



Losing Our Religion

Recap:

In the second half of chapter 2, Paul turns his attention on to Israel to be God's representatives in the world. He reminds his readers (Jewish Christians) where their identity as a nation came from (17-18) and what that calling meant to them as a nation from a missional perspective (19-20). The overarching call on Israel, dating all the way back to God's covenant with Abraham, was to be a light to the nations. And they were failing.

Paul accuses those who brag about being the possessors of the law are actually transgressors of the law (21-23). Could it get worse than that? Yes, it can. In verse 24, Paul slides back into his archives and quotes Isaiah 52:5 in his explanation as to how bad things have gotten. The Jewish Christians failure to follow the law was causing the Gentiles to dishonor God, rather than drawing them closer to Him. This was a sobering reminder of how our actions can impact others perception of God. Paul also addresses their reliance on circumcision, urging that outward symbols mean nothing without inward obedience. True belonging in God's family is not about external markers but about a heart that is truly transformed by Him.

God cares most about the condition of our hearts. Living out our faith means more than just knowing the right things—it requires inner transformation that shapes how we live and interact with others. We're left at the end of this chapter with the encouragement that the Spirit of God has great precision, like a surgeon, and He's ready to operate on our hearts as soon as we ask Him to!

Study: Read 2:17-29 (45 Min)

Icebreaker: What character from a book or movie best describes your life right now?

1. What about the message on Sunday and this passage stood out to you or do you have questions about?
2. After reading Romans 2:17-29, in what ways does religion make us proud? Hypocritical? Judgmental?
3. What is Paul trying to show his readers with the list of questions in vs. 21-23?
4. Think of a time when your actions didn't match your beliefs. How did that affect your sense of integrity and your relationship with God and others?
5. In what ways do you see yourself fulfilling God's missional call on your life to be a "light to the nations" (or to non Christians?)

6. Verse 24 is a quote from Isaiah 52:5. "God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you." Why is Paul pointing this out?

7. What is one way you have seen non-Christians "blaspheme" (or reject) God on account of something you or another Christian said or did?

8. What is your reaction to Paul's statement that the Gentiles, who don't have the law, can sometimes live more righteously than those who do? Can you think of situations where you've witnessed this in your own life?

9. What is the relationship between circumcision and keeping the law (vs. 25-29)? How can labels be misleading and or deceiving?

10. What does it mean to have a circumcised heart (vs. 29)?

11. How do you see the Spirit working in your heart? Where do you see room for growth in your faith?

12. How can we as a group support each other in striving for true heart transformation, instead of just focusing on outward actions or appearances?

SUPPORT/PRAYER (15 min)

Based on the last question, spend time praying for each other in the ways you feel prompted from the conversation.