



CHURCH | AT | BERGEN

COMMUNITY GROUP - QUESTIONS ONLY

Romans | Season 2, Ep. 5 | 2:25-29 | The Weight of Glory

Monday, May 18 - Sunday, May 24 (Week 16)

This week Pastor Mike wrapped up Romans chapter 2 by teaching us two main lessons: one about the outer life and one about the inner life.

First, Paul destroys our confidence in outward religion and ritualistic practices. In Paul's day, many Jews believed that because they were circumcised (the outward sign of God's covenant) they were automatically safe from God's judgment. They trusted in the religious ritual itself rather than in God. Paul makes it clear that if you place your confidence in any outward religious practice, it demands perfect obedience to God's law. And since none of us can obey perfectly, trusting in rituals alone condemns us. Paul's point applies to us today: we can't trust in things like saying a sinner's prayer, attending church regularly, having quiet times, or any other religious activity to save us. ***Outward religion without inner transformation is dead before the holiness of God.***

Second, Paul teaches us that what really matters is the inner life (the condition of our hearts). In verse 29, Paul says that true circumcision "*is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit.*" Only the Holy Spirit can transform our hearts. We have zero control over it. God's law (what Paul calls "the letter" in this passage) can only beat upon our will (do this! don't do that!) but it has no power to change our hearts. ***Only the Spirit can perform spiritual heart surgery, cutting away the parts of our hearts that keep us from truly knowing and loving God.***

The sermon ended with this challenge: Stop trying to earn God's love through religious performance. Jesus already kept the law perfectly for you and absorbed the curse of your sin on the cross. Your only job is to receive the unconditional love of God and ask the Spirit to cut away whatever is deadening your affection for Christ. The question we were left with: "How are you really doing?" Not on the outside, but on the inside. How is your love for Jesus? What does God need to cut away in your heart?

QUESTION #1 - Pastor Mike asked repeatedly: "How are you really doing?" Why do you think it's so hard for us to answer that question honestly, even with ourselves?

QUESTION #2 - Paul warns against placing confidence in "outward religion and ritualistic practices." What are some modern-day equivalents to circumcision, religious activities, Christians might trust in for their spiritual security?



CHURCH | AT | BERGEN



CHURCH | AT | BERGEN

COMMUNITY GROUP - QUESTIONS ONLY

Romans | Season 2, Ep. 5 | 2:25-29 | The Weight of Glory

Monday, May 18 - Sunday, May 24 (Week 16)

QUESTION #3 - Proverbs 4:23 says to "guard your heart above all else." Pastor Mike said we guard our hearts by protecting them from anything that deadens, dulls, decreases, or dampens our love for Christ. What are some things (even morally neutral / good things) that have been dulling your affection for Jesus lately?

QUESTION #4 - The sermon described "calluses on your heart" that form from working really hard to prove or earn something from God. Have you ever felt like you've developed calluses, where your heart has toughened and lost feeling toward God despite doing all the "right" religious things?



CHURCH | AT | BERGEN