because we possess the completed Word of God...

Perhaps... you've heard the phrase... “With great power comes great...Responsibility...”

But responsibility does not just come with power...Responsibility also comes with knowledge...If you think about it...Some knowledge comes with the responsibility to keep it safe...

I imagine some of you have been entrusted with great knowledge...Perhaps even Top Secret

knowledge... **I've heard of engineers** here in Huntsville, AL that work in a Vault...A vault that even James Bond could not get into.....I imagine some of you have worked in these environments...

Transition: Some knowledge is meant to be responsibly kept safe.....But.....some knowledge **IS** conversely meant to be responsibly shared...

There is Some knowledge that you must share or it can be disastrous...Think about your medical history...If you go to a new doctor and you do NOT disclose your medical history or allergies...Then the result can be DISASTEROUS...Right? That is why they have a 25 page book to fill out...

Transition: Some knowledge is meant to be kept safe...Some knowledge is meant to BE shared...But also some knowledge is meant to create change...To specifically change us.....

Some knowledge is purposely shared to change our behaviors or actions...For example: the results of blood tests...or the dreaded weight scale.....Are all meant pieces of knowledge that creates change...

WE:

But what else are sources of knowledge that should responsibly create change? Well...The Gospel.....The Gospel is meant not just to save us but also to change us...True faith in the Gospel necessitates change...

But as a Christian I think about another source of knowledge to create change...(Hold up the Bible)...Right? But...is the Bible just meant to create change in **US**?

What is the purpose of the Word even today? Back then, what was the purpose of the Old Testament Law in the lives of the Jews? If the Law was not meant justify, then what was the purpose of the Law? Here in Romans 2...Paul gives 3 purposes of the Law and then practically unpacks its responsible actions...

Transition: Well, Paul answers this question in his discussion of two Jewish signs of God's covenant.... Paul discussed the three actions due to the Law (in verses 17-24) and an essential conclusion regarding circumcision and justification...in verses 25-29...

Transition: So, come with me to Romans 2...And we will begin in verse 17 as Paul finally identifies his audience...Look at verse 17...

GOD:

Read verse 17, *"But if you bear the name "Jew" and rely upon the Law and boast in God,"*

Finally, here in verse 17, Paul reveals his audience in Chapter 2...It is the Jewish nation...And to this point...What has Paul warned them of?

Chapter 2:1-11: Not to hypocritically and unnecessarily judge others....For if they do, they

will store up God's wrath reckoned at the final judgment...

Chapters 2:12-16: That as a Jew...sincerity toward the Law does not justify or save...but rather perfection does...And Since no one is perfect then they need Jesus to justify them through His blood by faith...

Transition: If the Law does not justify...Then what is the purpose of the Law? Notice Paul's answers in verses 17-20...

Read verses 17-20, *"But if you bear the name "Jew" and rely upon the Law and boast in God, 18 and know His will and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law, 19 and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, 20 a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth,"*

To summarize...What is the purpose of the Law? Point #1: The Law is a Guide to Others...
The knowledge of the Law gives the Jewish nation a responsibility to use the Law to Guide others....

How do they responsibly use the Law to guide others?

#1: Know His will vs 18

#2: To Approve What is essential vs 18 (In other words to determine what not to make a mountain out of a mole hill.....Clear throat.....)

#3: Confidence to Guide Others vs 19

#4: Light in the Darkness of a sinful world vs 19

#5: Corrector of the Foolish vs 20

#6: Teacher of the Immature vs 20...

Think about it...The very Old Testament Law that they were given was not just knowledge to keep to themselves...But the Law was meant to help the Jews themselves guide Others...

Illustration:

In a sense...The Old Testament Law was a map...(Flip the map- You remember these, right?)

It was a map to help the Jewish nation to lead others spiritually from Point A to Point B...

It was a guide to map out spiritual growth...The Law was meant to provide the Jews with the ability to know God's will, to approve what was essential, to guide others, to teach the foolish...It was meant to give Jews the guidance to **lead others** to maturity...(hold up map)

Practical:

Ladies and Gentlemen...Let us not lose sight of something.....Not only were the Jews responsible to take the knowledge of the Bible to guide others.....But so are we...

I believe that God has now given to us this responsibility as well...The responsibility to use His word as a map to guide others...We have a fancy word for this concept today...Guiding

others toward spiritual growth.....is called what? It's called discipleship...

I've had soooooooooo many people over the years... Ask me, "How do I make disciples?" Simple answer... (Hold up the Bible)...As the Old Testament Law was a map to others...The Bible today is the map to help us guide others as well...

Transition: But following the map of the Bible is not meant to just help us guide others towards spiritual growth..... But the Bible and the Old Testament Law is also a map for my own personal spiritual growth...

Notice what Paul says in verses 21-23, Listen to Paul's bluntness in verses 21-23... *"You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that one shall not steal, do you steal? 22 You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? 23 You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God?"*

Woah...Talk about blunt...Paul getting all up in their grills... He is stepping all on their toes...And you think I step on yours...HAHA...man... Paul unmistakably takes the spotlight off of their "job" for discipleship and points it at their own lacking personal sanctification...

What is the purpose of the Law? To a Jew Point #2: To Be A Guide in Personal Sanctification (vs 21-23)...

Notice a key word in verse 21... "οὖν" the Greek word for "Therefore"...Which signals to me that Paul is drawing a conclusion...In other words, Paul says all of verses 17-20... for the conclusion in verses 21-23...

What is Paul conclusively telling the Jews in verses 21-23? **"Practice what you preach....."**

Paul is saying... "Therefore" Because you, Jews, have been given such great knowledge... ...Since you have been given the first sign of the covenant...The Law... since you have been given such great privilege and responsibility ...Do you then Jews practice what you preach?

Not only is the Law a Guide for Others...But the completed Word is also a Guide for ourselves...

Personal Story:

Friends, personally, I found verses 21-23 very convicting...Ya know... I am not perfect... I am the first one to admit this...And man...This convicted me...I was sitting in McDonalds this week putting this message together and it was like someone hit me in the face with a Big Mac...

Friends, the Law to the Jews...And the Word of God to us is given as a map not just for "them" but also for "me".....The Word of God should shape me...It should change me...It should mold me...

Listen to this... Watch this... “The Bible should shape the way I think, the passion I feel, and the actions I take...” (Repeat?)

Friends listen...

We have been given the very Word of God... The Completed WORD OF GOD... THE DIVINE REVELATION OF GOD... The special revelation of YAHWEH... of EL ELYON... THE MOST HIGH... OF “I AM WHO I AM...”

And because we have been given this great knowledge... We have great responsibility... And our great responsibility as Christians... Is to take this (the Very Word of God) and #1 To make disciples and then #2: Practice what we preach... But we aren't done yet... Not even close...

Transition: I want you to notice something about verse 24... It is juicy... Packed with truth...

Notice verse 24.... Read verse 24, *“For “THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES BECAUSE OF YOU,” just as it is written.”*

What else is the purpose of the Law? Point #3: To Be a Light to the World vs 24

Another purpose of the Law was to differentiate the covenant people from the rest of the world... And to make those nations living in darkness such as the Philistines, Moabites, Edomites, Egyptians to become jealous and exclaim... “Ya know... I look at their lives... and They have something I don't.... I want their God...”

But what is actually happening in the first century? The Gentiles are looking at their lives and then blaspheming and cursing their God.... The Egyptians look at their lives and say, “They are a bunch of Bible thumping hypocrites... Judging me for the same sin they commit...” (Clear Throat)

Transition: But it wasn't just a 1st century problem... Notice something interesting about verse 24... What is it? It is an Old Testament verse... Right? It is in ALL CAPS... Paul takes the Old Testament verse of Isaiah 52:5... to prove a point...

What is Paul's point? Not only are 1st century Gentiles blaspheming their god... But the Gentiles have been looking at their lives for centuries and blaspheming their God... Isaiah 52:5 was written 500 years before romans...

The problem of the Jews not practicing what they preach... Has been a proclaiming an anti-Gospel to the Gentiles for CENTURIES... **The Gentiles cursed them** for their Bible thumping hypocrisy for centuries

If you could boil verse 24 to one central idea... What is Paul saying? Because you have been given great knowledge... You have great responsibility... (Clear throat) People are Watching you...

Transition: But Gentiles are not just watching the Jews... Friends, people are watching You... They are watching US... too... They are watching how we live... And based on how we live... Non-believers will either believe in our great God OR curse our Great God...

Practical:

Friends.....Can I poke for just a second? If you profess to be a Christian then people ARE watching you...

To Tell you a Quick Story:

On most Sunday mornings, I go by McD to get HUGE cheap black coffee... I am all dressed up for church... so everyone at McDonalds that sees me... knows exactly where I am going...

And based on verse 24... in my simple interaction with them... by my attitude, by my patience or lack thereof... I will either cause them to grow closer to our great God... Or further away...

Drive it home:

As Christians, with great knowledge... comes great responsibility... Just like the Jews... our responsibility with the Word is not to just lead others but also to lead ourselves... and to allow our changed lives to shine into the darkness through our works... magnifying the name of Christ all the more...

Transition: So, the Law in verses 17-24 has three main purposes... For the Jews, The Law is a Guide to Others vs 17-20, A Guide in Personal Sanctification (vs 21-23), and A Light to the World vs 24...

Transition: But then Paul takes a turn... Paul takes a sharp right turn away from the Law and onto the second sign of the covenant... To the very sign that makes a Jew a Jew...

Notice verses 25-29... Read verses 25-29, *“For indeed circumcision is of value if you practice the Law; but if you are a transgressor of the Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. 26 So if the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? 27 And he who is physically uncircumcised, if he keeps the Law, will he not judge you who though having the letter of the Law and circumcision are a transgressor of the Law? 28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. 29 But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.”*

To God what is really important? (Long Pause) Based on these verses... Does sincerity toward the Law really matter? No... Does physical circumcision... Really matter? No... What matters? Practicing the Law... Actually obeying this (Hold up Bible).....

But for just a second... Imagine Paul’s Jewish audience..... Here in verses 25-29... Paul in their eyes has gone to far..... Paul here in verses 25-29 picks on the very thing that makes a Jew a Jew...

Friends, CIRCUMCISION to a JEW is a HUUUUUUUUUUUGE (Donald Trump) Deal...It is what distinguishes a male Jew from every other Male on earth...It is a physical sign that they are part of the covenant with Yahweh...

Circumcision is **THE** sign of the covenant...

To a Jew...Genesis 12, 15, 17 & 21 are some of the most important chapters in the entire Torah...Why? These chapters contain the 4 “s” of the covenant...

Genesis 12: is **the start** of the covenant

Genesis 15: is **the seal** of the covenant

Genesis 17: is **the sign** of the covenant...(Circumcision)

Genesis 21: is **the Son** of the covenant...

Transition: To demonstrate the importance of circumcision.....We will quickly reach back to two passages on it...Genesis 17 and Exodus 4...

Listen as I briefly reach back to Genesis 17 at the beginning of the sign of the covenant...Genesis 17:10-14,

Read Genesis 17:9-14...

“10 “This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: every male among you shall be circumcised. 11 “And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you. 12 “And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations, or.....13 “A servant who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; thus shall My covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. 14 “But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.”

What physically makes a Jew a Jew? Circumcision... And the sign of the covenant is extremely serious to God...Because not only will someone be cut off from Israel...

But God took it so seriously that He almost killed Moses over it...YES MOSES...God almost killed Moses over the fact that MOSES’ son was not circumcised...Exodus 4...

Transition: Ok...Time out...Let’s get out of the cultural weeds for just a second and step back...And examine Paul’s argument in Chapters 1 and 2...

Imagine...for just a second...that you are an ethnic and physical Jew in the first century...And you begin reading Paul’s letter...

You begin reading Romans Chapter 1...And when Paul goes into the depravity of the Gentiles...As a Jew you are thinking...“Ya get them Paul...” “Get those filthy Gentiles...” “Get those Disgusting uncircumcised beasts...”

I imagine the ethnic Jews when they read Chapter 1 are like obnoxious Football fans who painted their body and are holding up Signs at football Game...

But then Paul heightens his argument picking on the Jews.... In Chapter 2:1-11...when Paul says... “Ya know even though you are a Jew...You still can’t judge...”

But then it gets worse... Paul then says... “Oh you know that Law that you follow? Ya...It doesn’t justify you...”

But then it gets worse... Paul then says... “Oh ya...you know that sacred circumcision thing...Ya that doesn’t justify you either...”

And then imagine if you were a Jew in Rome... The greatest salvific security you have is the greatest sign of the covenant...Circumcision...And then all of a sudden Paul says...in Romans 2:28-29...

Read again verses 28-29, “*28 For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. 29 But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.*”

Imagine reading these verses...Your jaw would hit the ground... Because as a Jew...Paul is saying, “Ya know...your physical sign of the covenant...isn’t what really matters to God...It is this (point to your heart)...”

What is Paul’s point in verses 25-29? Point #4: What really matters to God is that you really know and follow Him...

It is if you are circumcised by the Holy Spirit... How is one circumcised by the Holy Spirit? Chapter 3...

As mentioned last week...Paul is whittling away excuse after excuse...Lie after lie that being justified before God is a matter of works...

To a Jew...Being justified before God is a matter of what I do and not a matter of who I believe...Paul is whittling away every excuse to get them to wake up and realize their need for the Gospel which is presented in Chapter 3...

YOU:

But I want to take a time out for just a second and I want to ask you a very serious question...And I want you to answer this question...Right where you are at...

And I want each of you to sincerely answer this question... “Are you saved?” Yes or No...If yes, then answer this question... “How were you saved?” (Long Pause)

If there is any other answer than “Because I believe in Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and

Savior...” Then you probably aren’t saved...

If you answered that question with any other answer... Then right where you are today...Believe...Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved...(Long Pause)...If you believed, I want you to come talk to me after the service today...

My hope is the same as Paul’s...My hope is that through a thorough examination of the text today and through past weeks to whittle your belief system away...My goal is to whittle away the lies of the world and the deceiving thoughts of religious people...and to get you to realize that you are not saved by what you do...or what your parents believed...But that you are saved through faith in Christ alone...

But.....Ya know this passage got me thinking...Dangerous I know...It got me thinking that we “Christians” are really not too much different than these Jews...Because just as the Jews were deceived over justification...So are many, many, many, many Christians...

I asked staff this week... “Ya know...what are the ways we in our modern church culture convince ourselves that we are saved?”

#1: Confirmation- Some churches practice confirmation which in and of itself is not necessarily a bad thing...But many adults and children think they are saved because they were confirmed...

#2: Infant Baptism- I had a teenager one time tell me that he was saved because he was baptized as an infant...WRONG...

#3: Going to Church... Here is the modern day sincerity argument...Right? Some think because they attend church or serve on a church board that they are saved...WRONG...

These are three common lies...But I still have two more...and these two hit much closer to home... But before you throw a hymnal at me...Hear me out...The fourth deceived way that we are “saved” is through an Altar Cal.l

#4: Altar Call- Some people believe they are saved because they went forward on an altar call...And what is worse is that SOOOOOOOOOOO many preachers proclaim it too...

Allow me to be very clear...You are not saved by coming forward on an altar call...If you think you are saved because you went forward...Then I hate to break it to you...There is only one place you will end up and it isn’t heaven...

Transition: So some believe we are saved through confirmation, baptism, going to church and altar calls...But I saved the best for last...Some people believe you are saved by praying or reciting...

#5 The Sinner’s Prayer... Some people believe they are saved because they prayed the “sinners prayer”... And what is even worse is that Many, many, many, many preachers believe and will defend the thought that someone is saved by reciting the sinners prayer...I am treading on thin ice today...

Friends allow me to be excruciatingly clear...a prayer does not save you....Faith does... A prayer does not save you...Faith Does...a prayer does not save YOU....Faith does...Faith ALONE...IN CHRIST ALONE...

I cringe when I hear preachers say “Repeat after me...Lord...Forgive me of my sin...etc...” But then it absolutely makes my blood boil when I then hear them say right after... “Ok open your eyes...If you prayed that prayer and you meant it sincerely then you are saved...”

WOAHHHHHHHHHH. Wait a Second....That is HERESY...PRAYING A PRAYER DOES NOT SAVE YOU...FAITH IN CHRIST ALONE DOES!!!!

Now.....Time out..... before half of my people walk out on me...Can a preacher guide someone through the sinner prayer and that lead to authentic faith?...Sure...

Can someone walk the aisle and become saved?... Sure...But let me be very clear...It is not prayer that saves you or walking an aisle...Faith in Jesus Christ alone that saves you...

Transition: So many “Christians” have been lied too...So many “Christians” walk around completely deceived...Thinking they are saved...But sadly will never make it to heaven...

Transition: I believe it will be abundantly true.... When Jesus says...In Matthew 7...**Read Matthew 7:22-23:** “²² Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many ^[n]miracles?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.’”

Application:

But before we close.....to all of you who are hopefully true Christians....For you, I seek to answer the question, “So What?” How do I take Romans 2:17-29 and apply it to my life?

With Great Knowledge...Comes Great Responsibility...As Christians with Great Knowledge...Comes great responsibility...As Christians, let us take 3 actions based on this passage...

Action Point #1 in verses 17-20: Let us #1: Make Disciples- How? Hold up the Bible...Be a Guide to Others...As the Law was meant to give the Jews a map to lead others...I believe so today the Bible is meant for us to lead others...Towards a growing relationship with Jesus Christ...

Action Point #2 in verses 21-23: Let us #2: Practice what you preach...If we ask others to walk the path...Then, We must personally walk the path...Let us not just expect others to follow the road map to spiritual maturity but let us walk the path as well...

Action Point #3 in verses 25-29: Let us #3: Correct False Ideas of Justification...Let us not be like the Jews in Romans 2:13 and 2:25-29...Let us not deceive ourselves...We are not saved

by praying a prayer or by walking an aisles... We are saved by faith in Christ alone...

WE:

As I close...I'd like to share a fitting quote related to today's message...

It says this, "Don't just sing about God on Sunday morning...Serve Him on Monday...Don't just sing that you'll give it all to Him on Sunday...Give it all to Him on Monday. Practice what it is that you sing about every Sunday morning...He wants less of our words and more our actions..."