

**Monday, August 1, 2022 ◦ 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!*

**Suggested songs: ARP51A “God, Be Merciful to Me” or TPH51C “God, Be Merciful to Me”**

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Romans chapter 2 verses 17 through 24. These are God's words. Indeed, you are called of 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 our confident that you yourself our guide to the blind, the light to those who are in darkness and instruction 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 say do not commit adultery, Do you commit adultery? You who have poor idols? Do you Rob Temples you who make your boast in the law?

Do you dishonor? God through breaking the law for the name of God is blasphemed among Gensha among the Gentiles because of you as it is written.

So the people who the apostles addressing here are especially Jews here but the principle applies for Christians as well. He says, you are called Jew and someone who identifies with the people of God, they rest on the law and they make their boast and God, that isn't being associated with God.

And they know his will and approve. The things that are excellent thing. Instructed, on a wall. Now there's nothing wrong with any of those things. Those are all good things to identified with God's people. And to be identified with God himself and to know that his word teaches us.

What is right? What is good? However, There is a danger for those who know that those are good things that we would have confidence not that God, by all of these things, is instructing and training and correcting us. But that we have goodness in ourselves and that what other people really need is us that is the other people who are blind and in darkness and foolish and that we are guides and light and instructors.

Oh, and babies, they're babies too. And we are guides and lights and instructors and teachers. And the great mistake here is in verse 19. Confident that you yourself are. The problem is that if you see all these privileges from God and you don't recognize that they are solutions from God to the problems that are in us, then you are not going to receive the solution, someone who does not know that he needs help as not going to take or receive the help, and it is even worse when they think that they are able to help others.

This is what Jesus called the blind. Leading the blind, which could be if it wasn't. So, politically incorrect, a silly cartoon, Except for that, in spiritual things. It's actually a profoundly sad reality and so he sets before us. If you know that God alone is good and that he's set apart of people to himself.

And that one of the great privileges that this people has is to have his word. Then what you're gonna do that word? First is address yourself and your own lacking. You're not going to use this word like the Gentiles. Use the creation. Remember that the Gentiles used their conscience to do?

What not just accuse but also excuse themselves. He said earlier in the chapter well it would be a dreadfully opposite thing for us to do to take God's Word. That tells us the truth about our sinfulness and somehow feel like our having it shows us. How superior we are.

And yet, there are those who by virtue of being in the church by virtue of having the Bible by virtue, having knowledge from the Bible, find themselves, not all the more needy of God, but knowing themselves inaccurately find by virtue of the benefits that God has given us come to be puffed up about themselves.

And so verse 21 asks you therefore, who teach another Do you not teach yourself Would you know the first thing you're supposed to do with the Bible is not feel superior but feel humiliated by how infinitely greater God's wisdom is than yours and always come expecting that you're going to learn more, that you're going to learn more correctly.

That you're gonna learn more profoundly and richly that you're gonna have disproportions and even maybe errors in how you think corrected an ironed out. We have to have a humility of spirit before the word of God. It's a dreadful temptation. In our fleshliness, especially if we happen to be right about a lot of things, there's nothing wrong with that.

You actually want to be right about a lot of things but there's a dreadful temptation. If you're right about a lot of things to read the Bible this way. Uh-huh. Yep, I'm right about that. Oh, and that one boy, this other person over here. Needs to hear that and we just read the Bible as a affirmation of how wonderful we are and how stupid everyone else's.

Now, You're obviously not reading it correctly, If you read it that way, but the flash wants to read it. That way, it's not just Pharisees. Who could do that. You know, the Pharisees were the more accurate of the Bible. Teachers of the day, comparing them to the Sadducees. Jesus said, listen to them because they sit in Moses, a seat.

But don't you do what they do. And so it's important question, you who teach another do not teach yourself you who preach that a man should not steal who say do not commit, adultery who a bore idols. Do you still Do you commit adultery? Do you rub temples? So he said You should be the first one you teach, and you should be the first one, you examine by the law, that's the same thing.

Jesus said because take the log out of your eye. Why? Well, in part so that you can help your brother with his eye. It's not wrong to show your brother or something out of the Bible that helps correct him but you better do it as someone who has sat humbly under the instruction of Scripture and don't have confidence in yourself.

Someone who is accustomed to being corrected and instructed so that you may be helpful to your brother. You don't think what your brother needs is you, but that what your brother needs is help in the same place that you have found that. You're desperate need for help is meant.

And If we don't come to the Bible that way, what do we have? All we have our remaining zen and our remaining error. See the problem is we actually are centers. The problem is, we actually are an error. And so if we don't receive instruction for ourselves first, If we don't examine ourselves first that our sin and our error will run unchecked and God will see it and He will be dishonored.

You who make your boast in the law? Do you dishonor God through breaking the law. You see if we understand understood his law correctly, we would say Yes, there are ways in which I steal, and in which I commit adultery. And in which I committed a idolatry, The law of God is exceedingly broad.

And that goes to the thoughts and inclinations of the heart. And every time I read it, I find ways that my heart is running in opposition to all of his

commandments.

The person who just takes the questions in verse 21 and 22 and says, no, nope, nope. Nope. Check, check. Yep. I did verse 21 and 22 self-examined and pass. They're missing the point about God's law that we've seen recently in the Ten Commandments as we went through each commandment and that Jesus himself has taught us.

Matthew chapter 5 and the heart requirements of every aspect of God's law. So he says you who make your boast in the law, Do you dishonor God through breaking the law? If you have, if you do not come to the Bible, every time expecting to be instructed corrected exposed, brought to more repentance brought to more faith.

If we don't come with that humility, then yes, we dishonor God through breaking the law and it is all the more offensive when we think that the law is exonerating us. And you know who else considered it's not just God, People can see that, we're hypocrites. You take someone whose sin is unchecked and they probably have their pet three or four commands that they think they keep pretty well externally.

And they want to make those the things by which you measure, everyone else, but they're ungrateful or mean-spirited are always grumbling or any number of sins that other people can see. Plain, as the nose on your face, he think they're impressed by the few things that you seem to be keeping.

Well, or do they hear you? And see you looking down upon others, but easily, see places where you don't keep the law that you claim to know and advocate for

And see hypocrisy is quite often very easily. Quickly seen through and not, only do we dishonor, God to His face and breaking his law verse 23. But when we live that way, we even give other people occasion to blaspheme the name of God. The Gentiles are responsible for their blaspheming God forbid God forbid.

That we, by not being humble by, not being instructed, by not engaging, in self-examination. First and foremost, that we would give occasion to the unbeliever. Because I see that's what God and his word and his people are like.

What a sad should be the. One of the things that we hate the most that the name of God would be blasphemed on account of me. And yet, that's always a danger for misusing. Our identity with God and our access to his work. Let's pray.

Lord. We thank you for bringing us back to this lesson. Again, the Providence and which we would end up having it a couple of times in the space of two weeks and we pray that Lord that we would recognize that you have done this. We pray that your spirit would humble us and make us to come to your word, to be instructed and corrected and pray that you would grow us in grace.

And in holiness that we would dishonor you less and less that less and less, would we give occasion to those? Who would blaspheme your name?

We thank you, Lord. So that your word is very honest with us, and we pray that we would find in you, and in your use of your word, the solution to our ongoing error and our ongoing sinfulness Grant it. We ask in Jesus name Amen.