

Romans 2:4-29

False Security Of The Religious Person

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The moral person's problem is they don't realize that just being a little better than the worst is not good enough. If you measure yourself by some drunk in the gutter I guess you are pretty good, but measure yourself by God. OK? And then you realize what I should be, when measured by Jesus Christ. I'm not even on the scale. I need a savior. *"Well, does God save everybody the same way, Mark?"* Yeah, look at **verse 11, "There's no partiality with God."** The word "partiality" means, actually the Greek word means "to regard the face". And the idea is to *"Oh, you look better than this person over here, I'll save you."* *"You're prettier than she is, I'll save you."* you know. God doesn't look at the outward, God looks at the heart. And it's interesting that, I don't see the contradiction where it says in **verse 7, "those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality"**-and they get eternal life. I don't think that that is a contradiction to salvation by faith alone. What he's saying is, there's only one good thing you can do to get saved, and he says what it is in verse 8. The only good thing you can do to get saved is to obey the truth. **Verse 8, "But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath."** That's the good thing you can do to save you, obey the truth. Well, what does that mean? Does that mean go to church, change your lifestyle, get baptized, start giving financially? No. That doesn't mean obeying the truth, that's not what he means. **Obeying the truth means believing on Jesus Christ.** See, the command in the Bible is not *"Work(!) and*

thou shalt be saved." The command in the Bible is **"Believe, and thou shalt be saved."** So the only "good thing" you could do that would result in Eternal Life is "believe on Jesus Christ." Look at Romans chapter 10 for a second, would you. **Romans 10:4** is where we'll start. It says, **"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness for everyone who believe."** [And we're told in **Romans 13:8-14**, **"Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we [first] believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand [Paul when writing this believed, as did the other apostles, that the 2nd coming of Jesus was right around the corner]: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof."** Paul lists here five of the Ten Commandments and brings the OT law to its spiritual intent (which is the NT Law of Christ), and shows we are to keep the spiritual intent of God's law by--vs. 14--putting on Jesus Christ, which he also calls ***"putting on the armour of light."*** In the book of James, written by the brother of Jesus Christ, James states in **James 1:22-25**, **"But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass [mirror]: For he beholdth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway**

foretteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed." I.e. the Law of God is like a spiritual mirror. A mirror can't clean the dirt off a person who is using it. It takes soap and water. Christ dwells in true born-again Christians through the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is often symbolized in the Bible as streams of Living water. Putting on Christ is to bring those very Rivers of Living water into our very being, giving us the ability to wash the spiritual dirt off which is revealed by God's mirror, the Law-and this Law is the NT Law of Christ-which is the spiritual intent of the OT Law of God [cf. Matthew 5:17-48].]

In other words, you can stop trying to be good enough to get to heaven [into the kingdom of heaven for some readers] if you'll believe in Jesus Christ. You don't have to be "good enough", you can accept the one who was absolutely good enough, Jesus Christ and all his goodness will be placed to your account. It's like somebody mysteriously, anonymously dropping \$10,000 into your savings account. Wouldn't that be a neat thing to have happen? See that's the way God's grace is, in your heavenly account, all the goodness of Jesus Christ, God-pleasingness of Jesus Christ, all the righteousness of Jesus Christ has been deposited into your heavenly account. And now you can draw on that when you need it, it's all the time to cover you, you can't have a bounced check with God, because you have millions and millions and millions worth of righteousness, covering you. You say, 'Oh, I really made a terrible bouncing blunder'. Hey, it's covered, covered by the grace of Jesus Christ. That's the gospel. Now that ought to change your life, gang. **[Romans 10:4-9, "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That**

the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Once you get a grasp of God's acceptance of you and his love of you. **Verse 9 [of Romans 10] says "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you *shall be saved*, for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation" (Romans 10:9-10).** It's so easy to lead someone to Christ. God will lead them around to the point where they see their need [Romans chapters 1-2, and don't forget it is God who does this leading and showing, cf. John 6:44]. I'll tell you, the easiest question to ask somebody is, 'Hey, if you were to die tonight, are you sure you'd go to heaven?' I mean, that is such an open question. All you have to do is 'Are you sure you'd go to heaven if you were to die tonight?' Most people are going to say 'No.' Some people might say 'Yes.' Well, 'Why?' What makes you so sure. 'Well, I've been a good guy, never stepped out on my wife, never cheated on my taxes.' 'Really? Do you know that the Bible says God requires perfection to be saved [by works]? And the Bible says that we all have sinned.' You see, [with the knowledge we've just gained in Romans] you can lead them right into the gospel. You can do it. You don't have to have a professional do it for you. You can do it. And there's people God's got all around you just waiting for you to ask the question. Now what's the worst thing that they could

do? You could say, "If you were to die tonight, are you certain you'd go to heaven?" They could say, "Ah, shut up!", and you'd shut up and realize 'I shouldn't have asked that person [chuckle]. But you know, most people can't believe that you'd care enough to ask. I mean, you've got a wide open door.

You see, God demands perfection [if you're gonna try to gain salvation by works], but there are people who will try to be spiritual Evil Keneval's-'We're gonna jump across the Grand Canyon', but let's see somebody do it? Now let's say you can jump 10 feet further than I can. That's awesome. It's not going to get you across the canyon. The best we can do isn't good enough, it won't, it isn't far enough. And so God, there's a gulf between him and us and so he has bridged that gulf and the cross of Jesus Christ becomes a bridge upon which we can cross from our side over to God's side. But it's the only way from hell to heaven. The only way to get from sin to God's perfection is thorough Jesus Christ. That's why he said "I'm the door, and you can only come through me." He says **"I'm the Way, the Truth and the Life, and no one can come to the Father but by me."**

There's No Status At The Cross

Let's go back to chapter 2. So everybody's saved the same way. Billy Graham has been saved the same way I have been saved. Salvation to God is all the same. God isn't partial in how he uses us, Billy Graham has been used a lot more than you or I have been used. But I mean, so what. He's God's vessel, and if he wants to make one vessel of gold and another vessel of silver, who are we to complain? That's his business, not ours. But as far as becoming children of God, there's no partiality. God saves everybody the same way. That's why we (in the Calvary

Chapels) don't have degrees or doctorates and all this status-blatis-smatis stuff, you know. Who cares what pile of junk you drive? Who cares what heap of junk you live in? It's all going to burn [at the end of God's plan for mankind, cf. Rev. 20:14-15;21:1]. I mean, there is no status at the cross. *'Oh, I'm a businessman, I have a six figure income'*, so what. Were you saved differently than someone with a three figure, four figure income?--unimportant. Was more blood shed for you than somebody else? No, and you see, the natural man sort of likes status. The flesh loves it, craves it. And we even sometimes get into that in the church, where we want titles, and we want position. WE want to be known. Look, the ground is level at the cross. We're all saved the same way, we're all worth the infiite blood of Jesus Christ and we all have tremendous value in Christ. It's not value like men see value and women see value, but it's value based on what God sees. And so the church should be the one place where we have this equality and this common ground. You lose your doctorate here, you lose your position here. You lose your financial status here, we're all one in Christ. God may raise up some more than he raises up others [for the sake of serving others, but remember Jesus' description of what a spiritual leader is, he's a servant of all whom he serves], that's the way God does things. Some may receive more honor than others because of the way God uses them. But that's God's business, not ours. The church has failed when the church begins to think that maybe somehow some people are saved a little differently than others. No way, not on your life.

Romans 2:17-19, "Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of

knowledge and of the truth in the law." Now I told you the title of the message was 'false security.' So let's talk about false security, and that really brings us to the next section here in Romans, where he says in verse 17, he talks about the religious person now. Now religion could classically be defined as 'man's attempt to try to reach God--building towers, walking on coals of fire, laying on beds of nails, doing penance, going to temples, wearing these undergarments that are considered Holy'--all of these things are works that men do to try to get God to change his mind about them, trying to reach God. And that [trying to approach God] is a hopeless situation. It's like trying to climb a flagpole that's been greased on a rainy day. You can try and try and try and try, but you're going to take two grabs and slide down three feet, go two feet and slide down three feet, go two feet and slide down another three feet--you know, it's just an impossibility. Christianity is so different from any other religion. ***Christianity declares that God has not told us to climb up to Him, God has come down to where we are. God sees our need, and God has reached down to where we are, and he has lifted us up. It's all his work.*** He's put us on an escalator, not a ladder! OK? So that's the difference. Now religious people have a big problem, they're probably the hardest people to reach for Christ. Pagan people are easy, they know they got a problem. Moral people are a little more tough, but even a good moral person is honest enough to see he needs a savior. But religious people, oh you can pull your hair out dealing with the religious, can't you? Some ethnic groups are very religious, Hispanics, Italians [not that we're singling out any particular ethnic group here], you deal with a lot of religious relatives in these groups. Don't you? And they've got problems. And you don't have to be of those two ethnic groups, that's not my point. But they have a false sense of security. The best way I can describe this. I'm a real safety sort of nut, like when my family is at home, even during the day I keep the doors locked. I lock the back door, I lock the gates, lock the front door. You know, when

you live in the Bareo like I do and the gangs have moved in, I feel like a pioneer, I just need my shotgun out my window, you know. But I want them to be safe and secure. So every night I have my little ritual checking all the doors that I already know are locked. And OK, now I can go to bed. And one of these nights about a month or two ago we're awakened in the middle of the night, Ely had a problem and we had to dial 911 and the guys arrived, fire engine and all the paramedics all arrived. All the commotion is going on and they're packing her up and got all this equipment in there and they're getting ready to take her in the ambulance to the hospital. And just about the time we're getting ready to leave, one of the firemen says, "Mr. Martin, ah, don't you think maybe you'll need these?" I had left my whole bunch of keys on the outside of the door in the lock. And here I'd gone to bed, I'm so secure, I've locked my doors, I can go to sleep now. I mean, I might as well have a sign out there "Rob me, I've got a key in the door, no problem, won't make any noise, I'll even show you where the jewels are, you can steal all our paper plates and everything else we have (if you don't break your neck on a baby toy!)." But, you know that false security? I thought, 'man I wasn't as secure as I thought I was.' I was trusting in something that was very insecure. And religious people have that problem. I don't know, you could be religious here and not even realize it today. Religious people have certain characteristics. [Transcript of a connective expository sermon on Romans 2:4-29 (page 2), given by Pastor J. Mark Martin, Calvary Community Church, P.O. Box 39607, Phoenix, Arizona 85609]