



**I'm OK, You're So So
The Problem with Preachers, Yellers
And Others Who Know Better Than You!
Romans 2:17-29**

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Today we journey into the world of religious hypocrisy. The only group Jesus ever was incredibly negative about were the religious hypocrites in the Temples.



Matthew 23:31–33

“So you testify against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of the guilt of your fathers. You snakes, you offspring of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell?” (NASB 2020)

Once again, Jesus providing brutal honest truth for those who believe they are the repository of all truth. They still exist today by the way.

Let’s take a trip back in time. I am still in college, I have long hair, a big bushy mustache, and cannot afford buying a suit or “Sunday go to meeting” clothes. I have been going to a Calvary Chapel, and when it was over 100 outside, preferred to wear shorts, flip flops and golf shirts. But I made a big mistake, I walked into a hard-line, King James Only, Baptist Church as a visitor. Yes, everyone else was wearing suit, tie and dressed really uncomfortably nice. Me, not so much. I just wanted to hear the word, but that was not going to be the case that Sunday.

The ushers led me to a seat in the very back of the building, and no one would sit next to me, no one.

As we sang hymns, I soon realized that the music choices were still bordering on Gregorian chant. Yes, as a Baptist Church they had the meet and greet minute, and no one came to meet or greet me since apparently, I had been seated in the exiles row.

And when the Preacher, who was already sweating and using a handkerchief to wipe off the sweat, even though the air conditioner worked really well, stood up and started yelling about sin, screaming actually, and made a remark about how people should dress coming to church and pointed right at me, I knew I would never be back. But I did stay the entire time forcing him to shake hands with me. I never did go back by the way.

Was the man saved? I have no idea. What did he teach on? I really can’t tell you anything about that either other than he hated sin, was proud he never had done any of it, and it was time to give. Were the people saved? Possibly, but poorly taught and into religion like crazy, and very dogmatic about what little they believed. I learned that apparently, I was not part of the elect because if I was, I would have had a crew cut and worn a suit. Yeah, they were also a wee bit Calvinistic too.

Here in Romans 2, Paul is preparing to have a heart-to-heart chat with those who are religious, they have rules how to live, and you better follow them or else.

He has just gone through the problem of those who are not saved and like to point out problems they see in others. He has also contrasted those who are saved and their eternal destination for us with those who are not and where they will spend eternity. And now he moves on to a problem that has never really gone away, the problem of religious hypocrisy.

Legalism, rules, rule keeping and becoming the repository of all wisdom and knowledge about those rules. Paul would definitely know who they look like, he used to be a Pharisee, a professional legalistic rule keeper and he was a hunter – killer of those who broke the rules, until he met Jesus on the road to Damascus.

As we read this, do not fixate on the fact that Paul is focusing on the low hanging fruit of his day, legalistic moralistic Jews, some of whom profess faith in Christ. Paul has already had to deal with some of them in Thessalonica, Galatia, Ephesus and Berea and at the time he is writing this, is yet to go to Jerusalem and encounter the same phony bologna hypocrites there.



The problem I have seen, there are those today who will seriously focus on the Jews of the day and forget that they are much worse with their own hypocrisy.

He is now addressing those who are into religion, but religion their way. Moral, you net and they will give you a long winded speech about what that looks like too. In the past, morality was defined for me by those who lean this way as not dancing, not going to the movies, never going to watch a play, or questioning any music that was not written at least two centuries ago. Oh, and don't even think about playing cards.

Today they will go as far as to tell you that you are not truly saved unless you have been saved only in the manner that they teach and approve of. Let's look at our text and listen to the sarcasm of Paul.

Romans 2:17–24

“But if you call yourself a Jew and rely upon the Law and boast in God, and know His will and distinguish the things that matter, being instructed from the Law, and are confident that you yourself are a guide to people who are blind, a light to those in darkness, a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, possessing in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth—**you, therefore, who teach someone else, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that one is not to steal, do you steal? You who say that one is not to commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who loathe idols, do you rob temples? You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God?** For “THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES BECAUSE OF YOU,” just as it is written.” (NASB 2020)

I think Paul is writing about himself here pre-Christ. “Surely this was just the way Paul had felt as the up-and-coming disciple of Rabbi Gamaliel. It was for the defence of this heritage, in which he took such pride, that he had launched his attack on the Christians.

The law was seen by Pharisaism as the essence of all knowledge and truth, to the extent that it was believed that knowledge about everything was hidden in the law, if only one had the key to unlock it. The Torah (law) was the blueprint God used to create the universe, and therefore the pattern of all truth. Its possessors were therefore in a position to be the teachers of the world, and they took great pride in it.” (Seccombe 2013, 58)

I wish I could say that people who state, and loudly so, what they believe and then do not act on that was something of the past. But it isn't.

What Paul is talking about here is something Jesus had earlier diagnosed and what I related a bit about from my own experience, these were gnat strainers and camel swallows. Both unclean per the law, and Jesus points out the problem he saw with those who were into appearances over substance.

Matthew 23:23–24

““Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the Law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others. **You blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!**” (NASB 2020)

David Johnson and Jeff VanVonderen add this insight about the reality of the time. “Gnats were a tougher matter. You had to work to avoid them. Bugs were everywhere. In the making of wine, for instance, there was no refrigeration, no filtering system, and the pressing of grapes was done by foot in large, open vats. A significant number of “unclean” guests made their way into the wine. Still pretending they could avoid any unclean intrusion, the Pharisees sifted their wine through their teeth and then picked out the bugs with their fingers. The meaning of Jesus' confrontation could not be lost on them. “You put incredible



amounts of energy into things of little consequence (dill, mint and cummin), but you swallow the camel (immorality, injustice, lying, hypocrisy). You have inverted spiritual values.” What is the meaning in this for us today? Again and again we see that the issue of inverted spiritual values is alive and well in the church. Many have grown up in churches that teach: Never let wine touch your lips, never play cards (not even “Rook”), never dance, never go to movies, and never smoke. To avoid some behaviors may in fact be a very good thing to do. But what if those same externally “clean” people are full of bitterness, anger and malice?” (Johnson and VanVonderen 1991, 141-142)

That is exactly the point that Paul is getting to in his conversation.

This really is all about hypocrisy here and not about Jews versus Gentiles. For all practical intents and purposes, Paul could also be talking to moralistic pagan philosophers as well. For them, it is a non-Biblical substitute as to how to reach God disguised as asceticism.

Something we see in many eastern religions.

Pagan ascetic training is designed to purify mind and soul together and to check self-indulgence or greed. This entails abstinence from meat, wine; little sleep; contempt for fame, wealth, honour, etc. Hidden within the body there are ‘opposing powers’. Only necessary food should be eaten. Beds should never be luxurious. Sexual activity for boys should be after the age of 20 and then very seldom. Sex is for procreation. In the Pythagorean community the novice must keep silence for five years to learn self-control, and bring his property into a common chest. There are chastisements for failures. (Chadwick 2001, 397)

And yes, much of that eventually made its way into various monastic orders later in history and can be seen in various non-Christian religions today as well.

As we talk about hypocrites, we come to realize that there are two kinds who operate today. First of all, there are those who pretend to be one thing, but they know they are not what they pretend to be. They are wearing masks and know they are doing so until they are caught. Today we would identify many politicians as this.

Paul here is talking about the type he would have identified with prior to meeting Jesus.

This type of hypocrite is someone who is incredibly passionate about what they believe. Note Paul’s borderline satiric language he uses here.

Romans 2:17–20

“But if you call yourself a Jew and rely upon the Law and boast in God, and know His will and distinguish the things that matter, being instructed from the Law, and are confident that you yourself are a guide to people who are blind, a light to those in darkness, a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, possessing in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth—” (NASB 2020)

Let’s stop there for the moment. For those of us on the outside looking in, the acting job of the first type of hypocrite is usually quite good. “It is not always easy to distinguish between the two types. Is the fallen televangelist an otherwise sincere Christian who at a moment of weakness betrays his or her own convictions, or is he or she all the time consciously parading one thing and believing and doing another? Whatever the answer, both kinds of hypocrite bring disgrace upon their religion.” (Seccombe 2013, 59)

I remember receiving church letters in the past, usually just before a major holiday like Easter, and no we are not sending anything out, or back to church Sunday which some make as a big deal every fall. Each letter we received were meant to be encouragement, but the reality is they were not designed to grow you



as a disciple of Christ, they were designed to guilt you into coming to church this next Sunday and with a friend.

If you have ever been on the receiving end of any of those intended guilt producing letters, let me ask this question. Did you feel as if your burden spiritually speaking is now lighter, or heavier? Jesus put it this way.

Matthew 11:28–30

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (ESV)

Yes, we are interested here at Calvary Chapel growing together in Christ and becoming more like Him, but no heavy burden please. Many of us have been under that burden elsewhere and then we discover this.

Galatians 5:1

“For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.” (ESV)

The same Paul who at a point in his past was a legalist and would be more than happy to pile requirement after requirement on top of you, once he met Jesus Christ and learned what following Jesus really means, rest, no burden, no long to do list or else. He changed.

Notice he tells us here to stand firm in the freedom we have in Christ. Why would he say that? Because he knows who he used to be and he knows about those who are into religion versus relationship, such as those he is now talking about here in Romans. The basis of our faith in Jesus Christ is not performance based; it is faith based and relies heavily on the grace of God. Abraham showed us the way.

Genesis 15:5–6

“The LORD took him outside and said, “Gaze into the sky and count the stars—if you are able to count them!” Then he said to him, “So will your descendants be.” **Abram believed the LORD, and the LORD credited it as righteousness to him.**” (NET 2nd ed.)

David expressed the same though as he repented of his great sin of murder and adultery.

Psalms 51:15–17

“O Lord, give me the words. Then my mouth will praise you. Certainly you do not want a sacrifice, or else I would offer it; you do not desire a burnt sacrifice. **The sacrifices God desires is a humble spirit— O God, a humble and repentant heart you will not reject.**” (NET 2nd ed.)

He is looking for faith, a true turning from our sin since that is why He came here and died on the cross. He did that so we could have a relationship not based on rules or to do lists but the light burden of faith and trust in Christ and what He has already achieved for us on the cross in dying for our sin. We are to just be obedient to Him and since He has already provided us all the tools, we will ever need in the Holy Spirit, why worry?.

Paul will later tell us just how complicated it is to trust in Christ. It isn't, not at all, not like those who he is talking about here at this point in Romans would want to make it.



Romans 10:9–13

“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”” (NLT)

Here is the thing that the one who wants to pile up rules and tests and liturgy and catechisms and more on top of us want you to forget.

Ephesians 2:8–10

“For by grace you are saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so that no one can boast. For we are his creative work, having been created in Christ Jesus for good works that God prepared beforehand so we may do them.” (NET 2nd ed.)

Grace not works. Grace not rules. Grace not fear. Grace and trust that the Holy Spirit in you is enough. Because He is.

Philippians 1:3–6

“I thank my God every time I remember you. I always pray with joy in my every prayer for all of you because of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now. **For I am sure of this very thing, that the one who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.**” (NET 2nd ed.)

I have been encouraged by at least two different firms that I must be sending out regular mailings to “guilt” you to come to Calvary Chapel. I will not do that. I did not appreciate it when others did that to me in the past and I suspect that nothing has changed. My job is to care and feed the flock the Lord has given me charge over. Not to make you feel guilty, burdened, or anxious.

Galatians 5:16–18

“So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won’t be doing what your sinful nature craves. The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions. But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are not under obligation to the law of Moses.” (NLT)

Paul knows what kind of a shepherd he used to be, one who piled on burdens and requirements and things to do to feel like you are Holy and measure just how Holy others are as well. Now he knows, in Christ, he is Holy. We are as well.

Romans 8:14–17

“For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God’s Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, “Abba, Father.” For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God’s children. And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God’s glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.” (NLT)

We are His kids and as such, yes there are expectations as to how to live, but again, we have the Holy Spirit and yes, He will indeed discipline us if we go off course.



My job is simple, “the function of a true shepherd is to remove the load of external performances, and help people discover the freedom and joy of their new identity in Christ. It’s true that when some people strip it all away, they discover they don’t know God and never did. The only thing keeping them in line was the weight of the religious load. Others, however, take the load off and discover the life of God in them for the first time. They begin to move through life and do the things they do by promptings and direction of the Spirit.” (Johnson and VanVonderen 1991, 149)

In a performance-based system, church or religion, you will become another bearer of the burden. You too will feel the gravity of needing to measure up and because others are beating us down, feel as if we never get there. But here, we are not going to do that, we point to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, He is our Shepherd and we rest in Him. He is our source of life and power.

Now that we have all of that, let’s go back and continue with what Paul is first of all bringing up, and it isn’t all bad, until he brings up the missing component. It is also a harkening back to what he has earlier taught us about in Romans 1 regarding those who are moral, not saved and condemning others while doing the same thing.

Romans 2:17–24

“But if you call yourself a Jew and rely upon the Law and boast in God, and know His will and distinguish the things that matter, being instructed from the Law, and are confident that you yourself are a guide to people who are blind, a light to those in darkness, a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, possessing in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth—**you, therefore, who teach someone else, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that one is not to steal, do you steal? You who say that one is not to commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who loathe idols, do you rob temples? You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God? For “THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES BECAUSE OF YOU,” just as it is written.**” (NASB 2020)

Inconsistent living was indeed a problem for the Jews at that time, and it would not get better either with two rebellions against the Roman Empire coming between 70 and 135 AD. The performance of some of the leadership we have studied in the life of Jesus as well as in the book of Acts shows us that religious hypocrisy is nothing new. But the sad fact is this, it chases people away from faith and causes others to blaspheme God.

Unfortunately, it has become all too common a scene. A Christian pastor or leader builds a solid reputation as a moral and social leader. He, and it is almost always a he, is then caught in an illicit sexual affair. Depending on how well known he is, the contradiction and hypocrisy of his actions become a talking point for those with Christianophobia. He becomes a joke for comedians and fodder for editorials. It is not hard to think of national figures that fall into this category...This sort of embarrassment certainly must hurt the image of Christians. (Yancey 2015, 69)

I remember the rather public failure of a Calvary Chapel pastor here in Florida. I was at work and some of those who worked with me were attendees of that church and deeply heart broken and in mourning over it. But in a company of over 900 employees, there are those who take a totally different view. I was lectured, more than once, on how evil Christians are because we are not better than the world and that failure was used as the evidence for their accusations.

It did indeed impact those of us, not even remotely connected with it, to be able to share Christ with others. The brush was broad and the words said do indeed classify as blasphemous just as Paul said they would.



We forget that those who are not followers of Jesus, have no idea what freedoms we do and do not have in Christ. If they grew up Catholic, that colors their view. If they grew up Southern Baptist, the same thing does indeed exist. George Yancey discovered in his research that “those who hate Christians also are very legalistic with regard to Christians. Personal interaction with Christians not living up to the values of those with Christianophobia can motivate their hatred. Just as I looked at every mistake other Christians make and used those mistakes to “demote” them spiritually in my eyes, those with anti-Christian animosity also use the failings of Christians to challenge the viability of Christian morality. The charge of hypocrisy was quite common among our respondents. Both young Christians and those with Christianophobia develop a legalistic perspective for the same reason. They both lack the level of Christian maturity and Christian experience to understand that the Christian journey does not consist of living a perfect life. Instead, we strive for perfection, but our inevitable failures increase our appreciation for Christ’s saving grace. We can hope that immature Christians learn this lesson over time. We cannot expect those with Christianophobia to gain this insight since they have rejected opportunities to learn of Christ’s grace. (Yancey 2015, 106-107)

It is obvious that what Paul is leading to saying here and what the expectation of our Lord is, is this, integrity in how we go about doing life. Paul is describing a disconnect between faith, knowledge, God's word and how one does life. I think James put it out there really well. He too is pointing out the disconnect, the hypocrisy from saying you know but not acting on that statement.

James 2:14–20

“What good is it, my brothers, if someone claims to have faith but has no actions to prove it? Is such “faith” able to save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food, and someone says to him, “Shalom! Keep warm and eat hearty!” without giving him what he needs, what good does it do? Thus, faith by itself, unaccompanied by actions, is dead. But someone will say that you have faith and I have actions. Show me this faith of yours without the actions, and I will show you my faith by my actions! You believe that “God is one”? Good for you! The demons believe it too—the thought makes them shudder with fear! But, foolish fellow, do you want to be shown that such “faith” apart from actions is barren?” (CJB)

Knowing the word of God is a fabulous thing. I wish everyone knew God’s word, but more than that, I would prefer that everyone also align the way they live everyday to Gods word. Based on the latest research from George Barna, if the 34% of Americans who claim to be born again actually lived that way, we would not be dealing with many of the issues in our culture we are dealing with today.

When one comes to Christ, their world view begins to change, the Holy Spirit is in the job of doing that for all of us, it is called sanctification. But there are those who decide to go down the path of legalism and become dogmatic over things they do not know.

I will never forget the young Christian who walked up to me one day and told me that I had spent over 30 years of my life learning the wrong things in the Bible. And it was all because I failed the very first test, I was not a Calvinist. He was, he was also a preterist, in other words he believed the book of Revelation was fulfilled in 70AD. He also believed the church had replaced Israel. He did not believe in a pretribulational rapture either. Was he saved? I really don’t know since I honestly never saw any fruit of the Spirit in his life. He was argumentative and was the poster child for why there are those today, unsaved, who blaspheme the Lord. He talked one way, and lived another.

Paul is talking about those of his own background who had the word, the knowledge of the law, and had the sign of the covenant in their own flesh demonstrating a life of commitment to that covenant. But the outward signs did not match what was going on in the inside.



Having an oversized Bible which you can conveniently thump others with, and no really changed life to go with it is the same thing. One who is growing in the Lord would be teachable, they would at least check the Bible to see if what is being taught is true or not. But no, if you are already the "corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, possessing in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and truth," and you are dogmatic about that, why bother.

Paul makes an interesting contrast here implying that those who know the law but do not do it, even though they have been circumcised, are no better than a pagan. Meanwhile, the pagan, who follows it, even though he is not showing the outward sign of the covenant in his flesh, is more "Jewish" than the one who is.

Paul is going to the same place that we already saw Abraham had gone to, Abraham was a believer, before he was circumcised. David, when he repented, understood what the law said and he had the resources to sacrifice thousands of cattle if necessary, but he knew God was interested in his heart, and not the outward rituals or expressions.

Deuteronomy 10:12–16

"And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good? Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the LORD your God, also the earth with all that is in it. The LORD delighted only in your fathers, to love them; and He chose their descendants after them, you above all peoples, as it is this day. Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer." (NKJV)

This is where Paul is going. Christ has fulfilled the law and those who are in Christ, physically without the outward sign of the covenant, but inwardly a new person in Christ, are those who are of the circumcision of the heart.

Getting back to our conversation regarding the religious person who is into the external signs and the external controls to make them feel as if they are saved and to know you are as well, that is, per Paul, not needed. When we come to Christ, we are set free and the Holy Spirit has come inside to change us and make us more like Jesus. At that point, integrity in all we do is totally possible, and it is because of Jesus.

All of us though, from time to time, will fail and for a time, feel as if we are also hypocrites only to be condemned. But God has given us an out through Jesus Christ. Here is the truth to all of this, none of us, no matter how we live, will meet what it is the scriptures call for us to be just in the world of being separated and Holy unto the Lord. But He still loves us, He still died for us, and He has a promise for us.

1 John 1:9

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (NKJV)

David was correct in his diagnosis of his sin and the hypocritical lifestyle he had been in for months.

Psalms 51:9–10

"Hide Your face from my sins And wipe out all my guilty deeds. Create in me a clean heart, God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me." (NASB 2020)

Knowing how horrible his own sin is, David asks God, after the process of admitting and asking forgiveness, to turn away and totally disregard what it is he did. "hide your face from my sin."



For us a followers of Jesus Christ, when we come to Christ, He forgives us of our sins. This is why Jesus came in the incarnation, this is why He died on the cross, to pay for the penalty for our sin.

2 Corinthians 5:21

“For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (ESV)

Colossians 1:13–14

“He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” (ESV)

Because of Jesus, when we believe, God chooses to forget our sins.

Hebrews 8:12

“For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more.” (ESV)

When our sins and iniquities are confessed, God pledges himself to forget them. We are incapable of making up our minds to forget. (Brown 1988, 160)

David’s face was ashamed with looking on his sin, and no diverting thoughts could remove it from his memory; but he prays the Lord to do with his sin what he himself cannot. (Spurgeon n.d., 404)

This is not an unusual struggle for anyone who is a believer. We all sin and there are those times where Satan lies to us and whispers we have done something so terrible God could never forgive us. Totally untrue.

Romans 8:1–2

“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.” (ESV)

His promises made to us in the scriptures are all true.

For David, sin is destructive, and he reminds us of how destructive it truly is with his next request of the Lord.

Psalms 51:10

“Create in me a clean heart, God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me.” (NASB 2020)

David chooses to use the same Hebrew word we see in Genesis 1:1. The word, bara, means to create out of nothing. As a sinner coming to the Lord in repentance, we have nothing except our sin that He forgives.

We have talked about this before as we understand that the reality is all we have to give God is our heart, totally and completely surrendered to Him. Because of the sin nature, our heart is sick, wicked, and on and on. David realizes that and here is asks God to once again create out of nothing, a clean heart for him. There is nothing there for God to work with, it must be a new creation.

I just said, all we have to give God is our heart, but it is old and nasty, why would He want it? He instead makes all things new.



2 Corinthians 5:17

“So then, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; what is old has passed away—look, what is new has come!” (NET 2nd ed.)

When we come to Christ believing what He did for us on the cross, He makes us totally new. You and I may not realize that immediately, but as time goes by, things that used to excite us no longer do. Now we want to hear His word, read His word, study His word and become more like the one we have trusted for our eternity, Jesus Christ. We are made new.

John 10:10

“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come so that they may have life, and may have it abundantly.” (NET 2nd ed.)

Paul is upfront about this. If you are religious, it is time to check the heart, is it where the dogmatism is? Or is this all exterior stuff, works as James called it, without faith. In Christ, we combine the two and then it is no longer empty religion. It is a relationship with our creator, the one when are privileged to spend all of eternity with. And He died on the cross to make that happen.

Decision time. Coming to Christ is not complicated.

ABC's of Salvation

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.

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