

regarded as circumcision? <sup>27</sup> Then he who is physically uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the law.

**AP:** We can fall into the same trap—thinking that our own “**anything**” would make us deserving and worthy of righteousness. But **our own righteousness is never enough!** We obey God because we love God—we follow God’s commands because He’s called for us to do so! But we can never be so good at following God’s commands to “**earn**” salvation. Rather, we need to learn that we aren’t God’s people because of what we do, but because of what He did. And ultimately, God calls not just for outward obedience to laws and ordinances like circumcision, but rather, inward cutting off of the old sinful man.

**RM 2.28-29** ~ *For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. <sup>29</sup> But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.*

## **CONCLUSION**

We might take confidence in our own selves—our own righteousness. But we must be careful—for this is the same trap that the Jewish leadership did during Christ’s ministry and that the Jewish Christians in Rome thought. But we must remember: we Christians **have no excuse**—if we **live like the Godless** around us, we **fall short of God’s expectations**—and if we fall short of God’s expectations, **our own righteousness**—however we define it—**will never be enough!**

**GL 2.15-16** ~ *We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; <sup>16</sup> yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified.*

## **Gospel/Significance/Parachute vs Backpack Pt 2**

In truth, we might feel comfortable living in our lives today. So much of what we do and the thought and effort we put forth is trying to make ourselves **comfortable**. But Paul wants us to get uncomfortable. He wants us to realize that the pilot is gone, the fuselage is on fire, and we’re going down. We’re all of us, religious and irreligious, Jews and Gentile, **guilty!** And we need faith and the gospel is we’re to be saved!

But blessedly, the Gospel has been made available—not just to you and me, but to all people. Sure, the pilot is gone and the fuselage is on fire. Sure, the plane is going down. But there are enough parachutes for everyone!

**RM 1.16-17** ~ *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. <sup>17</sup> For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”*

## **INVITATION**

#622 [Exp-NTPE]

11/02/2024

**Put on the Parachute!**

PC Pchd \_\_\_\_\_

RM 2

**QUESTION:** What does God think of the self-righteous?

## **TRN TO RM 2**

### **INTRODUCTION**

**ILL—My Recent Flight** (booked on Southwest; forgot early check-in, and did my early check-in an hour late; by that point, I was in late B group) As a result, I was waiting in line with my bags when I heard the dreaded announcement: the flight is full, and likely only middle seats will be available.

There are few things I dread so much about a flight as being stuck in the middle. While I am only slightly above average in height, clearly, airplanes are designed more for shorter people. I end up, inevitably, stuck between two large men, my arms jammed-in for the full four-hour-flight.

It’s a funny thing about human society: **we’ve conquered gravity and are able to fly across the country in a few hours (a trip that would otherwise take days), and our biggest concern is what?** Comfort! But in truth, we are a very comfort-focused people. And this isn’t limited to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century!

### **BACKGROUND**

Jesus spent much of His ministry attempting to reach the Jewish leadership. But He ran into a real problem: their hearts. They’d become so confident in their own faithfulness and righteousness—that when Christ came they had no interest in Him. They were perfectly comfortable in the life they had and the relationship they believed they had!

### **Gospel/Significance/Parachute vs Backpack Pt 1**

**JN 8.31-36** ~ *So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, <sup>32</sup> and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” <sup>33</sup> They answered him, “We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, ‘You will become free?’” <sup>34</sup> Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. <sup>35</sup> The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. <sup>36</sup> So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.*

The Jewish people thought themselves so special: after all, they were God’s chosen people! I can’t help but imagine that, as Paul’s letter to the Roman church was being read, that everyone’s reaction was the same: **“Preach! You put those Gentiles in their place!”** But then, Paul’s attention turned to the faithful Christians—the Judaic Christians in Rome. And when he spoke to them, his words were the very last thing they expected—or wanted—to hear: **“Therefore you have no excuse”!**

### **BD1: The Self-Righteous Lives Like the Godless – Vs. 1-5**

**RM 2.1-3** ~ *Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge,*

practice the very same things.<sup>2</sup> We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things.<sup>3</sup> Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God?

**EX:** To the Jews, the Gentiles were nothing more than “dogs”—unworthy of the time of day. Well, Paul’s statement to the Jews was simple: “Woof, woof”. If they spoke like a “dog” and acted like a “dog”, well, you know!

See, God’s judgment isn’t biased: God’s standards aren’t unjust. In the previous chapter, we’d read the list of the sins of the Gentiles: *They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips,<sup>30</sup> slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,<sup>31</sup> foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.<sup>32</sup> Though they know God’s righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.* (RM 1.29-32) **Terrible, aren’t they? But you know what’s worse?** What’s worse was that the Jewish Christians—who should have known better—were doing the very sins they were busy pointing out and condemning in others! They **fell fall short of God’s expectations.**

**RM 2.4-5** ~ *Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God’s kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?<sup>5</sup> But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed.*

**EX:** They thought it didn’t matter that they were disobedient. They thought it didn’t matter that they were every bit as envious, unrighteous, haughty, and ruthless as the ungodly Romans around them. They were counting on *the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience*—that His Grace would make their wickedness not matter.

**AP:** This mistake is drowning the church today. We **live like the Godless** and think that it’s okay! But Paul calls us to understand: God’s Grace is supposed to lead us to repentance—to casting off the worldliness and embracing Godliness!

**RM 2.17-24** ~ *But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God<sup>18</sup> and know his will and approve what is excellent, because you are instructed from the law;<sup>19</sup> and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,<sup>20</sup> an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth—<sup>21</sup> you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal?<sup>22</sup> You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?<sup>23</sup> You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law.<sup>24</sup> For, as it is written, “The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you.”*

Brethren, we must teach the world—but not just the world: we must also teach ourselves! We must teach ourselves and change ourselves—to no longer live like the world around us. For with all God has revealed to us—all that He has given us, “**we have no excuse!**”

## **BD2: The Self-Righteous Falls Short of God’s Expectations! – Vs. 6-11**

### **GOVERNMENT/Democracy/H. L. Mencken**

We often talk about justice. We often talk about “**getting what we deserve**”. Brethren, I don’t think we realize just how badly we should not want that.

**RM 2.6-8** ~ *He will render to each one according to his works:<sup>7</sup> to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life;<sup>8</sup> but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.*

**EX:** To those who have a soft and penitent heart, God promises three great things: glory, honor, and immortality—the very thing they seek for—eternal life! But to those who don’t obey truth, but who instead obey unrighteousness: all that you’re promised is wrath and furth.

But they offered sacrifices! They followed rites and rituals of cleanliness! But they only followed the appearance of the shadow of righteousness. Their hearts were far from Him! *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people’s bones and all uncleanness.<sup>28</sup> So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.* (MT 23.27-28)

**AP:** If anyone should have been seeking glory, honor, and immortality, it should have been the Jewish people. But even among the early Jewish converts to Christianity in Rome, there was godlessness and obedience only to unrighteousness. If Paul were to write directly to the American church, today, I wonder if he’d not repeat the same concern. So often, we think ourselves righteous—but in truth, we similarly **fall short of God’s expectations.**

**RM 2.9-11** ~ *There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek,<sup>10</sup> but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek.<sup>11</sup> For God shows no partiality.*

## **BD3: The Self-Righteous’ Righteousness Isn’t Enough! – Vs. 25-29**

**ILL—Number of Laws in America** (common question; determined it’s nearly impossible; United States code is 51 titles across multiple volumes; over 23,000 pages of federal law) As a result, its estimated that the average American breaks at least three federal laws a day. It’s nearly impossible to trust in our own ability to keep even the American law.

**RM 2.25** ~ *For circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law, but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision.*

**EX:** The Jewish Christians thought their “**Jewishness**” and obedience to the Jewish law was enough. This was encapsulated in the act of circumcision: the thing that made them “**Jewish**” more than anything else! And they took great pride in it as the definer of their own righteousness. But **their righteousness wasn’t enough!**

**RM 2.26-27** ~ *For circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law, but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision.<sup>26</sup> So, if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be*