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Romans 2 beginning in verse 25 through chapter 3 and verse 4. These are the words of God for circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law. But if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law.

Will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision and will not the physically uncircumcised. If he fulfills the law judge, you who even with your written code and circumcision, are a transgressor of the law. For, he is not a Jew. Who's won outwardly not a Jew's circumcision that, which is outward in the flesh, but he is a Jew.

Who is one inwardly and circumcision is that of the heart in the Spirit, not the letter whose praise is not from men. But from God, What advantage, then has the Jew or what is the prophet of circumcision? Much in every way Chiefly because to them, we're committed. The oracles of God, For?

What if some did not believe Will there unbelief? Make the faithfulness of God without effect. Certainly not Indeed let God be true. But every man a liar as it is written that you may be justified in your words and may overcome when you are judged So far, the reading of God's inspired and inherent word, We look to him to bless it and the preaching of it by his spirit.

So, two weeks ago, we were in verses 17 through 24, and in the broader context of the book of Romans, we're in that section between chapter 1. Verse 18 and chapter 3 2021 or so where he is proving and showing that none of us have any hope any righteousness.

Any goodness before, God, except that, which comes through faith in Jesus Christ, that only Jesus is righteousness. Can can be a man's righteousness before God. And of course, the Jews agreed without when it came to the Gentiles. But about themselves. They were identified with God. He is the one who had set them apart to himself and into his church.

And not only were they identified with God, they were instructed by God. And so it was easy for someone who was not a believing Jew to take this identity. This church membership, if you will, to use the phrase that that we most often use, for those who are identified with the people that have been set apart from the world and unto God, the church, it was very easy for them to take their church membership or their Bible instruction.

They're true, and right? And accurate theological instruction, and think themselves, therefore superior, and have confidence in the fact that there were members of the church or that they had the words of God and the instruction from God, but we were corrected. Weren't we were told that if we are thinking that way, then we have not instructed ourselves first.

If we thought that we somehow were better because we had the law, then, we really hadn't listened to the law, which accused us with everyone of its commandments. And so we We come to the question then If having that membership, that set a partners unto God in the church, which was marked with a visible sign, Any male who was added to the church, whether by coming into the church from outside, at the time that it was called, or at the time that the church was identified with the Commonwealth of Israel.

Like we heard in Ephesians this past. Lord, say morning, Whenever the email was brought into the church, he would be circumcised and all those of his household, all the males of his household would be circumcised. And So if membership is not something to be trusted on, if it's membership, is not something that makes us better.

Then someone else then is it worthwhile, Is it important? Is it valuable? Does it do me? Any good? Does the sign does circumcision? Do me any good and does having the law. Does having the good theology does it do me any good? If, if knowing what the Bible teaches is not something for me to trust in and if knowing what the Bible teaches doesn't put me in a better position then or make me better than another then.

Is that worth it? I mean, there are many people aren't there who think that church membership is not valuable and not important who think that Bible knowledge and accurate theology is not valuable and not important. And can they look at a passage like the one that we saw last time two weeks ago and say well if those things are not to be trusted in then they're not important.

And the answer, of course is absolutely not verse 25. Beginning of our passage circumcision is indeed profitable and then verses 1 and 2 towards the end of our passage. What advantage? Then has the Jew or what is the prophet of circumcision? Much in every way. And so if membership in God's old testament church was important And if the sign of membership in God's Old Testament church was important.

We could also make for ourselves. Couldn't we a how much more argument Now? That the church is not the church as constituted at Sinai under Moses. But the church that is constituted at Pentecost under a risen and ascended and enthroned Christ, we can make a, how much more argument.

And so the answer to the question if my church membership or if my identification being identified as set apart to God and instructedness are not to be trusted in or proud of, are they worthwhile? Or they valuable The answer to the question is yes, much in every way to use the spirits own language from verse 2 of chapter 3.

And so we see that circumcision is profitable to the believer in the first place. Versus 25 through 27 because circumcision was a visible sign of an invisible reality. And so you must, of course, have the invisible reality. But if you have the reality, it points you to that reality, and confirms for you, the reality of the reality, the validity.

It validates that. What you are experiencing what the Lord has done in you and for you Israel? So, first circumcision is profitable to the believer. Second circumcision was a visible sign of an invisible reality and then in the third place, If someone has the sign, if someone is a member of the church, but is not ultimately.

A believer does not. Ultimately believe This does not negate the goodness of, either the gift of circumcision or what's really at stake. The goodness of God who has given the circumcision. Because if you say, well, God gave circumcision to his church and it wasn't valuable, then you're accusing, God of giving a gift that isn't valuable.

So in the first place, then circumcision is profitable to the believer. Verse 25 for circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law. But if you were a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. Now, if you know what's coming in chapter 3, you might be tempted to say, well then circumcision and profitable for anybody because nobody keeps the law.

And that's true. Nobody keeps the law in what we call a meritorious way in a way. That is worthy before God. But there are those who keep the law, genuinely, although imperfectly and not, not in a worthy way. That earns things before God in five more chapters beginning of chapter 8, we're going to hear there is therefore now, no condemnation to those who are in Christ.

Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh. But according to the spirit for the law of the spirit of life in Christ, Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. And so if you're not in Christ Jesus, the law is a law. That exposes your sin and condemns you to death, But if you are in Christ Jesus and you are no longer condemned for your sin, the law is a law that the Spirit uses to show the life that is in you instead of death for what the law could not do.

And that it was week through the flesh, God did by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh on account of sin. He condemned sin in the flesh that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk, according to the flesh.

But according to the Spirit So Jesus's death doesn't just take the guilt of our sin away, but it frees us from the spiritual death that was required, has justice demands death for sin, but with Jesus's death, putting away that demand. It also gains for us, the work of the Spirit to give us life to walk in the righteous requirements of the law.

So, back to verse 25 of chapter 2 for circumcision is indeed profitable. If you keep the law, it's not saying it's profitable for no one because no one keeps the law. It's saying it's profitable for those who believed in the Christ and who by the Christ who took away the guilt of their sin, were able to have things like the cleansing of their conscience.

The renewing of a right spirit within them. The joy of their salvation is that not what? David through faith laid hold of in Psalm 51 to which we will return shortly. So assurance then comes from the Spirit, he is the one who produces law keeping in our lives, not law.

Keeping now as an arrangement of the boxes that we think we are best to checking and so we select those and then we check them and we feel good about ourselves and superior to others. But that law keeping that comes not only in response to what the Lord Jesus has done for us.

But as a desire to see the life of the Lord Jesus worked out in us, We delight in the law because it is God's and we delight to keep it because our keeping of it is also the work of God not by work so that no man can boast but we are God's workmanship created in Christ.

Jesus to walk in good works, which he has prepared before him. So, if someone has circumcision, but they have not come to Christ Jesus. They have not believed in the Christ. They have not been freed of the guilt of their sin. They have not been given spiritual life to begin to obey from the heart out of love.

For God. Then there they may have circumcision in the flesh but their condition is that of an uncircumcised person, their spiritual eternal genuine condition before God. And the way the Apostle puts it, at the end of verse 25 is your circumcision has become uncircumcision But then verse 26. Therefore if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law.

Well, how did he do that? Well, by the spirit, giving him life to believe in Jesus and whether he had the sign or not, when the Spirit does that. And he starts actually loving the Lord from the heart and he does this keeping the righteous requirements of the law, which ties chapter 2 and verse 26, through to chapter 8 and verse 1, and chapter 8 and verse 4.

Then his uncircumcision is counted as circumcision, isn't it? God sees the fruit of the work of his Spirit. God sees the fruit of the righteousness of His Son and God counts him, as his eternally, truly spiritually. Even if he's not visibly a member of the visible church, you see?

One can have the sign without the things signified. And sadly, the recent history of American evangelical and even reformed churches has shown that to be true. Too many times over. How many people have baptism? But do not have regeneration from the Holy Spirit faith. In Jesus Christ. Justification adoption and the sanctification that says glorification is coming.

They get the sign but they didn't have it and they never receive it. Of course, that doesn't just happen. To babies happens to adults at almost the same rate in the churches. These days. The dare say that. If the churches were faithful than we would see the covenant, children convert it at a great rate as well.

So one can have the sign without the things signified. That's the Jews in verse 25 and one can have the thing signified without the sign. And that's the Gentiles in verse 26. And on the day of judgment, which one will judge the other, it'll be those who are righteous through.

Jesus isn't it? So we've come full circle in just the space of a few verses. We've had people in the church who were judgmental towards those who were out of the church, but their judgmentalism came from a not being instructed and convicted by the word of God, which meant they were not abandoning all hope and self and trusting only in Jesus, which means that they may be judging now.

But in the last day, those who die in such a condition, they will be the ones who are judged and there will even be those, who repented of their sin and trusted in Jesus Christ, and the Spirit, giving them righteousness from Jesus. Not only counted for them for their justification but worked out in them for their sanctification.

Those will be ones who are doing the judging for the righteous. Will judge men and angels in the last day. So circumcision is profitable to the believer. It tells us that God is setting apart of people for himself. It tells us that God is the one who gives life to the heart, But for the one who trusts in the sign and has no life in his heart, it does not profit him.

Now, there's an analogy about baptism, of course. And we've already been making it, but it means that When you believe in Jesus, you're baptism is profitable to you. It tells you that God is the one who has set you apart to himself, not just visibly in the church in time.

But eternally in his son and a directs you to his son and it directs you to his spirit. It says, don't be content with or rest upon or be complacent by the fact that you're in the visible church because God has an eternal and invisible church. The total number of all of the elect and those whom, he forew, and predestined, those are the ones whom he justified.

Those are the ones whom he glorified And so, your baptism points you to be in that number, lest your judgment, be worse because you were in the number in the visible church. But not in the number of the justified and of the glorified. So circumcision is profitable to the believer And in part that's because circumcision was a visible sign of an invisible reality.

Now, in verses 28 and 29, and will not the physically. Uncert sorry, I'm reading verse 27 versus 28, and 29 for he is not a Jew. Who is one outwardly nor as circumcision that which is outward in the flesh, but he is a Jew who is one inwardly and circumcision is of the heart.

Now the fact of one's Jewishness was an outward thing. It was a physical thing. And the fact of the sign was an outward thing, a physical thing. But what he's saying is that without the

substance to which those signs belong without the inward reality to which those signs belonged the outward sign or the outward membership was worthless.

So the substance to which Jewishness pointed the substance to, which circumcision pointed was an inward substance, and the heart. And God actually made this point to his people in the book of Deuteronomy. That if his people as a whole were unfaithful, he was going to undo them. He was going to un Israel, them.

He was going to cast them out of the land and yet he well holds out to them. The promise that if they repent and believe that it will have been God, whose circumcised their hearts. God. Who restored them to the inward reality that the outward membership and the outward sign were supposed to point.

Now in Deuteronomy 10 he he tells them to circumcise their hearts and then in Deuteronomy 30 when he tells them that they're going to fail to do. So he says I'm going to do it for you. So, in Deuteronomy chapter 10 and now Israel, what does Yahweh? Your God require of you But to fear Yahwe your God to walk and all his ways and to love him to serve.

Yahweh your God, with all your heart and with all your soul and to keep the commandments of Yahweh and his statutes, which I command you today, for your good. So you see the righteous requirements of the law going to the internal? That's the essence of the law to love him and to serve him with the whole self, that's what the commandment.

Keeping comes from verse 14, indeed, heaven, and the highest heavens belong to Yahwe your God. Also the earth with all that is in it and you hear the echo, don't you of all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me verse 15. You always delighted only in your Fathers to love them.

Now, we have a distinction.

The opening of the membership in the church of the Lord Jesus to all nations. Yahweh delighted only in your fathers to love them and he chose their descendants after them You above all peoples as it is this day. Therefore circumcise, the foreskin of your heart and be stiff. Necked, no longer.

But of course they wouldn't. And so he picks it up in chapter 30. Now it shall come to pass when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I've set before you and you call them to mind among all the nations where Yahwe your God drives you and you return to Yahweh your God and obey His voice.

According to all that I command you today, You and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul that Yahweh, your God will bring you back from captivity and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where He always or God is scattered.

You, If any of you are driven out to the farthest parts under heaven from there, we always will gather you and from there, he will bring you then Yahweh. Your God will bring you to the land which your father's possessed and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers.

And Yahweh, your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants to love Yahweh. Your God with all your heart and with all your soul that you may live. And so you see the focus on the inward state of the heart before God. Yes, there was such a thing as physical circumcision, But the physical sign was meant to point to the spiritual reality.

The visible sign to the invisible reality. And so he says, he is a Jew who is one or inwardly and circumcision is that of the heart and then he gives us the whom and the what? And the, why of the heart work of circumcision your physical circumcision. If you were a Jew reminded you that you had to have inward circumcision.

Say well, all right, very good. I'll just love the Lord. My God with all my heart. Soul mind and strength. Like, he says to There's a problem, of course, You can't.

And so the sign pointed to the need for dependence upon the spirit for the work of the Spirit. So circumcision is that of the heart in the spirit just like baptism points to the work of the Holy Spirit, whom the Lord Jesus, pours out from heaven. So also circumcision pointed to a heartwork that the Spirit had to do Now to what does it point?

What does the heart work? Look like, It looks like a reality in the heart and the life of what was written on the pages of the scriptures. They had the letter, right? They had the the scriptures, but he says, in the spirit, not in the letter, But in the heart, and still the letter describes what the heart looks like.

The work of the Spirit is not just a warm fuzzy feeling towards God. It's a hatred of sin and a love of God and accepting the right, But righteous commandments of God, as holy and pleasing and acceptable. The work of the Spirit is defined and described by the words of the Spirit.

So it's not a, it is an internal thing. It's a personal thing, but it's not a subjective thing.

And yet those who had the letter could have, could be in a position where they did not have the reality that the letter described, those who had the law written on the page very often then, and still did not have the law written on the heart. And so circumcision pointed to whom would do the work.

Holy the Holy Spirit to what the word look. Work looked like as described by the scripture and to why the work takes place. So that God can see the work that he has done. And he approves it, whose praise and it's a play on Word with the word Jew, which comes from the word.

Jude and Judah similar whose praise is not from men. But from God, This is an amazing thing for a Christian, isn't it? Because you and I know that our love is imperfect, and our faith is imperfect, and our intentions are imperfect. And even our behavior, even our behavior is imperfect.

And so if you have been brought to the condition that verses 17 to 24 taught us to to use the word of God and not excuse ourselves by it, but accused ourselves by it. And yet, when the Lord is genuinely working in you, whatever good there is, is from Christ, whatever good.

There is comes by His Spirit and whatever good. There is God Himself praises. Now those of us who When whenever we in our flesh, wish that we would approve of ourselves and live for our own approval. And if we live for our own approval we very naturally live for others approval, The shape up when others are around so that they can see how good we appear to be when they're around and and they can praise us too when when we come to conviction about that.

And we realize how imperfect and even filthy all are righteousnesses as filthy rags. And then we are amazed to. Remember that wouldn't God sees the fruit of his work in our lives? He prayses it. It's his work. It's work of new creation. The God who said, who saw what he had made and it was good and he saw what it had made and it was good and he saw what he had made and it was good and he saw what he had made and it was good.

And he saw all that he had made and it was very good. He is the one who creates us new in Christ Jesus. So that we are His workmanship created to walk in. Good works that he prepared beforehand. And when we walk in those works, he looks at his new creation and he says the same thing as he did with his original creation.

He says it is good and very good and that is not something that we would be proud of. Since we have received it, there's something we should be grateful for something we should rejoice in so that we would want more and more to have that heart. Love for God, that his spirit produces in us from Christ.

That circumcision told the Jews they could have from God. That baptism tells the Christian he can have from God. And as you're baptism, tells you that all of spiritual life and all of faith, and all of obedience, and all of love for Him. And all of service is the work of the Holy Spirit in you and that when God sees his work, he praises it.

It becomes for you. Something of an antidote, doesn't it of aiming at that outward religion? That makes me feel better about myself by comparison to this man over here or that outward religion. That that man over there might see and praise me. Now, I am seeking from God the reality of His Spirit.

Working in me, the reality of his sons, glorious righteousness, having its reflections and refractions in my life. And I said, Lord, don't give me a partial repentance and don't give me an outward. Repentance Make me hate every kind of sin. Not just a few. Make me love every kind of righteousness.

Not just a few and make me pursue it from the heart out of love for you. Like, what is in your son? Like, what your spirit produces? Because that is the sort of righteousness that you praise, and I don't want any other kind.

Isn't it amazing? The corruption of our sin. What circumcision was intended to communicate to the Jews and what they ended up doing with it. Instead what our baptism is intended to communicate to us and yet how many don't value their baptism at all? They don't perhaps in this age.

They haven't been instructed about what it tells them about their union, with Christ and the ongoing work of the Spirit. And or perhaps they've been instructed. And it's just in one ear and out the other. Hello? How we should seek that? Which God praises with used the time. He repeats the question and will we'll take verses one through four next week.

Lord willing. But circumcision was profitable to believers. It's not to be trusted in, It's not to be proud of. But if it was profitable because it pointed to a genuine invisible spiritual work that God himself would do in the heart. And that even God Himself would be pleased with and praise because it's his work and you're baptism.

No less. Does it not point you to he who pours out the Spirit from heaven? He who unites you to himself. So that his righteousness is yours as many as are baptized into Christ. Jesus have put on Christ. Jesus escalations 2:27. Yes. You your baptized into his death and you're baptized into his resurrection.

Those are the main things. It's all of Christ. It's all of Christ. Those who are baptized into Christ. Jesus have put on Christ Jesus by the work of the Holy Spirit. Well, Pray for the Lord to apply this to us. Then we'll come to our main prayer time.

Our Father in heaven. We thank you that you're pleased to take. Not just a visible church for a time that you would separate and show the fact that you are good in it, but that you are pleased to take even from within the church. Even and some cases from those who do not have the sign, those whom you actually do the work in them, to make them righteous in Jesus and to make them walk in.

Good works Lord as we heard and thought about having our praise not from men, but from you, we longed for your spirit to be working. In us, we longed to stand at the judgment and have you. Praise the good things that you had done even though we never do them perfectly in this life but you praise according to grace and your reward according to grace.

So we pray that you'd be doing the work and that you wouldn't let us rest in the outward and the physical. But that you would make us to seek from you the inward and that, which is from the heart. Do what we pray for your own glory, who we ask it in Jesus' name, Amen.