

You Need Jesus

by Bob Caldwell

The sermon emphasizes the importance of acknowledging our own sinfulness and weaknesses, and seeking to understand and empathize with others rather than judging them.

Duration: 48:01

Scripture: Romans 2:1-3

Topics: "Self Righteousness", "Gospel Salvation"

Description

This sermon delves into the delusion of self-righteousness, emphasizing the need for humility and the recognition of personal accountability before God. It explores how judging others can act as a shield to avoid facing our own shortcomings and highlights the importance of being honest with ourselves. The message underscores the significance of being judged by the gospel of Jesus Christ rather than relying on our own deeds for salvation.

Transcript

What we're going to do now is go to the scriptures, Book of Romans chapter 2, and we're going to talk about the delusion of self-righteousness. We're going to talk about the shield, this false shield that people can put up in their life that keeps them from avoiding or keeps them in avoiding things that they really should be responsible for in their own life by having a false sense of self-righteousness. We're going to look at it from a couple different contexts.

The larger context I want to talk about first and then we'll start digging into the Bible here. Paul the Apostle, his goal in the first three chapters is to explain from a lot of different angles why people would need a Savior. I mean what's the deal with that? You know he dealt with it in chapter one with the Gentile society, with what we would probably call hedonists, and people that were pretty you know full-blown in living a lifestyle in ways that would have really offended the religious people of their day in Judaism.

Things that were very against things in the Bible, and so he deals with those things, he expresses them, and he says you know sin is sin and you need a Savior, but he then turns to the religious people and says you know I can just hear it coming. I'm so glad I'm not like those people, and so he says to them in chapter two and chapter three you know what ultimately you are no better, in some ways you might be worse, because you actually judge people and you yourself at the core have the same problems even though you're religious. The conclusion that he makes with that is in verse 19 and 20 of chapter 3. I'd like to read it real quick because I think he really captures what I hope we can find as we look at this passage.

In chapter 3 verse 19 he says now we know that whatever the law says it says to those who are under the law, so in other words those who the law of God, the word of God, that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh, no person will ever be justified in God's sight. Actually he says by knowing the law, the scriptures, is just knowing the knowledge of sin.

Just because you know the Bible or you can quote the Bible or you can point out people's sins doesn't in any way legitimize you. It doesn't make you better than somebody else. It actually should confirm that when it's all said and done we all need a savior.

So we'll let Paul kind of play this out for us. The first thing we're going to look at is judging people. How that can become a shield of facing ourselves.

Chapter 2 verse 1, this is the way he puts it. Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are, who judges. For whenever you judge another you condemn yourself, for you who judge practice the same things.

Then he says it again in verse 3. Do you really think, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and yet you do the same, that you'll escape the judgment of God. Now this introduction of what he says, a mind of a self-righteous person would automatically say what are you talking about? The things I'm judging that people do I don't do. That's why I'm judging.

And now what he's going to do is say well let me show you that in many ways you do commit the same things. But before we even look at that argument that begins in verse 17, have you ever judged anybody? Let's just start with kind of some reality therapy here. You ever like judge somebody? Ok, you've done it.

Do you have any, do you have children? A lot of you guys have kids, right? A couple thousand kids evidently. You're real busy. And now we are too, taking care of them here on Sundays.

But the point is if you have children, have you ever talked down to them? When you see them doing something wrong, like let's say that they lied to you. Most children lie, correct? And you've caught them. And what tends to be the demeanor of the moment? How dare you lie to me.

I cannot believe that you would lie to me. I'm your parent. This is not acceptable.

Where's the soap that's in your mouth right now? I am spanking you and spanking you or whatever it is your technique is. You've had it. I'm not putting up with that.

Have you ever caught your children not taking the trash out? Doing their chores? Cleaning their room? Doing their homework? Have you ever talked down to them in that moment? So I cannot believe. I don't know what you are doing. You go to school.

You have your homework. Why do I have to babysit you to do your homework? I get this note from your teacher. You know, listen, we are making some tough rules around here.

This is horrible. But let me ask you a couple questions. Have you ever lied? You're kidding.

You have actually lied. Have you ever not fulfilled your obligations? Have you not fully prepared for certain things you were responsible for? Did you go to school? Have you ever not fully prepared for your job? Have you not fulfilled all the obligations at your job? Have you ever kind of skirted by because it's like,

well, you know, he said dig three holes. I'll dig two.

Who cares? I don't need to put that on, you know, backup memory on the computer. I'm sure it's going to be fine. I'm really busy right now.

What am I trying to say? Hey look, what is wrong with us? What is wrong with us honestly? What is it that we somehow shield ourselves as if we're somehow isolated from the problem, the sins of other people? We have got to be in a place, I believe, and I think this is part of what we're trying to learn here, is honesty about ourselves before we try to figure out anybody else. Wouldn't you think it would be a little healthier if your child is caught lying that you said, son, not that I'm cutting your tongue out, because you lied. No, what am I going to do? I'm going to say, you know what, I know what it feels like to lie.

I understand. I've lied. Many parents will not tell the truth to the kids.

I don't know why you think that they think you're like some god or something. They already know you lie, okay. So the point is, why not be real with them and say, hey, you know what, I know the temptation of just trying to manipulate life so that it falls better your way.

You know, if you tell the truth it just sometimes hurts you, and it just doesn't help. And so there's a temptation, and I understand the temptation, and it's a struggle, and this is how I'm working through it. This is how when I want to lie to my boss, or lie to your mom, or not fully tell the truth to the policeman when he pulls me over and says, with your seatbelt on.

Let's see, he couldn't tell because I had stuff in the back seat. I'm going to tell the truth anyways. Do you understand? You guys do taxes.

I don't even bring that up, but anyways, leave it there, and it would be the same with anything in our life. There's nothing that people do that at the core often we can't find within our own heart. That's all.

And that's all he's trying to get people to admit that are self-righteous, that feel elevated above a need for a Savior, don't feel the same sense of personal accountability for their own life before God. Well what he does though, he does get some more specifics on this. You go to verse 17, and he explains this a little bit more.

He says indeed you call yourself a Jew, and you could put in there Christian, Muslim. You could put in there political activist. You could put in there social rights organizer.

You could create whatever it is that for you is, this is what I believe, and this is what is right, and what makes me feel good about myself. He says you rest on the law. You make your boast in God, or you could make your boast in your philosophy, your boast in your religion, your boast in your way of life, and what you think other people should follow.

You say you know His will. You say you're confident that you are a guide to the blind. Verse 20, that you instruct the foolish.

You're a teacher to babes. You look at yourself as somehow a vehicle by which people should do something better, and that you have to teach them, show them, argue with them, debate with them, get them to buy into your agenda. You're confident that you're a teacher for the babes, a guide to the blind.

But then he says, let me ask you a couple questions in the context of religion, though you can apply this again to any area of life. He says, you who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? You who say do not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? He gives three classic examples of religion that people would feel real firm about, and yet he questions the integrity of their position. But again, you know, it's the same with social issues or any other arena where people get real adamant about convincing other people to fix something that's not right.

It's amazing, this is an example, you know, how sometimes people that will really say they're fighting for the poor and trying to change society because of its oppression against the poor, when you actually interview them and say, well, how much do you personally give to the poor? Is there any clinics that you're working in for free to help the poor? Well, I'm too busy telling people what to do, I don't have time to do it. Okay. I read a story, it's kind of embarrassing, I'm sure for this guy, it's a story of a guy that was real, I think, you know, over the top about, like, that you shouldn't cut trees down at all, you know, it's just like totally leave the trees alone.

And so they tried to track him down, an interviewer in this, kind of where he lived in Colorado, and they went to his house and it turned out to be this beautiful log home. It's a true story, honestly. And I thought, man, that is going to be so embarrassing, you know.

But I think we all do it. I think there's this weird disconnect that somehow by saying stuff it makes us good. That if I just speak against evil, or speak against injustice, or speak against other things, religion or whatever, that's okay.

But what Paul says is that's a false righteousness. It's a false shield of your own need of facing yourself. And so he puts it this way, as I said, in religion.

Number one, you say don't steal, but you don't feel like you're a thief. You feel that you are evaluating someone else's life, and it makes you feel better, because you can see their weakness. But, don't you think that just about everybody's a thief? I mean honestly, right now in your life, can you tell me you've never stolen anything, ever? You still think you haven't stolen anything.

Okay, let me give you some examples. Well, I'll use myself, I'm weak on illustrations. I know I've stolen stuff, and it seemed like a natural instinct.

As a child, I'll never forget, I was walking my first truth thievery, is that a word? Maybe, I don't know, it doesn't matter, but I said it. Anyways, I'm standing in a line at a grocery store, and strategically placed for children to see is what? Candy. And I really like Snickers to this day.

Actually, I like a lot of candy, so don't buy me a bunch of Snickers, I'll take anything. Anyways, so there's the Snickers, and I go, you know, I think I can get it. I stole it.

And I put it in my pocket. I really didn't think I was sinning, because I thought, you know, my mom's on welfare, I'm a poor little boy, and this is a rich, rich store, and I feel deprived, and I want that Snickers. So I took it.

But you know, as I get older, you know, you look at life, and I'm amazed at how many things people do to steal from others, whether this is how they sell their car. And you stole money from that person, because you didn't tell them everything that was wrong with that car. There's \$500 worth of repairs that are secretly in that car, and you didn't tell them.

And you don't call that stealing? What do you call it? This is good business, man. It's good business. I needed that \$500 so I could buy a better car.

Buyer beware. Yeah, that's in the Bible somewhere, right? How many people have stolen in business contracts, in bills that they make, five hours. You know you only work three hours.

How many people at their job have stolen from their employer? Do you think that all of us have always worked 100% for every hour we've ever worked for a company? Come on. I'd love to hire you. You know, sometimes you show up a little late after lunch.

Sometimes the break is a little long. Sometimes you do those personal calls at the job when you know you're not supposed to. How many people go online on the computer on company time? Do you know the statistical averages there? That's why they're creating all these ways to stop people from doing it.

All I'm trying to say is, we all steal, if you really searched your heart. Now is he trying to justify stealing and say well hey, since we all steal, let's just do it. No, the opposite.

He's trying to say since we all steal, let's stop judging people who steal, and let's start admitting that I'm a sinner too. That I need the transforming grace of God in my life. I need to face my own accountability before God, and just because I go to church, I got baptized in some water, or I memorize a Bible verse, or I sing songs, or I get emotional at church, therefore I know I'm fine.

And my sins aren't sins. They're just mistakes anyways. So, look at the other one.

Do not commit adultery you say, but you commit adultery. Now what's up with that? But probably not every single person had committed adultery that he's referring to. But what is he addressing? It's sexual sin.

And you know Jesus did the very same thing when he was talking to self-righteous people in Matthew, you know the Sermon on the Mount, when he said, as far as trying to help people see their need for grace, for forgiveness, to realize that Christ is somebody for everybody. He said, look, I know that you guys say don't commit adultery, but let me just let you know the facts. If you have lusted for a woman in your heart, you've committed the act already.

Now why would he say that? Any idea? Do you think it's possible that most people have lusted for somebody that was not their wife at some point in their journey of life? You're not agreeing with anything I'm saying today, are you? You were never 16. I don't know what we got in this room today. We've all lusted.

Come on. So the fact is, it's like, wait a minute, before you judge other people that acted on their lust, maybe the only reason you didn't act on your lust is because you had social constraints, you had issues, you didn't want to get caught, blah, blah, blah. I don't know, but just be slow to be too quick to throw stones at other people when you have the same seed within you.

You see, this is the problem about life, is that we're really not the best of us much better than the worst of us. He gives one more example. He says, you poor idols.

It's horrible. I would never allow an idol in my church. That's so idolatrous and wicked.

Worshipping an idol is so dishonorable to God. But he says, you rob temples. What's that about? Well, you know, religion has got to be one of the greatest ways to do what? To rob from people.

I mean, in the ministry, we do it all the time. You don't think that pastors steal from people? You probably don't. Well, unfortunately, they don't even let me sign checks.

So, obviously, it's very common. You know, some of the wealthiest people in our country are religious leaders. Shh, shh, shh.

Don't overdo it. I'll get distracted. So the fact is, if you read the Bible, one of the greatest examples of misuse of power is religion.

One of the greatest uses of religion is to make money. You know, there's, I heard, I think I told you this maybe a couple weeks ago, that a gal who's getting a divorce, who has a TV thing around the country, she had her net worth, because of the divorce, had to be shown of \$22 million. You know, I don't know, it just seems like a lot of money to collect and then put it in your pocket.

What do you think? Maybe a little over the top on the compensation package? And, yeah, it happens all the time, and people just keep doing it. Amazing to me how many people will give lots of money to that kind of stuff. Jesus himself walked into the temple, you remember, and what did he do? He looked at the temple, and they were misusing the power of the temple to oversell, to price rather exorbitant rates, the sacrifices.

You had to buy a sacrifice from the priest, because he would never okay the ones you brought. You had to buy temple-approved sacrifices that the priest himself happened to own, and make a fortune. And he walked in there, and he tore the place up.

He just tore it up. Knocked over tables, and money's flying everywhere. He says, get out of here.

It's supposed to be a house of prayer. You've made it a den of thieves. But, you know, it's not just the system of those who have the power in religion.

I still, and you still, in another way, all of us. God himself said, through the prophet Malachi, Malachi quotes God as saying this. Why do you rob me? God's speaking to his people.

And then they reply, How have we robbed you? God says, well, it's called tithes and offerings. And God, evidently, unless we don't believe that part of the Bible, takes it personal. Yeah, people misuse money in the church, but if it's being used properly, it is God's call that his people use a portion of their assets to help people, to do things, to support each other.

There's no way around it. We don't talk a lot about it here, but it is a sin. And it is stealing from God.

It is stealing from what God should be doing in the world. In helping the poor. In helping, as many of you do, I thank you, in helping kids die of AIDS.

Of helping to start this house to help women get off of meth. Of helping people in our church with money who can't pay their bills right now because of the economy. With giving away food.

You know, there's a reason we do these sort of things. Because there's a moral responsibility. And if you don't give what you should give, it's wrong.

If you can't do that, and you say, well, I just can't afford it, I know the feeling. I'm a regular person. I don't get paid \$22 million a year.

And I've had to work side jobs for many years as a pastor of this church. I know what it's like to struggle. I know what it's like to not, I get a great paycheck now.

I'm doing fine. I don't have any complaints. But you know, I spent many years having to work two, three jobs.

And I know the feeling of, you know, should I tithe or not? But I know God's word that I'm stealing. And so, I accept what God said to Malachi when he said, why don't you just test me? Just try me out. And see if I don't open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing that you can't even contain it.

And I believe if God, which he says in very few places in the Bible, says to test me, that's pretty nice. He could just say do it and be quiet. But he says, just try me out a little bit here.

I know it's hard, but just see if I don't bless your life. I honestly say this, and it's hard to say because people misuse it so much, but truly, you cannot get out and give God. I have always, when I'm in financial straits, I look at my tithing and my giving.

I always look and see, where am I at in my faith that God is going to meet the needs of my life? Because a lot of times in my life, I can't meet my needs no matter what I do. I need help. I need his provision in my life.

And so, because I don't know if you've noticed this, but no matter how much you make, there's never enough. Because I'm American. And you've got to spend every dollar as soon as you can.

So, why is this in here? Because we all need to face our own struggle with sin. Our selfishness. Our thievery.

That we're not as holy as we think we are. That we should not be judging as a shield that keeps us from facing ourselves. That we need a savior.

We need our own transformation. Well, what he does now in verse four is one of the most shocking statements. It's scary to read it.

It's in verse four. He deals with the danger of despising God's grace. He says, Do you not, excuse me, or do you despise the riches of his goodness, his forbearance, his long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? What does he say here? He says, look, if you despise how gracious God has been to you, how good, how long-suffering, how forbearing, you are really, really, really in trouble.

He'll go on to say in verse five things that are shocking as a result of this. But let's just look at the concept first. Despising God's grace, his goodness, his kindness, his long-suffering, his forbearance.

Because, you know, I don't know if you've ever been in a sin cycle where, as a non-Christian, you just think, hey, you know, if God was torqued off at me, he would, like, strike me dead. No lightning bolts coming down from heaven. I just got done doing this and this and this.

Have you ever thought that way? Am I the only one here today who's thought anything that I think? Anyway, I've certainly thought that out as a non-Christian. I'm not going to get busted for nothing. He doesn't care.

I didn't realize that only his goodness, his forbearance, and his long-suffering was allowing me to suck air. He was being very kind to me. He wasn't validating my sin, my arrogance, and my rebellion against God.

He was trying to bring me, as it says here, to a place of repentance, to turn. And certainly that's been my experience as a Christian, too. Times in my life as a Christian when I go, you know, oh, this is not that big a deal, you know, small things.

You know, Christians, we justify a lot of stupid things. And in your life, you say, well, you know, same thing. Nothing happened.

Why would God let you get away with something for four months? Why would he let you hold bitterness in your heart or whatever it is that you do, unkindness and unmerciful and just robbing from God or whatever this stuff is, and he just kind of seems to let it go. Why does he do that? Because it's like he says, oh, I don't care. It's okay.

You're one of my kids. I'll spoil you rotten. Do whatever you want.

No. He's waiting for repentance. He's waiting for us to get it.

Because if you've been through these cycles in your Christian life, what usually happens if you don't, if kindness, mercy, long-suffering, forbearance doesn't ring your bell, what tends to ring your bell? It's called a two-by-four. Correct? Is there anyone who knows that story? Where it's like all of a sudden, boom! And you go, oh, did you want to tell me something? Yeah, I have been trying to talk to you kindly and graciously, but you're despising my grace. You're taking advantage of my grace.

So, hey, come on, wake up. Smell the coffee. He will be as gracious as he can be, but he'll also be as firm as he has to be, because he loves us.

So anyways, he's just saying, please, those of you who reject Christ, just wholeheartedly, I don't need him. You do not know what you're doing to yourself. This is what he says we're doing.

But he says, in a concordance with your hardness and your impotent heart, you're treasuring up for yourself what? Wrath. And the day of wrath and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God. That is amazing.

It's got to be the greatest shock a person will have in their life by far, you know? You're living your life. You're living in your delusion. I'm not that bad.

You know, I'm self-righteous. I judge people. I tell other people what to do.

You know, I know more than they know. Yeah, sure, I do some things, but I'm not as bad as them people over there. And you just don't face yourself.

And then you think you're treasuring up this chest full of proofs. I'm really not that bad. And the chest, this treasure chest is opened up, and what's there? Proofs of judgment.

Proofs that say, you're guilty. I'm guilty. And what will be ultimately the greatest guilt in our life? What will be the guilt? I mean honestly, what are you going to be guilty for? It's real simple.

Despising the grace of God. Despising His mercies where He cut us slack. He gave us time to repent.

He gave us warnings and guidance. He gave us His word. He gave us people sharing Christ with us.

And we're just like, you know, whatever. You know, you guys are just so over the top. You know, I don't know what was in Jesus' mind.

He didn't die for my sins. I'm okay. I don't know.

I was foolish. You know, maybe He was a nice guy, kind of hip, you know, good teacher or something, but He's not a Savior. You'll stand before God, and you're going to open up your chest and say, here, let me prove to you why I do not need a Savior.

Why I am not accountable for my own sin. Why I'm not accountable for my own arrogance as if God and Christ was a fool to die for me. Don't need it.

I know it's hard for us to see this, but how often we are no different than those who were at the feet of the cross, railing against Christ, cursing Him, making fun of Him. If you're so great, why don't you come off the cross? If Jesus is so real, prove it right now. Manifest yourself.

Let me see you. It's not a game. When Jesus Christ said, I came as a ransom, a payment for the sins of humanity, when He said from His lips, God has so loved you that He gave me as an offering for your sin, that you could be given a gift of eternal life, a gift of freedom from all sin, a gift of zero accountability.

You will justly forgive your injustice as an act of His love if you would just have the humility to accept you need an act of love, an act of grace, an act of forgiveness that God has given His Son. If you got Christianity from the essential reality that Christ died for sinners, that the world, as Paul is saying in these three chapters, we are all accountable. We are all declared guilty for our own personal responsibility to the poison of this world and the tragedy of this world.

We all have a place of accountability and that we will pay. God is just and He will hold me accountable as He'll hold you accountable for the things that are wrong but because His love, He says, I will in myself reconcile you. While you were my enemy, I was in my Son Jesus Christ dying for you, reconciling, trying to make up with you when you are joking about me, cursing me.

I loved you. That is the gospel. The good news is not good news unless you know the bad news and if you avoid the bad news of the reality of human accountability before their maker and think that it's just a joke and Jesus was a fool and this book is a tragic lie, you explain that when you see your maker.

So however you want to cut it, it's pretty simple. Self-righteousness is a delusion and if we hide behind that shield it will melt instantly in God's presence and so that's why He closes with one final take on this position that so often we take that good deeds are enough. It's in verse 6. He says who will render, speaking of God, to each one according to his deeds? Oh good! He's going to judge me according to my deeds because I'm not as bad as some people.

He then says in verse 11 there's no partiality with God. He's equal opportunity. He will be fair and just in how He evaluates all of us.

Then He explains it to the religious and non-religious both. He says as many as have sinned without the law, they don't have the Bible, they'll perish without the Bible or the law. As many as have sinned with the law, they know the Bible, they'll be judged by the law.

And then He explains to the religious how that the Gentile, the non-religious, the people that don't have this book, don't know anything about this book, have their own internal accountability before God that will judge them. He says when the Gentiles which do not have the law, but by nature it says do the things in the law, these people He says, although they have not this law, they become a law to themselves. They show the work of the law written on their hearts.

This law it says from their own conscience will bear witness within them, within themselves, accusing it says or excusing them. What is He trying to say? So you know, look, you have the law of God written. You religious people, you know the Bible.

And it will judge you, and it will judge your deeds and the problem is, is it going to show that you're a sinner. And if you don't have the Bible, it doesn't matter either because if you do what is good, like religious people will do some good things, non-religious people do good things too. But He says, you know, yes your conscience that I gave you and my own internal law of basic moral behavior is written on your heart.

It will judge you. You don't need the Bible. I know you've all experienced that whether you're Christian or not, correct? I mean, did you only feel guilty after you became a Christian? I mean, didn't every once in a while something in you say, you know, that was wrong.

That was rude. That was inappropriate. That was disrespectful.

Where does that come from? It's not the social structure that forces you. God has written it upon your heart. That's why it's a part of society that there are certain standards because it's within the heart of a person written by God.

And God says your own heart's going to judge you and you know that your heart has condemned you and you know that your heart has excused you, said the things that are right. The problem is is that when you stand before God you'll be judged either by your deeds, which will say you've committed sin, or you'll be judged by the gospel of grace. And that's why he closes this whole thing in verse 16 saying that in that day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

He just wraps the whole thing around this concept to say, look, my conscience, the law on your heart, or the law from the Bible, it's going to judge us and you can have it that way or you can be judged by the gospel, the good news of Christ. So let me ask you a couple questions. Have any of you guys ever, I think I already referred to it, I said sped, speeding, remember that? So many of you have probably gotten a ticket at some point in your life, right? Going too fast? Correct? Okay.

Thank you. Now if you got pulled over in a 50 mile an hour zone and the speed limit was 50 and you were going 56, would you get a ticket or not? If you were in a 50 mile an hour speed limit and you were going 65, would you get a ticket? And the ticket would be a ticket, right? And so are you going to go, don't do this, this is a rhetorical question. The cop pulls you over, you're only going 56 and you know that the guy up here before you, I've heard about people on this road that were going 65 and they got a ticket.

And so you rolled down your window. I was going to go like this, like see how old I am. Anyway, so you're rolling down your window and the cop comes in or comes over to your window and they always ask you what? Do you know how fast you were going? Are you trying to make me feel guilty? And so then you say, yeah, I was going 55, maybe 56, correct.

You're going to get a ticket. Hey, hold on, hold on, hold on. I know somebody on the same road last month that got a ticket for going 65.

I want to negotiate. I mean, I'm not as bad as that person. Can I get like half a ticket? Or maybe if I gave you 20 bucks, no ticket? Do something good for you? What happens if you try to do something good for the cop? You know.

It gets really ugly. It's called handcuffs. So anyways, the point is you break the law, you break the law.

If you think you can go to God and say, well, hey, I'm not that bad. I was judging people going 65. I only went 56.

You can't judge me. It's not real. I don't know what we think.

God is some kind of loser that he can't think. He knows what's going on. He knows the secrets of our hearts.

All of you guys have probably played sports at one point in your life, right? And almost all sports have rules, right? And the rules have to be obeyed or there's a penalty. Now the last time I checked, we were watching a football game and a guy on the line has done a lot of things right. He's in the right position.

He's got the appropriate stance. He's not over the scrimmage line. He waits until the count and the ball is snapped.

Obeying all the rules. And then he's missing his block. And it's like, you know what? This is going to be bad.

If this guy tackles the quarterback and we're like third down and 12 and the game's almost over, I've got to get this guy, man. And so I'm going to do the hold-non-hold. I'm going to hold him, but it's illegal to hold him, so I'm going to try to act like I'm not holding him, but I'm going to hold him because I've got to hold him because I cannot be blamed for this mess.

Anyway, so you hold him. You get the flag. And then you go... Away! So they do the replay and they see... That's called a hold.

Can he say, wait a minute. Just wait. I obeyed five rules.

And I think it's completely inappropriate that you judge me because I broke one. I'm not accepting. This is wrong.

This is so unjust. Would you listen to that argument? You'd say, would you get over it, man? You caused a foul. You messed up the deal.

It's your fault. God is God and He is just. And if you want to be judged by your deeds, even you who are good people, you do not understand.

You do not understand God. You don't understand yourself. And you don't understand your level of accountability.

You are accountable. And I hope and I pray that you would make a decision today, if you have not put faith in Christ, to be judged by the gospel. To not be judged by your deeds.

To be judged by the gospel that is in Jesus Christ. As Paul closes. Because it is there and there alone that you will find complete justice and love meeting at the cross.

And for us who are Christians, let me ask you to do something too. Many Christians are some of the most guilt ridden people in town. Because we do know the Bible.

We do know some of the expectations the Bible has for us. And you've got to be a real constant, deluded liar to not feel sometimes like you're not meeting the mark. You know the feeling? I used to be way over here.

I put faith in Christ. I'm trying to follow Him. And I'm making these steps.

But there's always people better. Always people more spiritual. Always people more holy.

And Jesus is the ultimate standard. Therefore, many Christians feel more guilty. More despondent.

More... I don't know, just like there's a cloud of rejection over their life. And it's a great tragedy. Because you are to be judged by what gospel? The gospel of deeds? Or the gospel of Jesus Christ? Which one are you going to live under? You know you don't get saved by grace and then you become a Christian by works.

It's not, I started with grace and I finished with myself. What I can do for God. Yes you should grow.

Yes you should mature. Yes you should grow forward into maturity in Christ. No question about it.

But listen, it'll never make you more loved. It'll never make you more accepted. It'll make you never any closer to heaven.

Do you understand? You're going to heaven or you're not. You're forgiven or you're not. There's no partial forgiveness.

And there's no partial salvation. That's why the Bible says, quoting Jesus on the cross when he died for you, he said, it is what? Almost finished? Or finished? It's finished. It's done.

So what do you do with guilt? The scriptures make it very clear. There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. I'm in Christ and under his gospel.

I will not live under condemnation and rejection and hopelessness and despair and failure. Even though I have failed God. I have not always obeyed his word.

I have not lived according to my own standards of what I would want out of my life all the time. Nor have you. But what I will do is come under the grace of God because it's now conviction.

It's a big difference. It's God's conviction in my life. Why don't you rise and live to the potential of who you are now as a Christian? You have the life of Christ in you.

You have the Holy Spirit in you. You have the power of God and the power of answered prayer. You have the help of a friend.

God is a friend now. God is your advocate now. God is your defender now.

God is for you who could be against you. That's my position. So yeah, I got the wind knocked out of me.

I'm down on the ground. It's down for the count, but get up because God is for me. My temporary defeat is not a time for me to say okay God go ahead and just take me out.

Put the boot in my face. Kick me. I can't get up.

No. I will be judged by the gospel. And I will judge my life by the gospel.

And I'll say okay Lord, I'm weak, and I got the wind knocked out of me, and I feel so bad. But I'm reaching to the gospel. I'm reaching for your grace.

Last time I checked, that hand that reaches for the gospel of His grace always picks you up. Always. Unbelief, ignorance of the grace of the gospel leaves you on the bottom.

Leaves you on the ground. Leaves you defeated. It's tragic because it doesn't need to be that way.

A great price was paid for what I just said. A great price. A great price.

Don't despise it. Don't neglect it. Enjoy it.

And live from the power that it will give you. So we're going to pray right now. And we're going to pray about two simple things you guys.

Some of you don't follow Christ. You've never put faith in Him. And it's not for me to twist your arm or to try to make you.

Not my job. But I try to explain to you something about God. And your own self and your accountability to God.

And if you can logically right now give me a reason why you would want to stand before your maker in your own self-righteousness, in your own deeds, explain it to yourself. Because you have broken the law. You have broken the law.

All of us have. And for those of you who have lived under the shield of self-righteousness, let it melt today. It's phantom.

It's pretend. Let's be real. Every Christian here, let's stop it.

Stop this foolishness of pretending we're more holy than we are. Let's be real before God. And real in front of each other.

And let's help each other within the position of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Nothing less. Nothing more.

Let's stand and pray. Heavenly Father we thank You for what is good news. It's the best news this world has ever been given.

And Lord I pray today by Your Holy Spirit that You would saturate our minds, our conscience, our hearts with this good news. Because we accept the bad news. We accept that we need grace.

And I pray that grace would just come over as a mighty flood over every heart here. For those that would put faith in You Jesus, may their hearts be clean. May their conscience be pure.

May they allow themselves to be forgiven. For Christians that came in here under the cloud of shame and guilt, discouragement, Lord, do the gospel to them. Teach us what is true about ourself now under the grace of God.

And Lord if there's any here who are trying to get out of here and still carry their self-righteous arrogance against You, may Your mercy track them down. May Your forbearance, Your long suffering not be misunderstood. Speak while there's still time Lord in their life.

We worship You Lord. We worship You. We're so grateful for this gospel.

Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/8ybatolEjas.mp4>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/bob-caldwell/you-need-jesus/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net