

sermon study guide

Sermon Summary (see next page for discussion questions)

“Romans” Part 5: The Danger of Trusting in the Wrong Things

November 6/7, 2021

Dr. Henry Schorr

In Genesis we learn that Adam and Eve rebelled against God, resulting in evil entering the world and fracturing their relationship with God and each other. Since then, we have all been striving to fill this God-shaped void of true intimacy within us, which only God can satisfy.

Those with a pagan worldview choose to reject God, rebel against Him, and think they will be fulfilled by taking complete control of their lives, pursuing satisfaction via ‘temporary measures’ such as power, possessions, people, pleasure, etc. These inevitably result in immorality.

Others attempt to compensate for this lack of intimacy with God by being ‘respectable’ or ‘moralists’. They believe themselves to be good, though not perfect, since they are law-abiding, clean-living, moral, and some even attend church. Although in their view, a close relationship with God is unnecessary, they assume they will go to heaven when they die. They blame the chaos in our world on those who reject God, are rebellious pagans like criminals and abusers, etc.

Paul emphasizes that to be acceptable to God, we must be crystal clear about what we trust and hope in. There are two types of faith: one is genuine and alive, the other is empty and dead. It is evidence that we have placed our faith in Jesus Christ when, firstly, our focus is on Christ alone, and secondly, we live a Godly life. The desire to do good works and deeds are evidence of true faith, just like apples on a tree prove the tree is alive. But the apples don’t in themselves provide life. The roots pull in nourishment and give life to the tree, producing fruit. God is our life and our ‘fruit’ shows we have a living faith in God.

It is distinctly stated that we cannot inherit eternal life solely on the basis of our good deeds. Romans 1:17 says: For in the Gospel the clear righteousness of God is revealed – a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.” We must follow all of Scripture, not just a few verses/chapters. Even those who have never read the Bible have a conscience/moral code given by God so they may distinguish between right and wrong. God calls us to become ‘Living Bibles’ and we should ‘live out the Word of God’, not just read or listen to it.

God sent His only begotten Son to die on the Cross for the remediation of our sins. When we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we are saved by grace. It is only through God’s grace that we are enabled to do good works for the right reasons - because we love and want to obey God and follow His plan for our lives.

Let us focus on Christ alone, live a Godly life and do the good works which God prepared in advance for us to do (Ephesians 2:10). While our good works won’t get us to heaven, they impact our experience of heaven which is for eternity.

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Discussion Questions

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IN - PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. If you could cultivate any type of tree or bush that produced fruit all year round, what would it be?
2. Has anyone ever done something for you that simply by their actions, speech or spirit, led you to believe they were a Christian? Has anyone asked this about you? What were the circumstances?

UP - PURSUE GOD

Read Romans 2:5-16, 3:22-23, Titus 3:5, Ephesians 2:8-10

3. What is the basis of a person's salvation? How are our good works evidence of faithful and loving obedience to the God who created us to do these works? How might a person know when they lean too heavily on one or the other (faith or good works)?
4. From Romans 2:5-16 and Psalm 62 identify characteristics of genuine and false (or no) faith.

OUT - PURSUE MISSION

5. From Eph 2:8-10, why does Paul speak of works (v 10) only after speaking of grace (vs 8-9)? How does a firm foundation of God's grace help us when we come to 'examining ourselves' (2 Corinthians 13:5)?
6. Our faith in Jesus Christ becomes visible to others as we become more like Him. Discuss how maturity, experience and the Holy Spirit have increased your ability to express the fruit of the Spirit in interactions with others instead of competitiveness?

For Personal Reflection/Prayer:

Take time this week to study these passages: Matthew 6:6; 16:24; Mark 9:41, Luke 6:35; 14:13-14, Colossians 3:22, 1 Timothy 6:18, 1 Corinthians 15:58, and Hebrews 11:6. In light of these promises from God, have you put your trust in Him alone? Is your faith in Christ validated by the way you are living your life?

THE WORD (NIV)

Romans 2:5-16

⁵ But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. ⁶ God "will repay each person according to what they have done." ⁷ To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. ⁸ But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. ⁹ There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; ¹⁰ but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. ¹¹ For God does not show favoritism.

¹² All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. ¹³ For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. ¹⁴ (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law. ¹⁵ They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them.) ¹⁶ This will take place on the day when God judges people's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.

Romans 3:22-23

Titus 3:5

Ephesians 2:8-10

Psalm 62

2 Corinthians 13:5