

Crossroads Baptist Church
March 26, 2006 10:00
Romans 2: 17-29
Romans #10

“What Advantage to Be Raised in the Bible Belt?”

Paul continues in his role as a prosecutor having brought the Gentiles into the court of God in chapter one, now continues with the Jews in chapter two.

I. Paul reminds the Jews of their privileges. Verses 17-18

1. They were named a Jew.
2. They rested or had great confidence in the law.
3. They boast was in God.
4. They knew the will of God.
5. They approved the things that are right (compare 1:32)

II. Paul reminds the Jews of their superior works. Verses 19-20

1. They were a guide to the blind.
2. They were a light to those in darkness.
3. They were a corrector of thoughtlessness.
4. They were a teacher of babes.
5. They had a form of knowledge and truth

III. Paul exposes the essential requirements of the law. Verses 21-24

Then Paul asks them about three essential requirements to expose their real problem – the problem of the heart.

1. The test of honesty.
2. The test of purity.
3. The test of loyalty.

The silent answer to these questions is that they are guilty. But Paul anticipates that the Jews would then say, “But we are the children of God – the people of God because we are the circumcised.”

IV. Paul main point – rituals and religion do not mean you are God’s child – only a changed heart. Verses 25-29

Since we are not Jews, how does this apply to us living in the Bible belt of America?

It could be said of us, in a general sense, what Paul said of the Jews:

1. We are privileged to be called an American.
2. We have great confidence in our constitution and laws.
3. We boast that it was God who permitted us to be born an American.
4. We know the will and ways of God.
5. We have a history of approving of the right things.
6. We have been a guide to the blind, a light to those in darkness, a teacher of the things that are good and right.

But being an American will no more help us in our determination of where we will spend eternity than being a Jew who had all the privileges. The Jews in this passage believed that circumcision was the most important ritual assuring them of their being a child of God. Circumcision was the sign of the covenant before the giving of the law.

Yet Paul hits them hard saying that the main characteristic of being a child of God is not an outward ritual, but an inward heart change.