

The background features a photograph of ancient stone ruins. A large, circular opening is visible in the upper left. A semi-transparent cross shape is overlaid on the right side of the image. The overall color palette is warm, with shades of orange, yellow, and brown.

ROMANS

Week #1: The Gospel is “Good News”: (Romans 1:2-6)

1. It was promised long ago by God.
2. It is about His Son:
 - He is fully human – a descendent of King David.
 - He is fully God – raised from death by the Holy Spirit.
3. His name is Jesus Christ!
4. He is for everyone ... all people, all nations, all of us.

... But why is Jesus good news... and why do I need him?

Week #2: Why is the Gospel “Good News”? (Romans 1:16-32)

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of this Good News about Christ.

- *It is the power of God at work, saving everyone who believes—both Jew and Gentile.*
- ***¹⁷ This Good News tells us how God makes us right in his sight ...”***

Issue: Why am I not right in God’s sight?

... what has happened?

*All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left
God's paths to follow our own way.*

Isaiah 53:6



All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own way.

Isaiah 53:6

Romans 1-2 describes what “*our own way*” looks like and where it takes us.

Warning: It is not pretty, difficult to digest & politically incorrect.

- it contradicts what *I want to believe* about myself.
- it contradicts what *Canadian culture tells me to believe* about myself.
 - it appears intolerant, non-inclusive & anything but “*progressive*”.
- it is completely true in describing every one of us.



¹⁸ The **wrath** of God is being revealed against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness ...

Key: What does God's wrath look like? What does He do?

- He *abandons* us to our choices.
 - 3x we are told this (verses 24, 26, 28)
- He lets us have what we want ... *all* of it.

God's Response: "I will not stop you ... but I will not go with you."

- "You will now experience ALL you have chosen."

Three Stages of 'going my own way':

Stage 1: My Will. – I suppress what I know. (v.v.18-23)

- a. by denying the obvious about God.
- b. by rationalizing what is clearly untrue.

Stage 2: My Body. – I do what I want. (v.v.24-27)

- a. by denying the obvious about my sexuality.
- b. by rationalizing what is clearly untrue.

Stage 3: My Mind. – I think as I wish. (v.v.28-32)

- a. by denying the obvious about my selfishness.
- b. by rationalizing what is clearly untrue.

Summary:

1. God *lets me choose* what I do with my life.
2. God has boundaries. He will not join me in my rebellion & folly.
3. When I choose to reject what I know is right, God lets me experience *ALL* the consequences of my choices.
4. God is not to blame for my problems ... I am.

Week #3: The Folly of Self-Righteousness. (Romans 2:1-16)

¹You may think you can condemn such people, but you are just as bad, and you have no excuse! When you say they are wicked and should be punished, you are condemning yourself, for you who judge others do these very same things ... ¹⁶and the day is coming when God, through Christ Jesus, will judge everyone's secret life.

Folly of self-righteousness: I see morality as only a matter of degree, and justify *my behavior* as not being as “bad” as those around me.

Three problems with this:

- a. I measure others against my righteousness, not God's.
- b. I become the judge, not God.
- c. I exempt myself from judgement.

Self-Righteousness: 6 Truths That I Need To Know:

1. Romans 1 applies to ALL of us. (v. 1)
2. There *will* be a day of reckoning ... for ALL of us. (v.v. 2,5-6)
3. When God judges me, He will miss nothing. (v.v. 3,16)
4. When God judges me, He will be impartial. (v.v. 7-11)
5. When God judges me, He will be fair. (v.v. 12-15)
6. When God judges me, He wants Jesus to be there. (v.v. 4, 16)

This Week: The Problem Of Religion (Romans 2:17 – 3:20)

***17** You who call yourselves Jews are relying on God's law, **and you boast about your special relationship with him 3²⁰(but) no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands.** The law simply shows us how sinful we are.*

If I were able to bring only one message to every person putting their faith in Christ, it would be *“How can you live as a Christian without becoming religious?”* I don't mean the “pure and undefiled religion” that James describes in his letter (James 1:27), but rather the religiousity ... the churchianity ... that turns a person into a religious robot – one who speaks religiously and performs religious deeds but lacks the true spirit of religion. I also include people who trust in their religious background and activities for salvation but inwardly are just as lost as anyone else without Christ.

Swindoll

The Struggles of the Religious: 3 Challenges they face:

1. **Pride.** “I have the truth ...” (2:17-20)

*¹⁷ You who call yourselves Jews are relying on God’s law, and you boast about your special relationship with him. ¹⁸ **You know what he wants; you know what is right because you have been taught his law.** ¹⁹ You are convinced that you are a guide for the blind and a light for people who are lost in darkness. ²⁰ You think you can instruct the ignorant and teach children the ways of God. For **you are certain that God’s law gives you complete knowledge and truth.***

The Struggles of the Religious: 3 Challenges they face:

1. Pride. “*I have the truth ... and you don't.” (2:17-20)*

- Issue is not *having* the truth, but what it does to you ... does it humble you, or make you proud?

... “*the Jews were entrusted with the whole revelation of God.*” (Rom. 3:2)

- “I’m right and you’re wrong ...”
- “God loves me more than you ...”
- “I’m better than you ...”

When Paul showed in Romans that the heathen (chapter 1) and the moralist (chapter 2) are both condemned under God’s scrutiny, almost any Jew would have agreed with him but would have considered themselves to be exempt from condemnation. They were God’s chosen people; They had the Law; They were circumcised.

T.H. Epp

The Struggles of the Religious: 3 Challenges they face:

1. **Pride.** *“I have the truth ... and you don’t.”* (2:17-20)

2. **Legalism.** *“I keep the rules ...”* (2:21-24)
 - “I have the rulebook, and know how to play the game.”
 - “I bring honour to God through my rule-keeping.”
 - “As Long as I keep the rules, God will favour me.”

The Struggles of the Religious: 3 Challenges they face:

1. Pride. *“I have the truth ... and you don’t.”* (2:17-20)
2. **Legalism**. *“I keep the rules ... and you don’t.”* (2:21-24)
 - Issue: The “rules” cannot easily be kept ... in fact, they cannot be kept at all!

*21 Well then, if you teach others, why don’t you teach yourself? You tell others not to steal, but do you steal? 22 You say it is wrong to commit adultery, but do you commit adultery? You condemn idolatry, but do you use items stolen from pagan temples? 23 **You are so proud of knowing the law, but you dishonor God by breaking it.** 24 No wonder the Scriptures say, “The Gentiles blaspheme the name of God because of you.”*

The Struggles of the Religious: 3 Challenges they face:

1. Pride. *“I have the truth ... and you don’t.”* (2:17-20)
2. Legalism. *“I keep the rules ... and you don’t.”* (2:21-24)
3. **Posing**. *“I play the game and I look the part ...* (2:25-29)
 - “I look like a Jew, dress like a Jew, act like a Jew, worship like a Jew.”
 - “I carry the mark of a Chosen One ... Circumcision.”

The Struggles of the Religious: 3 Challenges they face:

1. Pride. *“I have the truth ... and you don’t.”* (2:17-20)
2. Legalism. *“I keep the rules ... and you don’t.”* (2:21-24)
3. **Posing**. *“I play the game, look the part ... and you don’t.”* (2:25-29)
 - Issue: God sees through my posing. He knows who I really am.

²⁵ *The Jewish ceremony of circumcision has value only if you obey God’s law ...* ²⁸ *For you are not a true Jew just because you were born of Jewish parents or because you have gone through the ceremony of circumcision.*

²⁹ *No, **a true Jew is one whose heart is right with God** - true circumcision is not merely obeying the letter of the law; rather, it is a change of heart produced by the Spirit. And a person with a changed heart seeks praise from God, not from people.*

A Terrifying Reality: No one is righteous in God's presence. (3:9-20)

- The pagan, the moralist, and even the religious fall short of the glory of God.

⁹ Well then, should we conclude that we Jews are better than others? No, not at all, for we have already shown that all people, whether Jews or Gentiles, are under the power of sin.

10 As the Scriptures say,

“No one is righteous—not even one.

11 No one is truly wise; no one is seeking God.

***12 All have turned away; all have become useless.
No one does good, not a single one.”***

***13 “Their talk is foul, like the stench from an open grave.
Their tongues are filled with lies.”***

“Snake venom drips from their lips.

14 “Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.”

***15 “They rush to commit murder. 16 Destruction and misery always
follow them. 17 They don’t know where to find peace.”***

18 They have no fear of God at all.”

Even the most strident religious commitment:

- cannot remove my guilt.
- does not replace my emptiness.
- will not repair my brokenness.
- cannot restore my relationship with God.

*¹⁹ Obviously, the law applies to those to whom it was given, for its purpose is to keep people from having excuses, and to show that the entire world is guilty before God. ²⁰ For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. **The law simply shows us how sinful we are.***

So ... where's the hope?

²¹ **But now** God has shown us a way to be made right with him without keeping the requirements of the law, as was promised in the writings of Moses and the prophets long ago. ²² **We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ.** And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are.