

Boasting in the Law

by Don McClure

The sermon highlights the Jewish heritage and their boast in God, but also points out the problem of hypocrisy and the need for humility and obedience to God's law.

Duration: 47:29

Scripture: Exodus 20:4, Exodus 20:14-15, Matthew 6:33, Romans 2:17, Romans 2:23-24

Topics: "Original Sin", "Moral Decline"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses how the apostle Paul systematically addresses different types of people and their beliefs about acceptance before God. He emphasizes that all people, regardless of their religious or moral standing, have sinned. The speaker also highlights the decline of common sense and moral values in society, using examples of absurd regulations and behaviors. Ultimately, the sermon encourages listeners to recognize the importance of knowing God's truth and living according to His principles.

Transcript

Romans 2 17. Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast in 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 to the blind, a light to them that are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge, and the truth in the law. Thou, therefore, which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest, a man should not steal.

Dost thou steal? Thou that sayest, a man should not commit adultery. Dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols. Dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast in the law, through breaking the law dishonorest thou God.

For the name of God is blaspheme among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law. But if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.

Therefore, if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision? And shall not uncircumcision, which is by nature, if it fulfill the law, judge thee by the letter, and the circumcision thus transgress the law? For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward of the flesh. But he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God.

Lord, we thank you for your word.

And we ask tonight that as we continue looking at Paul's great and important letter to the church at Rome, Lord, we ask that we would realize that the same spirit of God that gave this to Paul and gave it to the church at Rome gives it to us. And we ask, Lord, that we would listen to it. We would hear it.

We would understand it. And we would respond in any way that is appropriate. So we ask that you would work a work within us.

In Jesus name, we pray. Amen. You may be seated.

Well, here is we continue on looking at Paul's letter to the church at Rome. As I have mentioned before, on a couple of occasions so far, every time I go through this book, it always reminds me almost of a tremendous attorney giving a case or something before the Supreme Court presenting his arguments. It is so artfully, skillfully, systematically done.

Paul right now through the first three chapters is essentially in his mind as we're watching it being developed and coming into its plan. He is going through systematically wanting to look at each and every type of person, whether there's somebody that just says, oh, I don't need God and live outside or they're a religious person or they're a good person, or they try to do well on their own. But systematically, Paul is taking each thought that somebody may have of any form of acceptance before God, any righteousness that a man may think that he has.

And he is systematically bringing it to a place where when he gets to the end of chapter three or near to it, he's going to be saying there that all have sinned, all have sinned. And that every human being that there ever has been in all the world is a sinner. And here he is essentially looking here a little bit as the at the sin of the Jew, almost just a sense of just religious sinners, in a sense.

And he begins here in verse 17, and he says, Behold, thou art called a Jew and retest in the law and makest thy boast in God. Here, Paul looks and now he turns to the Jew and he said, Now, as for you, you are called a Jew. And here is the first thing he does is he kind of looks at just the Jewish call.

First time the word Jew is actually used is in second Kings 16. But then on the Jews really grabbed on to it, in a sense, as a name by which they became known and, of course, proud. And it distinguished them amongst themselves essentially as a Jew.

And when they thought of themselves as a Jew, they knew about them that they had a call. As he looks at them, behold, thou art called a Jew. You have this thought in your mind.

You have this call that is upon you, that you believe you have. And he says, And indeed, you do. He doesn't argue with that so much.

But the result of that call was, is then he goes here through a few verses. And he says, You also make quite a claim. For in verse 18, he says, And you know his will and approve those things.

Pardon me, in the second half of 17, you rest in the law. You make thy boast in God. You know his will.

You approve things that are more excellent being instructed out of the law. And here now he looks at some of the claims that a Jew has that are wholly really essentially Jewish sort of claims. Nobody else can really make these sorts of claims that they would have.

And I suppose in one sense, when you do look at a lot of these things that we'll be looking at, the Jews had a tremendous sense of pride. They had a tremendous sense of identity within themselves that they really thought of themselves genuinely, for the most part, or many of them as better than the rest of the world. They had a heritage.

And they had a heritage that anytime you do look at it, it is definitely one that is absolutely unreal when you compare it to the rest of the world. Nobody else in all the world that has a heritage like the children of Israel, like the Jews. Here, when you stop and think that they and they alone could be, they were a people, they could look back in their own descendants and say, our descendants walked and talked with God.

When you stop to just look at that alone, essentially. But God miraculously, not only did he walk and talk with them, but God singled us out as a people. He chose us as a people.

We are called his chosen people. And we have been miraculously loved, protected, provided for, watched over, defended time and time again. They looked at themselves as absolutely different than anybody in the whole world.

I suppose that really began probably with Moses. I suppose the children of Israel, of course, they had a God. And they always sort of believed in him, in a sense, of course, since Abraham.

But at the same time, Abraham was just a sojourner. And then through Isaac and then through Jacob. And then the children of Israel end up down in Egypt.

And they spend some 400 years down there. Meantime, they're crying out to their God for some 400 years by reason of their taskmasters. He didn't answer, didn't do anything, didn't show himself.

Of course, as far as Egypt was concerned, that didn't bother them. Cry out to your God all he wants. Your God is up in another country anyway.

Our God is down here and he's powerful. And there was all these gods and goddesses all over the world. And when you now you're caught down in Egypt, you're kind of under his thumb.

You're kind of under his power. You can cry out to him all you want, but he has no power here. Our gods reign here as far as the Egyptians were concerned.

And they kept them there under their thumb and as wicked taskmasters and control them in slavery. But here, of course, is then God came and he revealed himself in the most awesome ways with Moses. Well, there is when Moses came down from that mountain.

Thereafter, having been before God and been called of God and sent out with power. And he went before Pharaoh. The children of Israel began an identity that's been with them ever since.

Separated them from all the other nations, all the other peoples in the world. For there is God mightily and awesomely. You know those stories only too well through the plagues delivered the children of Israel out of Egypt.

And then as he brought them into the the wilderness. And then is Moses, of course, who is the author of the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. But here as Moses began to write for them, the words of the God of God with the Bible and giving it to us there in its in its fundamental form there.

And here is Moses gives this to them there. When if you could imagine when Moses began and he gave them the word of God. And then they are told in the beginning Elohim.

Here, their God, as he goes on to identify him fully and wonderfully and completely. But here the children of Israel begin to realize, wait a minute, in the beginning. Our God is just not a one of a, you know, of a mega number of gods and goddesses out there of powers and principalities of which, you know, are all in, you know, on different levels of authority and power.

But our God created the heavens and the earth. Our God spoke and light was our God day by day created all that is Jehovah. Our God did this.

He is supreme above all powers and principalities. And here, when the children of Israel began to realize when Moses sat down and said, our God is not just a God, not just one of many gods or some of many deities. He is the one and only one God of heaven and of earth.

And here the Jews had an identity about this, that when they realized on how God had fed them and delivered them and empowered them and protected them, not just once or twice or three or four times, but generation after generation had delivered them in the most awesome ways, time and time again from their enemies, had overpowered them in the most amazing of odds. When God would just awesomely with their open ground, open rivers, well, you know, for them, when he would bring earthquakes, when he would bring famines or pestilence, when he would judges their enemies, when he would call fire from heaven, when the most unbelievable things would happen, the children of Israel began to think, you know, we really are a little different than most people. And granted, I mean, arguably there is nobody at all like them, is there? But then he goes on, he says, you have this great claim of your identity.

And as he breaks it down, he says, and as he says in verse 17, you rest in the law, you know who you are and you know that you have that the very words of God were transmitted to you, given to you at Mount Sinai by Moses. And here was something there. And in order, of course, to get that law, God delivered you in the most awesome and the most powerful ways.

He says, but you like nobody else in the world, you, you rest in the law, you make thy boast, he says, in God. The rest of the world, as I said, had their little gods, had their little deities. But here, you know, your boast is in the one true living God, the God of all gods.

And while everyone else had all their little pagan images and all of their little pathetic sort of carnal dreamed up gods and goddesses, you know that you have the one true God. And also, he says, you know, his will. The Jew could literally explain like nobody else in the world when they sat there with the word of God that they had and having that law that they had the words of God, the boast of God, and they had a knowledge.

He says, you noticed his will. A Jew could sit down and tell you the whole existence, the plan of existence of life, where we came from, who made us, how we are intended to live, what pleases him, what displeases him. And, you know, when you look at all the rest of the world with all of its philosophers, all of its religious thinkers.

But here it is something there that the Jew knew that they are absolutely without insight. They know nothing. They sit around and think in wonder and dream up things that people philosophically say, oh, here's where we came from or here's where it is.

But here he looked at the Jews as you, you know, something that you could pick up the Bible and he could tell you more truth. He knew more truth than Plato and Aristotle and Socrates and a bunch of them put together. And they knew it.

They knew anybody, anywhere, anytime, anyhow, grab all the philosophers of the world. But the Jew could be arrogant in knowing he knows God and he knows his will. And he says, you can also you approve the things that are more excellent.

And here he's saying the Jew, he could actually lay out better than anybody else. The excellent life. He could look at anybody in the world and not just simply kind of muddle through human existence, but a Jew knowing who he was, where he came from, what he is all about, who his God is, is that he not only was here for an existence, he knew how to make the very most out of life, how to live life to the fullest, the greatest of the greatest and grandest of all lives.

And a Jew could teach the excellent life essentially. There is he could just pick up the word and he could go right from Adam and Eve and from Cain to Abel and right on through to Noah and all the lessons of life. When you walk with God in the Enochs who please God, the Abrahams who began to have faith with God, Jacob, who could show on how you can prevail with God and Joseph, how God can preserve and protect and care for your life.

Moses and how to surrender your life to God. Joshua, how to be a servant of God. They could just from story after story in lesson after lesson.

David, how to live in his power and in no victory over your enemies. Daniel, how to pray and have fellowship with God. They knew an excellent life.

They knew the most wonderful of lives. The greatest is surrendered and blessed and filled in rich lives. No one in all the world could look at their heritage and say, what are we here for and how do you live it to its fullest? But a Jew could.

A Jew had these things about him. And he also goes on, he says, and being instructed out of the law. A Jew could also just look and say, I know what is right and what is wrong.

I can tell you what is good and what is bad. I can tell you what is how a nation is to be governed, how people are to be governed, how a city is to be governed, how a family is to be governed, how relationships are to be led in the way that they are perfectly to live in the most high and the richest and the wonderful of lives. He can instruct from the law because God taught them these things.

They weren't just things where a bunch of, you know, national leaders got together and thought this is how people ought to live and then just put together their own rules and regulations. Like in so many of the countries in the history of the world, you look at Roman law, you look at Greek law, you look at Babylonian law, you look at all the other ways that governments and men, whether live on a huge, you know, national level or live on an individual or a family level. But here was something that the Jew could look and he was instructed how to live right and wrong.

He knew it and he could even be arrogant about it. He knew national law, moral law, civil law, personal law, spiritual law. He knew it all and he was right because he got it from God.

Nobody else has this. Nobody else in all the world like the Jew. And the result was is because the Jews, they had this great call and they had this unbelievable claim.

Everybody else in the world has got to say, you know, sorry, we look back in our, you know, pick your nationality if you're not Jewish. We got all these ways that we want to be proud of who we are, you know, but there's not much history to them. Not much credibility to any other, you know, people in the world.

You know, after my wife had been married to me for a while and she decided she better figure out what the Scottish people are because I'm Scottish, trying to figure me out a little. And somebody told me, do you don't know who the Scots are? And she said, no. And she says, well, basically they're tribal and warlike.

And she's repeated that to me many times. But that's, that's, that's the call I know. That's about it.

What else have we got for the rest of the world? Not much. And, you know, other than I can buy it cheaper than you, you know, and that's about it, you know, or something. I'll figure a way to do it.

But it's something there. But the Jews had this unbelievable claim. And then he also went on, he says, the result of it is, is that you're absolutely cocky.

You have a confidence. There is something about the Jew, he says, just your walk, just the way you strut down the street. For he says in verse 19, and art confident that thou art thyself a guide to the blind, a light to them that are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, and has the form of knowledge and the truth of the law.

Now he looks there at the Jew and when he's just giving them a list, he says, I know who you are. I'm going to tell you who you are because I'm one of you. But then he goes on and he says, you've got this call and you've got this claim and you've also got an unbelievable confidence.

Here he says, first of all, he says, you are confident that thou thyself are the guide of the blind. And I suppose a Jew can be more confident than anybody else in the whole world that has ever lived in one sense there. And that is, is that he can guide the world.

If there's one person that has something in their heritage that ought to make them a guide to the blind, it's the Jew. A light to them that are in darkness. I suppose nobody, once again, all the world knows more about light than the Jew.

Nobody knows more about truth than the Jew. And they ought to have the greatest sense of light and life of anybody in all the world. And he says, and also he goes on next, he says, and an instructor of the foolish, or actually in the Greek as he says, you are stupid.

He says, and you are instructor of the fool, of the stupid. He says, you are somebody, you can look at people. You have this capacity about you that you can look at the rest of the world and you know how stupid it is.

You literally know how foolish it is. You can look at any other tribe. You can look at any other nation, any other group in the world, and you can watch the way they live and how they think and how they function and what makes them do what they do and how they, how they, their philosophies and behavior of life.

And you can look at them. And he says, you can actually tell them how stupid they are. You know how stupid they are.

And they are stupid, you know, and when you do look and I don't mean, don't mean it, you know, as a personal attack, but it is when you look at the way the world lives outside of God's truth. It's insane. It's, it's foolish is a nicest word, I suppose you could say.

Stupid is a more honest one. But it is something there that, that it's tragic to see. I mean, here he's looking here at the Jew, and the Jew can kind of say, well, yeah, that's me.

Well, you do know who I am, Paul. Well, Paul is one of these guys when he's setting somebody up, he does it like a genius in one sense. And, and he's setting them up great.

But in one sense, though, as he does look at him, he says, you do know these things. You know how to live. You know, the priorities, you know, the blessings, you know, in your history, and in your people, in your words, God has called you and he has identified himself with you.

He has spoken to you, he has preserved, he has protected. He has blessed, he has done more for you than anybody else in all the world. And, you know, it's, it's a tragic thing, I suppose, in one sense there, when you do look at foolishness, you look at stupidity on what happens to anybody, whether it's a Jew or a Christian country or whatever.

When, when we lose these things, when these very things that, that, that the body of Christ that you and I have today, same list. You should be able, if you're a Christian, everything that Paul says there about a Jew ought to fit right down the line, essentially, with any born again Christian. Because as Paul tells us, we have been grafted in to the family of God through faith.

We have become, that heritage and that truth, now God becomes our protector and our provider. He becomes our father. He is the one, in a sense there, as he watches over and he cares so wonderfully personally for us.

We now know where we came from, what life is all about, how you ought to live, what it is to please him, what it is that is right or wrong or good or bad. And the, tragically, we look at our country once known and essentially almost as a Christian country. But it's far from that now.

We lose, you know, these things that were our heritage and it's, and you lose common sense. You lose everything. Pretty soon, you're in terrible trouble.

In fact, somebody sent me an obituary. It's a very interesting obituary. I'll just read it to you.

Today, we mourn the passing of a beloved old friend by the name of Common Sense, who has been with us many years. No one knows for sure how old he was since his birth records were long lost in bureaucratic red tape. He will be remembered as having cultivated such valued lessons as knowing when to come in out of the rain, why the early bird gets the worm, and that life isn't always fair.

Common Sense lived by simple, sound financial policies, such as don't spend more than you earn, and reliable parenting strategies, such as adults, not kids, are in charge. His health began to rapidly deteriorate when well-intentioned but overbearing regulations were set in place. Reports of a six-year-old boy charged with sexual harassment for kissing a classmate, teens suspended from school for using mouthwash after

lunch, a teacher being fired for representing-- pardon me, reprimanding an unruly student only worsened his condition.

It declined even further when schools were required to get parental consent to administer aspirin to the student but could not even inform the parents when the student became pregnant and wanted to have an abortion. Finally, Common Sense lost the will to live as the Ten Commandments became contraband, churches became businesses, and criminals received better treatment than their victims. Common Sense finally gave up the ghost after a woman failed to realize that a steaming cup of coffee was hot, spilled it on her lap, and was awarded a huge settlement.

I'm sorry, I thought that was funny. But anyway, Common Sense was preceded in death by his parents, truth and trust. His wife, discretion.

His daughter, responsibility. And his son, reason. He is survived by two stepbrothers, my rights, and I'm a whiner.

But not many attended his funeral because so few realized that he had died. But the tragic thing is on how sometimes you can have people that have so much, so much given but little by little. This is what had happened to the Jews.

It deteriorated. When they sat there and Paul began to say, this is who you are, and this is where you came from, and this is your identity, and this is what you know that nobody else knows. These are the values that have been given unto you that nobody else in the world has, and unless you live them and share them, nobody else will get them.

And yet, little by little, the Jews walked away from them. They found themselves essentially giving up on them and in deep trouble. Used to be an instructor of the foolish.

They ought to be. It ought to be that the simple look to the Jew or look to the child of God and say, teach us. But it's gone past somehow or another.

He also goes on and he says, and you're a teacher of babes. In other words, he looks there and he says, you as a Jew, you can recognize immaturity in other people at a distance. You can see the petty.

You can see the immature. You can see the childish. You can see the ridiculous things people do, how they act in that.

They're just childish, immature things. But unfortunately, they were also very smug in their own knowledge of what they thought they knew, though they ought to be ones there to help and care for the rest of the world. They weren't.

And having the form of knowledge and the truth of the law, he looked there and he says, at the Jew, he says, you can stop and you can realize that, you know, the greatest forms of knowledge and truth. They're in your hands of all of heaven and all of earth. And here is Paul.

He sets them up and he would, you know, verse after verse. He just says, is this not you? And they could say, yep, yep, yep, yep. And here is Paul looks at them.

He now looks at them and sets them up in verse 20. We're now, pardon me in verse 21. He says, thou, therefore, which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest, a man should not steal.

Dost thou steal? Thou that sayest, a man cannot commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast in the law through breaking the law, dishonorest thou God. For the name of God is blasphemy among the gentles, the Gentiles, through you as it is written. Here he looks now and Paul, after he lays this out, he sets them up and he says, this is who you are.

You know who you are. I know who you are. God knows who you are.

The world ought to know who you are. But he also essentially is about to say that the greatest of sin is basically measured according to revelation. Sin is something that is really there according to our personal response to what do we do with the knowledge of what Paul is about to say.

You know, a heathen guy who, you know, somebody born off in some other nation, born of other tribe, born in an ignorant world sort of thing. And he was born and raised in the survival of the fittest sort of a world. And he goes out and he steals, you know, a meal from a restaurant.

And then, you know, he goes in and he steals a buck from his boss or something. And he's a shirt, you know, off the rack at the store, you know, to wear something. And he's a petty thief essentially there.

He looks there and he says, you look at this guy out there who's just survival of the fittest. A man's got to do what a man's got to do. In a lot of worlds, it's beg and borrow and steal.

And whatever it is you got to do to get ahead of it, that's how they were born and bred and raised. And that's all the heritage has for them. But he looks at them and he says, now you who can teach another, thou shalt not steal, dost thou steal? He asks them.

And here is he would look at the Jew in a sense there. He's wanting, he's about to say in a sense, I want you to know everybody else in the world, that guy who went out there and he stole the money or he robbed the bank or the guy there that did whatever it was that he stole. He is nothing.

He's a petty thief compared to you. Because you know God and you have stolen your life away from him. You know who he is.

You know the responsibilities and you know the things that happen to people who don't fulfill them. You know Adam and Eve. You know Cain and Abel.

You know Noah. You know Abraham and Sarah. You know story after story.

It's you're born in it. You're bred in it. You were raised in it.

You studied it. You can quote it. And he looks at them and he says, you know how you ought to live.

But he looks at the Jew and he says, knowing who you are and where you came from and who made you and who loves you and who has cared for you and watched over and provided and protected miraculously over and over. That's your boast. You know these things and yet have you not stolen your own life? Something far more precious than any petty thief will ever grab off of any shelf in any store.

And here he looks at them and he wants to know what is it that has essentially happened to you? You who want to say, you know that thou shalt not commit adultery. Dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhors idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? He looks at them and he says, you know, you know, maybe other

people out there, they technically look and say, well, adultery occurs when a male and a female body commit an act. But you know, you know the Bible, you know God, you know what he has had to say about when a man finds himself involved within his heart and his heart is being stolen away.

You know that adultery is within the heart. And he said, you who say thou shalt not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who say that thou shalt not, you know, worship idols, do you not do the same thing? And here is, you know, and so often, you know, you know, their life is bowed down, their energy is poured out to the world and the things of the world and the pleasures of the world. That here rather than there is there that God ought to have that high and holy and awesome place where he commands our love and our worship and our respect and the desire of our heart.

He looks at them, he says, is something else got that with you as he's looking here at these Jews who just simply say, hey, I'm a Jew, I'm fine, leave me alone. Don't you know who I am? I am a Jew. I was born a Jew.

I am related directly to Abraham and to Isaac and to Jacob. I can take you my family tree right on down through the tribes of Israel. I know exactly who I am.

Don't you tell me anything, Paul. And he says, now, let me ask you. Do you think knowing on where you have come from exempts you from pleasing God? Have you stolen your heart? Have you given your heart to another? Have you found yourself there to where you're out, you know, pouring all your time and energy and effort and desires into the world and the things of the world around you that you would bow down to that command your affections? And here it is something, the judgment that Paul is about to say, he's going to go on down here and he says, the judgment of God is upon those who ought to know.

And I think sometimes I look at our country and I don't know if and when and how the Lord may bring a judgment upon us. But when I look at our heritage, who we are in the Christian world, in the history of the world, when I look, there is almost as if what Israel has been, you know, in the history of the world to to God in his hand upon him, in a sense, in the new covenant, God has done some unbelievably wonderful things in the heritage of this country. And yet you look at how we have turned away from it.

As radically as we turned away from it and wonder how the judgment may be. This is a statement. I was going to read it to you, but it made over the public address system at a football game in Rhone County, Kingston, Rhone County High School in Kingston, Tennessee, made by the school principal, Jody McLeod.

Let me just read it to you. It has been the custom at Rhone County High School football games to say a prayer and to play the national anthem to honor God and country. Due to a recent ruling in the Supreme Court, I am told that saying a prayer is a violation of federal case law.

As I understand the law at this time, I can use this public facility to approve a sexual perversion and call it an alternate lifestyle. And if somebody is offended, that's OK. I can use it to condone sexual promiscuity by dispensing condoms and calling it safe sex.

If that offends somebody, well, that's OK. I can even use this facility to present the merits of killing an unborn baby as a viable means of birth control. If somebody is offended, that's no problem.

I can designate a school day as Earth Day and involve as many students in activities to worship religiously and to praise the goddess of Mother Earth and call it ecology. I can use literature, videos and

presentations in the classroom that depict people with strong traditional Christian convictions as simple-minded and ignorant, and I can call it enlightenment. However, if anyone uses this facility to honor God and to ask Him to bless this event with safety and good sportsmanship, then federal case law is violated.

This appears to be inconsistent at best and at worst, diabolical. Apparently, we are to be tolerant of everything and anyone except God and His commandments. Nevertheless, as a school principal, I frequently ask staff and students to abide by rules which they do not necessarily agree.

For me to do otherwise would be inconsistent at best and at worst, hypocritical. I suffer from that affliction enough unintentionally. I certainly do not need to add an intentional transgression.

For this reason, I shall render under Caesar that which is Caesar's and refrain from praying at this time. However, if you feel inspired to honor, praise, and to thank God and ask Him, in the name of Jesus Christ, to bless this event, please feel free to do so. As far as I know, that is not against the law yet.

One by one, the people in the stands bowed their heads, held hands with one another, and began to pray. They prayed in the stands, they prayed in the team huddles, they prayed at the concession stand, and they prayed in the announcer's box. The only place they didn't pray was in the Supreme Court of the United States of America, the seat of justice in the one nation under God.

But what an amazing thing to think of a school principal and how many schools could this exact same thing be stated? A nation that was one nation under God, that was formed this way, that has a heritage of Christians that surrendered their lives, that sacrificially moved from all over the world, came as pilgrims to want to have a heritage passed on, and we still have it within our blood in this country. We still have it within our roots. And yet, having it is deeply within us, what do we do with it? What is its real effect that goes on within our own heart and our own life? Do we just merely acknowledge God or is He somebody there that we're to find ourselves fully given over to Him, fully surrendered? And he looks at them and he says, you make your boast.

And he says, verse 23, Thou makest thy boast in the law, but through breaking the law, dishonorest thou God. He looks at them and he says, you have this great identity, this great claim, this great purpose for which you are supposedly to live. And he says, and yet at the same time, you have this boast, you make this claim.

But the bottom line is, is are you breaking yourself what you claim to have, what you claim to be? And here is he then just strategically and wonderfully essentially brings it home to the realities that for circumcision, verily profiteth if thou keep the law. Or pardon me, in verse 24, I skipped one. For the name of God is blasphemy among the Gentiles through you as it is written.

He looks at him, he says, you who ought to have, you have this claim, you have this identity, you have this truth, you have the greatest truths in all the world. And yet you don't do them. The result of it is, he says, the name of God is blasphemy among the Gentiles through you as it is written.

For circumcision, verily profiteth if thou keep the law. But if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. You see, circumcision, of course, as I'm sure we're all aware, it is the mark of a surrendered life to God.

When somebody presents their life to God, knowing that God has the right to rule it and the right to reign it, and they give it to God, circumcision in the Old Testament was the way of a surrendered life to God. Just that simple. But here he says, if you have gone and you have gone through this activity, you surrendered yourself.

You came and you made this pledge. But he says, but if you have the outward mark, but you don't have the inward desire, the outward, the inward, the lack of the inward desire will nullify the value of the outward mark. Your circumcision is made uncircumcision.

It's undone. It wasn't real. And here, when you, you know, look, and they're simply saying, if somebody really says, I belong to God, Paul is just simply saying, then honor him.

Then know his power, know his life, know his truth, know his character, and surrender to it. Live within it and let it have its rightful place. I don't know what the Lord's up to lately.

And last of Chuck's, few of his sermons lately, there's been a lot in the sense of, of our lives being lived genuinely, fully before God. Monday night, I came and listened to Brian and it was one of the best sermons I've heard in a long time. Sorry, Chuck, yours was okay.

But, but anyway, I'm going down a bad road here. So help me out, folks. But anyway, the, but Brian was in Mark and he's going through the relationships in life and talk where Jesus is talking about marriage.

He's talking about family. And then from there, he kind of, he got off in the issues of the responsibilities in life that we have before God to live right before him. And that how we ought to be ones that the great prayer of a life, God, make me a disciple in every way of my life.

However, you tell me to be and to live as a married person. That's it. That's done.

Case closed. I obey. However, it is to be done in a family by your word, by your life.

That's it. Make me a disciple of these things. It ought to be a close case with the Christian.

And I'm going to preach this whole message if I get going on it, but it's just so wonderful. Then I came back for mortem last night for some reason. I'm not sure why, but John was sharing.

Actually, I came to see Mary, his mother. I love dearly. She's been a dear friend.

And so I thought, well, I'll sit through his message while he's talked to her. But anyway, but John, he was in, you know, Revelation and he got into the plagues and there is the seals are broken. And then the famines there in the last time did a fine job with that.

But then from there, you know, he still had some more time, I guess, or whatever. But he went on back into Amos and he talked about the other famines and they talked about a spiritual famine. And then he brought out in Amos on how that in the last days there will be a famine in the hearing of the word, not the preaching or the teaching, but in hearing.

And that the issue there in last days of people, not the ability to hear the things that God wants them to hear and to be able to do them. So often we have this great inconsistency between kind of the hearing and the applying, the hearing and their true hearing where it really gets into our heart. And what Paul here is saying there, you know, is there many a slip, you know, between the cup and the lip type of thing.

He's looking there, he says, but God desires that what I hear, I long for. When there's something God wants for my walk with Him, I want it. When there's something that He has for me in my marriage, I want it.

When there's something that He has in my relationships, I want it. And just hard, full, surrender, obedience. When it says don't steal, don't steal.

When it says there, don't allow anything to be idolized in your heart, in your life. If something is there, be determined to get it out of your life. John went on and mentioned, he says, a family, they went and took their TV out.

And I don't know what they were doing with it. It's none of my business, but they just took it out of their house. And I wasn't sure if that was true.

And they said they put in the garage. So I drove by on the way home and sure enough, it was in the garage and they're all sitting on cold cement watching it. But it was out of that.

No, I'm just kidding. Just kidding. But so often, you know, we take something and we kind of move it from room to room, but it stays around.

But when somebody says, it's out of here or whatever it is that within our life, that there is a desire to please God. And the moment we desire that and to hear Him and to do Him, it is wonderful. And something that I would just long for that we as a body of people wouldn't just be ones that we like to hear the word.

But even more than that, we find ourselves longing. God, whatever it says to me, I have this very same heritage. I don't have the same promises to the nation of Israel still yet to be given, but spiritually God's covenant in Christ with me, His revelation of truth, His protection, His power, His love, His provision.

And He looks at me and He says, now live before me, obey me. You'll have the richest and the greatest of lives. You ought to be able to look at the world and just look at that foolish thing that these people do.

And a Christian, I think we've got, if you're a Christian and you've been a Christian three months, you've got, I think, more truth and more understanding, more maturity, more wisdom than the Supreme Court of the United States, probably. Outside of Christ, but in Christ. But when we have it, what do we do with it? We are now to be a Supreme Court in our own life and to say, now God, judge me, lead me, put your hand upon me.

If my heart is being strayed away from you in any way, if I have stolen my life off the altar of God, if I have taken myself in any manner, way, shape or form, bring me home. Get me where I belong. If I find myself there, you know, kidding and flirting and, you know, around with the other things of the world or people in the world and things would take away my heart from the Lord or away from the home, in a way, from the family and the things that God, we know we have all the truth on how we ought to live.

But God, help me to live within your truth. That's the challenge. And oh, when we can find ourself there saying, you know, did not want to stand before God and say, Lord, I know an awfully lot.

Don't I? Have me say, well, does thou commit sacrilege? Does thou steal? Does thou commit adultery? And when we can look and say yes, then wash me and cleanse me. This is not God's desire in closing here to, Chuck told me the other day, whenever you think you've lost their attention, say in closing. So I'll

do this.

Just I'll try it, see if it works. And it worked. They're back.

Man, I just feel a new burst energy. But when we find there in our life, God, it belongs to you and I've got to give it to you. And I got to keep giving it to you.

Never stop giving it to you. And to be before you. And it isn't there where Paul's desire is to make me feel terrible and to destroy me and convict me as much it is there to bring my heart to a place to where I say, then God, is there any hope? And Paul is bringing us to a place.

He says, oh, yes, there is. Run to Christ. Run to him with all your heart and he can fix it all.

Let's do that. Dear Lord Jesus, we come before you and how we thank you for your love and for your word and your goodness. And Lord, I pray that we would invite your word to speak to us.

Lord, that the obvious things that we can grasp so quickly and say, oh, I know who God is. I know where the world came from. I know who created man.

I know how we're to live. I can tell you much of the true history of the world, where man has gone right, where man has gone wrong. And Lord, we indeed can be an instructor to the foolish.

We indeed can be a light and a guide to the blind. But Lord, may we look at our own heart in our own eyes and say, do I need to open my eyes myself and say, Jesus, I need to see you better. Get me right.

And Lord, anything else that could capture my heart. I want it out. I don't want to just know that it ought to be out.

I want to obediently surrender and open my heart to your mercy and your grace. That Lord, I just may be drawn into a personal and a deeper fellowship with you than ever before. That my life is cleansed and washed, made right to follow you the way that would bring pleasure and glory to you.

Lord, that you would one day look at us and say, you've caused the world to blaspheme. They look at a Christian and say, so that's a Christian. I don't think so.

Lord, may we be ones that the world looks at and says, would you teach me? Would you guide me on how you live? Father, we ask it in Jesus name. Amen.

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