
Monday, July 18, 2022 ◻ Read Romans 2:17–24

Questions from the Scripture text: What is the reader called, upon whom the apostle is specifically focusing now (v17)? Upon what is he resting? In Whom does he make his boast? What does he know (v18)? What does he approve? From what is he instructed? What two things is he confident that he is in comparison to others (v19)? What two more things is he confident that he is in comparison to others (v20)? What does he have in the law? Whom should he be teaching (v21)? Whom should he be examining for theft? Whom should he be examining for adultery (v22)? Whom should he be examining for idolatry? By what question can he evaluate whether his boasting in the law is unto the honor of God (v23)? What happens to the name of God on account of such a man (v24)? Among whom does this happen? How had this concept been previously communicated?

What is a first, right response to our covenant status and instruction? Romans 2:17–24 looks forward to the this week’s midweek sermon. In these eight verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **when we have been associated with God and instructed by God, one of our chief uses of that instruction is to follow it in such a way as to bring honor to Him.**

The kind of person to whom the apostle is speaking here. In vv17–20, the apostle gives us an eleven phrase catalog of the attributes of the sort of person to whom he is speaking. It basically boils down to this: someone who is associated with God and instructed by God.

He is associated with God. He is called a Jew. He rests on the law; from the context, he thinks that just having it and hearing it (cf. v13) gives him safety and security. He makes his boast in God. Even if his heart is far from God, he is still the sort who draws near with the lips. He knows that God’s greatness ought to be his theme, and he makes others think that it is his theme, and maybe believes that it is himself.

He is instructed by God. He knows, approves, is instructed, guides, is a light, an instructor, a teacher, having the shape/formula of the truth. He’s very impressed with this, as others are blind, in darkness, foolish, and babies.

What this kind of person would do, if these things are genuinely true. There really are people whom God sets apart to Himself from the world and whom God instructs. It would be a mistake to say that there aren’t. What, then, is the apostle’s point in the questions that make up vv21–23? He’s asking diagnostic questions to help the man in vv17–20 assess whether these things are genuinely true about himself.

The necessity of learning for ourselves first. “You, therefore who teach another, do you not teach yourself?” Here is a great help for recognizing whether we are genuinely instructed by God. If the wisdom is from God and His Word, then we come before Him with a keen recognition that by comparison to Him and His Word, it is I who am blind. I who am in darkness. I who am foolish. I who am a baby. I come in gratitude, humility, and expectation—thankful for what He has given but knowing that there is so much yet to be overcome, in which to grow, etc. But, if my coming to Scripture is largely an exercise in reaffirming how correct I already am, then I am exposed as self-wise rather than God-instructed.

The necessity of examining ourselves first. “You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal?” This would be a shocking question to most pharisaical Jews. And the question about adultery even more so. And the question about robbing temples even more! But God’s law is very searching and exceedingly broad. As the apostle just finished pointing out (v16), it touches even the secrets of men.

When we begin to approach it the way that Jesus did in Matt 5:13–7:12, we realize that it especially addresses the heart that God alone can see. Rather than saying “of course not!” to all of the questions in v21b–22, we ought to be asking ourselves how it is that we are breaking these commandments from our hearts. He who lacks humility makes himself less useful to others not more. It is the one who has practiced dealing with sin in his own heart who is actually useful to his brother. Having dealt with the log, he can help with the speck.

Self-righteousness betrays a disregard for God and His honor. It’s not just God Who can see our hypocrisy. The unkept heart inevitably shows through. When v24 adds “as it is written,” it shows that God has been diagnosing this as a problem for a long time. We are fools if we think that our hypocrisy will stay hidden. And if we try to live this way, we show that we don’t really care about the honor of God. For the man who is false before God knows that he will eventually be exposed before men as false, and then he will bring shame upon the Name of his God.

We can tell ourselves that our boasting is in God. But if we aren’t actively caring about how we honor Him from the heart in our obedience, then we can be sure that we do not really care about honoring Him in our theology. If we are using God as an excuse to feel superior to others, then we are false. And when this falseness is exposed, God’s honor bears the brunt of it.

So the last great question isn’t just, “do I teach myself?” or “do I examine myself?” but “do I really love God and His honor?” What a hard question; praise God the answer for Christ is “Yes!” And the more the Spirit works in us, the more that will be our answer too.

If you are really instructed by God, what will your experience of Bible study and hearing preaching be like? What is the difference between asking yourself “do I do this” and “how am I doing this”? How does loving God’s honor affect how you approach the Bible? How you approach other people?

Sample prayer: Lord, thank You for setting us apart to Yourself and instructing us. Help us to remember that by setting us apart to Yourself, You have made what we do to reflect upon You. So give us genuine humility under Your Word, genuine gratitude for whatever work You do in us, genuine desire for more of that work, and genuine praise of You in our hearts and on our lips. For we ask it through Christ, AMEN!

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Romans chapter 2 verses 17 through 24. These are God's words indeed you who are called a Jew and rest on the law and make your boast in God, and know His will and approve. The things that are excellent being instructed out of the law and are confident that you yourself or a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness and instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes having the form of knowledge and truth in the law.

You therefore, who teach another Do you not teach yourself 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 you who make your boast in the law? Do you dishonor?

God through breaking the law.

The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you as it is written.

So far the reading of God's inspired and and Aaron twerked. There are people in the church, one of the temptations of being someone who is in the church. Who is one of God's people is to trust in our status and to trust in our access and just trust in our identity with God.

So our status or our identity with God's people, He says you who are called a Jew, wasn't bad to be called a Jew, the Jews were the people of God. It was a great honor and you who rest on the law? That is the, they felt safe because they were the ones who had the words of God.

And who talked about the words of God and they understood that this is a great, great privilege when he says later in the beginning of chapter 3 and another paragraph or so what advantage? Then has the Jew. He's going to say much in every way chiefly because to them were committed.

The Oracles of God. So it's not necessarily wrong thing to be grateful for and see it as a great blessing to be counted among God's people and to have his law and even to be identified with him. And that's the third one here and make your boast in God and no His will.

And so These are people who are in the church, but what he's just finished saying, remember is that those who don't have the law and who are outside of that community to whom God gave the law and whom God marked by his law. Those were outside, they have that which will judge them.

There's enough of the knowledge of God and His glory to leave them without excuse and to let them know how great is the wrath that their sins deserve. But then those who were Jews, The law didn't make them safer, but showed them more of how our sins are without excuse and the greatness of the wrath that our sins deserve.

And so, he's zeroing in now on on that particular group. And he's saying, if you thought you were safe because you were among these people, You are called a Jew or because you had this this teaching and this revelation you rest on the law or even because you are identified with God and make your boast in God.

Then you need to check weather your. Your status is really one through which God is making you safe and will get what to do with these things in a moment, But it's not just status. There's also instruction We're not just associated with God, we're instructed by God, and that's where we begin to think.

In verse 18 know, His will and approve. The things that are excellent being instructed out of the law. So these are people who are among the right group and we have right doctrine. We don't just know what the Bible teaches. We know that what the Bible teaches is God's will, we don't just approve of things that the Bible approves, but we know that whatever the Bible approves is praiseworthy.

It's excellent. And we know that the law that the law teaches us. And and that it teaches the right way of thinking and the right way of living. So we're associated with God and we're instructed by God. That's not a bad thing. And yet there are those who understand that in the church we are associated with God or that the Jews who are the Old Testament Church?

Of course, our associated with garden uncertainty, they understand those things, but they don't teach themselves. They think that they have already arrived and they don't examine themselves. They think that they are already good in and of and of themselves. So there's this word confidence here. We use association with.

We must use with association our association with God to realize that we can't be confident in ourselves. We must only be confident in God and then we can't just teach others but that we still need to be taught by God and teach ourselves and that we can't just confront others with what the Bible says about in God's law.

But we need to be confronting ourselves because we too still need to be sanctified to grow in holiness. And that's where the being associated with God and instructed by God in verses 17 and 18 is not being consistently lived out by the particular people that this passage is addressing in versus 19 through 22.

So confident that you yourself and that's where your red flags should go off. Because right? Use of our association with God. And our being instructed, by his word, would not say. I am a guide. I am a light. I am an instructor. I am a teacher or to use those things to say compared to me.

Those other people are blind and in darkness and foolish and babies. See the person in verses 19 and 20 hasn't learned to compare himself to God and to say God is my guide and my light and my instructor. And my teacher, This person is saying I in the guide and the instructor and the light and the teacher.

And therefore he's not saying because apart from God's grace and what it is doing to me there is still in me much of being blind and in darkness and foolish and a baby. When we come before God, we should realize that we are blind. That we are in darkness that we are foolish and that we are babies and we should be grateful to him for whatever he has given us to remedy those things.

It's not that we say there's no difference between a believer and an unbeliever. It's that if there's anything that being associated with God and instructed, by God, does to us, one of the things that should do to us, is make us to think of ourselves in interaction with and comparison to God in which interaction and comparison we would never be confident or proud of ourselves.

And so, when the primary thing that we do is feel puffed up about ourselves and despise others, we show that we may have been given the privilege of being associated by God and instructed by God, but we are abusing those privileges to use them in the manner. That is exactly opposite what we should have learned

from the Bible.

And so is the kind of the sort of person of the apostle. Speaking to here is someone who is in the church but who in verses 19 through 22. Oh, we talk. We covered you. Who? Therefore who teach another do, you not teach yourself. So we gotten that far but it's not just that we still need to be better.

Instructed, it's still. It's that we still need to be made more. Holy said you who preach that? A man should not steal. Do you steal the apostles? Asking them a question to which this sort of person is confident in himself. Says, absolutely not except that the law treats the heart as we've seen recently in our exposition through the Ten Commandments and the Lord's day afternoons.

And before we condemn anyone else for their stealing, we need to be asking ourselves. How am I breaking the eighth? Commandment. I might not be cheating in business or, you know, going over to my neighbor's house and taking the gas cans or whatever it is. However, it is that people steal.

There's lots of ways that people steal, but there are ways that I break the eighth commandment and there are ways that I break the seventh commandment. You who say do not commit adultery, Do you commit adultery? And there are ways that I break the second commitment. You who abhor idols?

Do you rob temples and say well yeah you know this might be literal going and participating in being complicit in the idolatry by buying the cheap meat, after the sacrifices that has been offered to demons. As the Apostle, Paul tells the Corinthians. And it can also be mental and emotional.

Am I looking for the type of worship experience of the true God that the pagans get in the false gods? You know, these ecstatic moments and expressions of myself, the pleasing of my flesh in a worship that's supposed to be from heaven, right? Am I robbing the temples stealing from them?

The ideas of how worship should feel or look to some extent. And and so God's law is very searching and none of us should ever come to any of his commandments. And say, here's one that I already keep perfectly. I should really tell other people to be as good as I am.

Except that's what we tend to do, right? And Jesus is very helpful to us in Matthew chapter 5, you know, after he comes out of the Beatitudes, you know, one of the first of which is blessed is the poor and spirit later in the chapter, he comes into his explanation of what the law of required.

God requires just in case there was anybody who didn't know how poor in spirit? We are to show us what beggars we are. How penniless we are spiritually. When it comes to obedience in God's law that it requires the heart that we not even be despising of others or or have those risings of anger, the, you know, the way that heat of anger in flames because we're murderous towards others and it doesn't flash out of our mouths in, in throwaway, angry words at one another.

And they're not even be looking with lust in the heart when it comes to adultery and so on. And so a right use of God's theology doesn't make us feel like we're theologically superior and to write use of God's morality doesn't make us feel morally. Superior. Yes, it can show us that the things that God has taught us are true and work grateful that we're not still walking in some of the same lies.

Yes, it can show us that the heart work and the habit work that the Holy Spirit has done on us and starting to conform us to Christ are good. And we're grateful for ways in which we don't desire or do wicked things to the same extent, or in the same way that we did.

But we never draw the conclusion, hahaha. Well, I'm pretty close to the standard. No, it humbles us before. God and makes us desire to honor him more, but the person who doesn't interact primarily with God but feels puffed up with it in himself. Not only is he misusing his association with God and is instruction from the law, he ends up abusing God.

Isn't that what verses verse, 23? And 24 do says, yes, God has identified himself with you and God has instructed you. But look at what your abuse of that has done to him, you who make your boast in the law. Do you dishonor? God through breaking the law because whenever we're puffed up about how much we think we know or how good we think we are.

We have forgotten that we should be honoring God and that and that our arrogance about ourselves, in addition to all of our theological and moral ongoing shortcomings, They dishonor. God. And so we should be grieving over how much there is left to go because of how it dishonors. God.

That's our, that's our great sorrow. In our sin, not that we aren't as good as we want to be. So we don't feel as good as ourselves as we want to feel. That is a sorrow. And it's one of the things that that God has built into us to restrain sin to some extent and we can be grateful to him for that.

But shouldn't the greater sorrow be in our sin. Be that I'm not loving the God, who is so loved me the way that I should. I'm not honoring him the way that I should. There is so far. Yet to go to love him rightly and to honor him rightly.

And the God who has made me and redeemed me as surely worthy of better, honoring him and better loving him. It's a real searching question, isn't it? You who make your boast in the law? Do you dishonor God through breaking the law. You're happy to honor yourself at the cost of dishonoring God.

And not just what we do to God directly between ourselves. But what the shame that we bring upon his name before others because others are not so easily. Deceived just as we want them to be that can tell when we're proud and controlling and arrogant. And so they see us and they see a lot of the remaining sin and they see how proud we are of how righteous we are and they blaspheme our God because we say that we are representatives of what he is.

Like so hot. They must have a pretty terrible God. Now, the person who rejects God, who rejects Christ, because of the level of hypocrisy they see in Christians, They don't get off the hook for rejecting God or rejecting Christ, but how horrible it is, when the thing that but the the way by which we became the occasion for their blaspheming, God was precisely because we misused being identified with him, We misused having his word, their arrogant about how much we thought we knew where arrogant about how good we thought we are.

And in the process we emboldened and multiplied. The blaspheming and despising of the God who submersively has identified himself with us. So he says, at the end of the passage, for the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you. Oh, how we ought to desire from God to respond, rightly to be identified with him, and being instructed by him, that we would want to grow in understanding that we would want to grow in holy living in order to honor him.

Well, and to give less occasion to those, who despise him to give less occasion to them to despise his name. Let's ask him to help us Our Father in heaven. We do. Thank you for putting us among your people and forgiving us your word and even for identifying, this with you yourself.

But we asked Lord that you would help us to respond rightly to all of these, that we would marvel at your grace. That we would be thankful and that we would see who you are and what your word requires, more and more from the scripture that we would long to be further instructed, as we realize, how much more there is to know of you, then that good that you have already given to us.

That you would humble us before you because of how much your law requires of the thoughts and intentions even of our hearts. We thank you for your gracious working in us, by your spirit. We pray that you would help us not to be ungrateful, but grant them to us to see the perfection of how perfect is your holiness, and how much you require in that holiness, how much that requires of us?

So that we would not end up in a place where we would be, puffed up about ourselves. Give us to mourn rightly over how much we continue to dishonor you and give us to love you. Give us repentance that we might have ongoing and increasing rejoicing over the opportunity to love you and to honor you that would come from humility and wonder that such a God.

Is you continues to be patient with those who continue to be suchinners as we are So we bless your name and we ask for your spirits blessing even upon this part of your word that your spirit would use it. Well, and make it fruitful in our hearts and in our lives.

We ask in Jesus' name, Amen.