

26-0322sc Transcript

26-0322sc - *The Book of Romans, Steve Cain*

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26-0322 - The Book of Romans 2:17-29

Transcript (0:04 - 43:38), Teacher: Steve Cain

(0:04) Okay, we're going to be looking at Romans, the second chapter, (0:08) at the very last part of it. The last two paragraphs in particular is the ones we (0:13) stopped at because I was dealing with circumcision and I asked you to look up Deuteronomy, (0:22) two chapters in Deuteronomy and Jeremiah and Colossians concerning circumcision (0:28) and the subject of circumcision. So before we get into it, let's have a word of prayer.

(0:43) Most gracious Heavenly Father, thank you so much for the blessings that you've bestowed upon us, (0:49) especially the measure of health and safety that we enjoy because it enables us to do your will (0:57) and our will. And our will is for us to be here today, the first day of the week, to study your (1:06) word. And we ask that you bless us with understanding and insight as we look into (1:13) your scriptures and into your word that the Holy Spirit has provided us through the prophets.

(1:19) We ask these things in Jesus Christ's name. Amen. So let's pick up with the (1:29) verse 17 in chapter 2. Again, I read from the New International Version, but I've been reading from (1:36) the King James Version for this month and I've been really enjoying that.

You never know exactly (1:44) how the translations speak to you, and they really do to me anyway. It gives me a different (1:54) perspective. So he's dealing now with the church in Rome, and he's addressing himself to (2:04) the individuals, the Christians who were brought up as Jews.

And a Jew (2:15) may not necessarily be relying on the Mosaic law anymore to do that, but they do hang on to (2:24) their traditions. And they will hold on to those traditions, and apparently Paul held on to his (2:32) traditions along the way, too, because we see in the book of Acts that he is asked by (2:44) the leaders of the church there to take on an oath that some other people have taken, (2:52) so he takes it on. And so he doesn't abandon the traditions, the Judaist traditions, but he's not (3:02) relying on the law to provide him with the salvation that he wants, the righteousness that (3:09) he wants.

So he's talking to the Jew, and he's realizing that, oh, the other thing that gets to (3:20) me was that when Paul gets to Jerusalem, he's told, see how many people, how many the Jews are, (3:31) or the Christians are, who are faithful to Judaism. And that's when he's being asked, (3:39) because he's told that they are told, and they are angry about him, how that he's (3:45) telling people to abandon the traditions of the Jewish faith. And so apparently (3:56) I'm not really quite able to grasp what all

is happening in that time, and why Paul goes ahead (4:03) and does what he does.

But nevertheless, these Jews apparently are falling in basically in the (4:12) same concept, because he says, now, if you call yourself a Jew, if you rely on the law and boast (4:21) in God, if you know his will and approve of what is superior, because you are instructed by the law, (4:32) if you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light for those who are in the dark, (4:41) an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of little children, because you have in the law (4:47) the embodiment of knowledge and truth, you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourselves? (4:57) Do you who preach against stealing, do you steal? Do you who say that people should not (5:04) commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? (5:11) You who boast in the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law? As it is written, (5:19) God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you. And so obviously, these Jews (5:27) are very prideful of their history, of their heritage, and rightfully so, because Paul's going (5:35) to point out later on, he says, you are right. And I believe it's even in the beginning of chapter (5:41) three, the next one.

You are right because God has taken the Jewish people, those who are (5:50) descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob, he has taken them and given them special treatments (5:58) and special considerations and blessings and grace, and so they're prideful. We are the (6:11) followers of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob's God, and so they're very prideful in this way, (6:19) and so they are able to tell you what the law says. They're able to tell you what the law says, (6:29) but are they practicing it? And that's the whole issue.

They're not practicing it. (6:37) They can tell you everything there is about the law and what God is and what God should be, (6:44) but that's basically head knowledge, and it's one thing to say, I believe in God, (6:52) but then that's head knowledge. I believe in God because look at everything that's all around us, (6:58) and how do you explain what's going on? But it doesn't mean that you are what God wants you to (7:06) be, just because you have this knowledge.

And he's saying, you're not practicing it. You need (7:17) put yourself in the same basis as your fellow Christians who are Gentiles in their paths. (7:26) So he's going to point out to them what they're prideful about.

We're circumcised. Oh, wow, (7:39) we're circumcised. What did the Germans do with the people that they considered to be Jews? They (7:48) asked them to drop their pants so that they could see whether they were circumcised or not.

That's (7:52) how they knew whether they were Jews or not. And so this is one of the traditions that they carry (7:59) on and they pass on, and so he says, what does it mean to be circumcised? You're just circumcised in (8:09) flesh only. You're not circumcised to the faith.

You're not circumcised to what Abraham was (8:17) circumcised to. What was Abraham circumcised to? He was circumcised to his faith in God. (8:26) He was circumcised because he got to the point where he really believed God divinely intervened (8:32) in his life, and that his whole life evolved around God's blessings, and that he wanted to (8:39) devote himself to God.

And he would do what God asked him to do. Why? Because he loved God, (8:47) because he dedicated himself to God. These Jews don't have that relationship with God, (8:54) and that's what Paul's trying to point out to them, and that's the reason why he's bringing (8:58) up the concept of

circumcision.

And he says, just because you're circumcised doesn't mean (9:05) that you are in that coveted relationship with God that Abraham was. What does it take to be (9:13) in that coveted relationship that Abraham was in? It takes true circumcision. (9:24) So he points out, and this is the reason why he's saying this to us, in verse 25, circumcision (9:31) has value if you observe the law.

If they weren't observing the law, they could tell you the law. (9:38) They could teach the law, and it didn't mean that they were observing it. They knew the law, (9:45) and they knew everything there was to know about law, but they weren't observing it.

Circumcision (9:52) has value if you observe the law, but if you break the law, you become as though you had not been (10:00) circumcised. So then, if those who are not circumcised keep the law's requirements, (10:10) will they not be regarded as though they were circumcised? The one who is not circumcised (10:18) physically and yet obeys the law will condemn you who, even though you have the written code (10:26) and circumcision, are a lawbreaker. So he's pointing out to them that, look, your pride and (10:35) everything is falsely observed.

A person is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision (10:46) merely outward and physical. No, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision (10:55) is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a person's praise (11:07) is not from other people, but from God.

So what is circumcision? And this is one of the reasons why (11:17) I looked it up, because this circumcision of the heart is really what God is after. (11:26) The circumcision of the heart is what Abraham really demonstrated, his willingness to be (11:36) God-fearing and relying on God. So circumcision, and this is the reason why the Colossian letter (11:45) brings up circumcision, because when is circumcision performed? Circumcision is performed (11:54) at baptism, and who does the circumcision? God does.

God is the one who does the circumcising. (12:05) And so we reflect upon those things. Let's take a look at the Scriptures that I mentioned.

(12:16) Let's take a look at Deuteronomy chapter 10, and looking at verse 16 in that area. (12:44) God is with the Israelites at this time, and He is concerned about their faithfulness, (12:52) and He's concerned about their worshiping Him, and how they worship Him, and how they (12:57) honor Him, and how they dedicate themselves to Him. And He's concerned about that.

So (13:05) let's pick up with verse 14, which in my version, the New International Version, (13:11) is the start of the paragraph in which it comes, "...to the Lord your God belong the heavens, (13:22) even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it. Yet the Lord set His affection on your (13:29) ancestors and loved them, and He chose you, their descendants, above all the nations, (13:36) as it is today." So notice what He is saying. Circumcise your hearts, (13:46) not just the flesh, not just the tradition, not just the heritage.

Circumcise your hearts, (13:53) therefore, and do not be stiff-necked any longer. What does it mean to be stiff-necked? (14:04) I'm not going to follow you. I'm not going to pay your attention.

I'm going to do what I want to do. (14:12) Yeah. We can do that to authorities, can't we? This is really what happens.

We can do that to (14:21) authorities, whether it's our parents, whether it's our teachers, or no matter who is or has (14:28) authority over us. You ain't my mom. You ain't my dad.

And then we say, you ain't my president. (14:36) You know, I'm not following you. That's what stiff-necked means.

(14:46) I'm just going to do this. So what is He asking us? Repent. Repent.

Change your attitude. (14:56) Give me your heart. What does He mean then when He's saying that? Give me your heart.

He's saying, (15:02) respect me. Love me. Be dutiful.

That's going to be part of my sermons after this morning. (15:13) Be respectful. So, circumcise your heart.

(15:32) Give me your heart. Give me your spirit. (15:36) And it's pointed out in the Gospels that that's what John the Baptizer's message was all about.

(15:47) Repent. Repent. And they're pointing out to us in the Gospels that John the Baptist's (15:57) real message was, repent.

Many were, but the leaders did not get the message. (16:11) So, as we reflect upon this, so He says in verse 16, circumcise your hearts, therefore, (16:18) and do not be stiff-necked any longer. For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, (16:27) the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes.

He defends the (16:36) cause of the fatherless and the widow and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them (16:43) food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves are foreigners (16:52) in Egypt. Fear the Lord.

So, what does it mean to fear the Lord? Respect Him, to really pay (17:00) attention to what He is saying and His authority. Fear the Lord your God and serve Him. Hold fast to (17:08) Him and take your oaths in His name.

So, the Israelites at this time, in the Old Testament, (17:17) under Moses, is demonstrating anything but godliness. They're following after other gods (17:27) now. They're following idols, and they're dedicating their children to these idols, (17:33) and they're sacrificing them.

So, that's one of the things about circumcising your heart. (17:41) So, that's what Paul is trying to get across here in Romans, the second chapter, is circumcision (17:48) is more than just flesh. It needs to be a circumcision of the heart.

The next one is (17:54) found also in Deuteronomy, the 30th chapter, and we're going to be directing our minds to (18:12) the sixth verse, but let's read down to that. And all these blessings, again, I'm reading from the (18:23) New Interpretation, when all these blessings and curses I have set before you come on you, (18:29) and you take them to heart, forever the Lord your God disperses you among the nations. (18:35) And when you and your children return to the Lord your God and obey Him with all your heart (18:41) and with all your soul, according to everything I command you today, (18:47) then the Lord your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again (18:54) from all the nations where He scattered you.

Even if you have been banished to the most distant (19:02) land under the heavens, from there the Lord your God will gather you and bring you back. (19:09) He will bring you to the land that belongs to your ancestors, and you will take possession of it. (19:18) He will make you more prosperous and numerous than your ancestors.

The Lord your God will (19:26) circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants so that you may love Him with all (19:33) your heart and with all your soul and live. The Lord your God will put all these curses (19:42) on your enemies who hate and persecute you. So what is God going to do? He's going to circumcise (19:51) our hearts.

In other words, like He's circumcising our hearts when we're baptized, we're (20:00) being dedicated to Him. Isn't that what is the purpose of God having Abraham circumcised? (20:13) Abraham was being circumcised to signify that he is dedicated to God and that his heart is 100% (20:26) with God. That's the whole thing about the purpose of circumcising, and that's the reason why he was (20:32) being asked to circumcise his family and those of his nation, his descendants, (20:41) is to indicate that they were dedicating their lives to God.

So He's going to circumcise them. (20:52) In other words, when they come back from Babylon, they will recognize their need to be loyal to God, (21:01) dedicated to God. So they were, and they still continue to be.

(21:08) Because what was happening in Jesus' day, they were concerned that He was teaching there were (21:15) other gods, and that He was God Himself, and that was blaspheming. And why was it blaspheming? (21:27) Because they believed there was only one God, one and true living God, and that's the God of Abraham, (21:33) Isaac, and Jacob. And they didn't want to fall back under the curse of God and be (21:42) reprimanded like their ancestors were when they were carried away into Babylon.

(21:47) And the reason they were carried away into Babylon is they had basically rejected God. (21:56) They weren't doing what He wanted. So let's pick up with the following, with the rest of (22:05) that paragraph.

The Lord your God will put all these curses on your enemies, I'm picking up at (22:11) verse 7, hate and persecute you, you will again obey the Lord and follow all His commandments. (22:19) I am giving you today, then the Lord your God will make you most prosperous in all the work (22:27) of your hands and in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your land. (22:33) The Lord will again delight in you and make you prosperous just as He delighted in your ancestors.

(22:40) If you obey the Lord your God and keep His commands and decrees that are written in this (22:47) book of the law and turn to the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul. (22:54) So what's the object of God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind? (23:06) So what is the greatest commandment? Love your God with all your heart, with all your soul, (23:12) with all your mind. And what's the second? Love your neighbor as yourself.

Okay, any questions? (23:43) Yeah, if you read Psalms 106 and I think 107, you'll see where the psalmist is pointing out to (23:52) the reason why they were suffering what they were suffering is because they had (24:00) turned away from God and started worshiping the gods of Canaan and also sacrificing their own (24:08) children to these particular idols and they were offering worship

to Baal, (24:14) or Baal, whichever pronunciation you want. The elite says Baal. (24:24) So let's take a look at now at Jeremiah, the fourth chapter, and see what Jeremiah has to say.

(24:33) Let's read down to them, starting with verse one. (24:38) If you, Israel, will return, then return to me. If you put your detestable idols out of my sight (24:47) and no longer go astray, and if in a truthful, just, and righteous way you swear, as surely as (24:56) the Lord lives, then the nations will invoke blessings by him, and in him they will boast.

(25:04) This is what the Lord says to the people of Judah and to Jerusalem. Break up your unplowed grounds (25:11) and do not sow among the thorns. Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, circumcise your hearts, (25:21) you people of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, or my wrath will flare up and burn like fire (25:31) because of the evil you have done.

Burn with no one to quench it. So what is the purpose? (25:43) Instead of having a stiff neck, he's wanting us to circumcise ourselves. In other words, repent.

(25:52) Repent of your attitudes, repent from all those detestable things you are doing, and turn to me (25:59) because I am a jealous God. And God doesn't mince words when he says, I am a jealous God. (26:08) What does jealousy do? I've mentioned this before.

What is jealousy? What is the source of jealousy? (26:17) The fear of being displaced. The fear of being replaced. (26:22) And so God doesn't want to be displaced.

He doesn't want to be displaced. He wants to be (26:31) number one foremost in our lives. And so he's asking us to circumcise our hearts (26:37) and be able to do those things.

And then again, in Colossians, we use the Colossian passage, (26:46) in Colossians the second chapter, verse 11. Let's pick up with verse 9, which is the beginning of (26:54) the paragraph in the New International Version anyway. For in Christ all the fulness of the (27:01) deity lives in bodily form.

And in Christ you have been brought to fulness. He is the head (27:09) over every power and authority. In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed (27:19) by human hands.

Your whole self, ruled by the flesh, was put off when you were circumcised (27:29) by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him (27:37) through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. So (27:47) what happened when we became Christians? It says here, Jesus, we were circumcised by Christ. He is (27:58) the head over every power and authority.

In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not (28:05) performed by human hands. Your whole self, ruled by the flesh, was put off when you were circumcised (28:16) by Christ. In other words, the world no longer appeals to us.

We have, in our way, said to God, (28:32) I am yours, and yours only. My whole focus is going to be on you and your will and your kingdom. (28:43) I'm going to quit looking at the world.

I'm going to quit thinking in self. I'm going to quit. I'm (28:52) going to live the life that you want me to be.

So what does Romans 6 point out to us? (28:59) When we're baptized, we are raised to do what? To walk in the newness of life. (29:08) In other words, we've been circumcised. We're no longer going to be focusing or being influenced (29:14) by the world.

We are going to walk in a newness of life, the life that God really wants us to live, (29:21) focusing on his will, his commands, his desires, and that's what circumcision of the heart is going (29:30) to imply. Any questions or observations? So our hearts are circumcised. We're dedicated to God.

(29:40) And so I'm going to use this particular concept in my sermon this morning as far as (29:49) dealing with that. So I hope you can appreciate my desire to (29:59) look at this passage of circumcision. (30:02) In Galatians 12, or 2.12, talking about having been buried with a baptism, (30:16) which we're also raised through faith in the power of our Lord, you know, God.

So there's the (30:23) faith that stays. So those who accept baptism are accepting that faith. Exactly.

And that's what (30:39) Peter is talking about when he says to the crowd, repent. Because we're going to repent from the (30:46) lifestyle that we have, but not only from the lifestyle we have, but the attitude we have (30:52) towards God. We're going to repent.

We're going to change. That's the reason why he says we're (30:58) going to walk in a newness of life. We're repenting.

And that's what repent means, (31:04) to change from one position to the other, to accept the new position and be dedicated to the (31:14) new position. And so we are accepting God. We're going to reject the world's attitude towards who (31:22) God is and how they view God.

God is not dead. In their minds, He is, because they're not paying (31:30) attention to what He has to say. May as well be dead, because they're not living the way He wants (31:36) them to be.

So we're repenting, and we're dedicating ourselves to God. You'll hear that again. (31:48) You'll hear that again.

So exactly. You're right, Scott. Absolutely.

That's exactly what (31:55) is being said there in the Colossian letter. That's what He wants. So repentance is a broad (32:04) application.

So we are repenting in many, many different ways. (32:13) Whatever it is that we're rejecting, repentance means we're no longer rejecting it. (32:22) Whatever, especially if it's been negative and against us, and against whatever the subject is, (32:29) our supervisor, our person of authority, we are rejecting them, being stiff-necked about it, (32:38) whatever.

And so all of a sudden, I'm not going to resist. I'm not going to resist. That's what (32:47) repentance means.

I'm not going to resist. I'm going to accept. So when Paul's talking now to (32:56) the Romans in the Church, let's go back to Romans, the second chapter now.

When Paul is talking to (33:05) the Christians who are of Jewish background, (33:12) he's basically sharing with us—and Paul will point this out in the book of Acts when he's (33:19) defending himself, and he'll point this out—that we're not relying on the law anymore to provide us (33:29)

with that righteousness that we desire, because it can't provide us with the righteousness. (33:35) That's what Paul wants us to realize is the law is a law, and the law can only do one of two things, (33:44) and that is to measure us up to the law, and if we measure up to it, it says we're righteous. (33:53) But if we don't measure up to it, if we fall short, then we're sin.

That's what sin means. (34:02) Sin means missing the mark, and so sin, it condemns us. Judging either will declare you to (34:15) be perfect, and if it doesn't declare you to be perfect, it condemns you.

And so he's pointing (34:24) this out to us, that the Christian who has a Jewish background—and this is what Paul's (34:34) fighting all the time, whether it's in Galatians or wherever it is—he's fighting the concept that, (34:44) oh, you need to be circumcised. No, you are circumcised by Christ, (34:53) but if you want to be physically circumcised, that means you want to be dedicated to the law. (34:58) You want to rely on the law, so you're going to burn the candle at both ends.

You're going to (35:04) deal with the two concepts, and you can't. You either accept one or the other. You reject the (35:11) one, you reject the other.

You can't burn the candle at both ends, and this is the reason why (35:17) he says, if you allow yourself to be circumcised, Christ is no longer your salvation. Why? Because (35:32) that's what they're relying on—the law—to provide them with the righteousness. But that's (35:37) not the righteousness that God wants to provide.

The righteousness that God wants to provide (35:43) according to the first chapter of Romans is his gospel. He's providing us with righteousness (35:51) through Jesus. You don't have to go through the law of Moses.

You come to me through Jesus, (35:59) and Jesus provides you with the righteousness. His righteousness is based on the sacrifice (36:06) that he paid, and that's what Paul's going to point out here in the third chapter. (36:11) Do we condemn the law? No, we don't condemn the law.

We uphold the law. (36:19) And how is it that we're upholding the law? Because Jesus pays the debt. (36:25) And we recognize that the law holds the condemnation, and the only way that we're (36:34) honoring the law, and we're upholding the law, and the law is right because it was (36:39) put on by God.

The law is right. You aren't righteous. The law has condemned you.

You (36:48) aren't righteous. God wants to provide you with a righteousness that is apart from the law. He (36:56) wants to provide you with a righteousness that comes through Jesus who pays the debt and honors (37:03) the law and meets the satisfaction of the law.

And so we have our righteousness based on Jesus, (37:13) and we are being baptized into Christ, and that's the reason why we die with Christ, (37:19) and we rise to walk with Christ to be in the newness of law. So Paul wants us to recognize (37:30) that, and he wants the Jewish Christian or the Christian who has raised a Jew to realize that (37:39) his past has been met, that the promise that his past was offering has been met, and that (37:48) you are on the same basis and on the same par as your fellow Gentile Christians, (37:55) the Christians who were raised in the Gentile faith, because the Christians who were raised (38:00) in the Gentile faith had to be saved in the same way and provided with righteousness in the same (38:07) way that God was offering you. Is he a

respector of the people? Does he respect the Jews more than (38:14) he does the Christians? No.

They're all one. So he's writing to the church in Rome, and he's (38:25) trying to point out to them that everybody that is in the pews and in the congregation, (38:33) everybody that has been baptized for the remission of their sins are there for the same reason. (38:41) They are getting their righteousness from God through Jesus, so that we're on the same par.

(38:51) Your past doesn't count. Their past doesn't count. That's what condemned you in the first place, (38:57) that he's providing us with a righteousness.

And so Paul wants us to recognize, (39:03) this is God's righteousness that he's offering to you and me. God is offering righteousness to you, (39:13) and what does that mean? It means that he's reconciling you to him, and you can come and (39:22) any time you want to worship him, because your sins have all been taken care of. (39:28) Jesus is able to present you before God without spot and without blemish, (39:33) and he'll continue to do so.

As long as you walk in the light as he is in the light, (39:39) his blood will continue to cleanse you. So he's trying to help us to appreciate the fact that (39:46) our past, yes, we have pride in our past. We have pride in our heritage, (39:56) but that's not what's going to get us to heaven.

We're all in the same boat. (40:04) What's going to get us into heaven is to receive the righteousness that God wants to provide us (40:11) through Jesus. So that means that we have to be baptized for the remission of our sins to put (40:16) Christ on, because that's the best conditions that Jesus made, isn't it? Go into all the world, (40:26) making disciples of me, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit.

(40:32) That's how we make disciples of Jesus, being baptized in the name of the Father, Son, (40:37) and the Holy Spirit, and he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. So we put Christ on. (40:44) And so we are presented before God without spot and without blemish.

Why? Because Jesus is our (40:53) high priest. We're in his church. We're in his church.

We're not Jews, and we're not Gentiles. (41:07) We're Christians. We're in Jesus's church, and Jesus is the high priest, (41:14) and he is the one who intercedes for us, and he is the one who's offering the sacrifice, (41:20) and he is the one that provides that sacrifice for us, and God accepts that sacrifice (41:30) for the forgiveness of our sins, for God authorized it in the first place.

(41:35) Okay, any questions? I know I can beat a dead horse, but it's so important to know (41:48) how it functions and how it works. So we finish out chapter two, and my time is up. (41:56) A person is not a Jew who is one only outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical.

(42:06) No, a person is a Jew who is one outwardly, and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, (42:15) by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a person's praise is not from other people, (42:25) but from God. What a beautiful concept.

And then he's going to go on in chapter three, (42:33) and he's going to talk about their heritage and their pride, and he's saying, (42:40) I understand your pride, but don't let it get the best of you. I understand your pride. Why? (42:48) Because your heritage has been blessed by God from Abraham on.

I can understand your pride, (43:01) just like we can understand other people's prides, whether or not you come from the South. (43:09) My father was a general in the Union, you know, or as a Confederate, or whatever. I'm a true blue (43:18) American.

Well, we got pride. Where does that get you? Two dollars gets you a cup of coffee. (43:30) So, thank you so much for your attention, and I hope I can meet your expectations in my lesson.