



October 8, 2023

Romans: Rooted in Jesus

Distorted View: Law

Romans 2:1-29

For Discussion and Reflection

1. The Law of God, according to the Apostle Paul, is holy, righteous, and good (Romans 7:12). At the same time, in our text, the Law is hard and dispassionate. How do you understand this dichotomy?
2. Read the story Jesus tells in Luke 18:9-14. How did the Pharisee view the Law in relation to himself? How did he distort God's law? How did the publican view the law in relation to himself? How did he respond to the Law's assessment of himself?
3. The Jewish believers had grown up in a law-abiding culture and were living a relatively moral life. They concluded that they had God's favor and would escape the Law's accusation. In essence, "The Law doesn't condemn me because I'm a relatively good person." Paul's response is to point out their corruption, 2:3, 21-23, and shame their moralism, 2:25-29. In other words, "A little obedience to the Law doesn't make you a righteous person." Why do we excuse ourselves? How must we distort the Law to accomplish this?
4. The Law demands justice, but God is patient and forbears. Why does God show patience and kindness? What does he desire from us? Consider Peter's teaching, 2 Peter 3:8,9.
5. A prominent minister makes the argument, "At our church, we don't draw lines, we draw circles." His point is that the church shouldn't exclude anyone who is willing to join, regardless of their sinful lifestyle. At ECPC, we don't exclude sinners, but we only grant membership to those who are repenting. Why is that? How does the first statement distort the Law of God?
6. Did you notice the distortion that says, "Knowing and understanding God's Law makes me a better person"? How does Paul respond to that perspective? Consider 2:12,13,24. What does the Law demand?
7. Romans 2 is a challenging text, because it seems Paul is saying, "If you obey the Law of God, you will be justified." Some have concluded Paul is going against the gospel in this moment. What do you think Paul is doing? Isn't it true that if we obey the Law "perfectly" our entire life that we will be judged innocent? How does he draw the net in Romans 3:9-20?
8. At the end of the chapter, Paul says, "A Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit." (v29) What is Paul communicating about the necessity of the work of God in our lives? Consider Paul in Titus 3:4-7.
9. Does the Law of God lead you to repentance? Does it humble you or make you judgmental? When you see a brother/sister engaging in sinful behavior, or expressing sinful ideas, how do you respond?