

Are You A Child of God?

Romans 2:25-29 ²⁵ For circumcision indeed is of value **if you obey the law, but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision.** ²⁶ So, if a man who is uncircumcised **keeps the precepts of the law,** will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? ²⁷ Then he who is physically uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the law. ²⁸ For no one is a Jew **who is merely one outwardly,** nor is circumcision outward and physical. ²⁹ But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision **is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.**

❖ Intro

- **Who wants to make talking about circumcision and who is a Jew fun this morning???**
 - Who comes to the Bible Study that is entitled: [Circumcision and You???](#)
- **We get some amazing truths from these verses...**
 - Amazing principles to understand God and our Hearts...
 - They are tucked away deep inside the text...
 - You will see, Paul is not just concerned with giving away some information here
 - He isn't just trying talk about who is circumcised and who isn't...
- **Why Should You Listen?**
 - Why do these verses matter to you?
 - Why did God see fit to instruct you on this?
 - Because:
- **The Bottom Line this Morning:**
 - [Are you a Child of God?](#)
 - [The root of the matter here today... and when Paul wrote this letter...](#)
 - [Consider if you are a child of God....](#)
 - [Is there anything more important to consider?](#)
- **So... We are going to consider 2 Main Points this morning from the text..**
 - 1) God is Concerned with the Heart of Man
 - 2) The Spirit of God Changes the Heart of Man
- **But... before we get there... we are going to deal with the technical things...**
 - We will do some explaining of terminology...
 - That way you will understand why Paul is using all of this....
 - We will consider:
 - 1) What is circumcision... and why is Paul talking about it...
 - 2) What does it mean to be a Jew, and why is Paul talking about that...
 - 3) What does it mean to keep the law (this will transition us)

❖ 1) What is Circumcision?

- Let's just get right to it...
- It took me a while to figure out what I would say to a room with a bunch of kids too
- **Physically...** Circumcision is a cutting off of some skin from a little boy's weenie
 - Is that ok? Is that fair?
 - It's in the Bible and the kids need to understand it and not be afraid of this stuff...
 - I know some of you are like.... Oh my goodness... lets move on...
 - So we will...
 - But that is what circumcision is...
- **Symbolically...** circumcision was something different...
 - There was a purpose in it... It was used as a sign when God started it with Abraham...
 - In Genesis 17 we see it in the Bible

- **Genesis 17:11 “And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you.”**
 - Here you see it is to be a sign or a symbol...
 - It was a reminder to the person that they were a follower of God...
- **We can also look at it Spiritually...**
 - The external circumcision was to signify the internal change of the person’s heart...
 - A part of the person’s body was taken off and something else made bare...
 - In the same way the heart of man should be laid bare...
 - the hardness of the heart should be removed...
 - There should be a cutting off of the old self... replaced by a new person
- **All in all...** in its origin it was a representation...a sign or symbol
 - That a person was a follower of God...
- **Baptism is a very close parallel...**
 - Some would say... Baptism is to be used in the exact same way...
 - Which is why many people baptize babies...
 - **But... Baptism is something we do... to show that we have been saved...**
 - At it’s core... it is a sign that we identify ourselves with Jesus...
 - We have died to our old self... our sins have been washed away...
 - We have now been raised up to walk with Jesus...
 - We are now altogether a different person...
 - It is also an external way of displaying what has happened within the man...
 - **All who have been saved by Jesus...**
 - ◆ Have been, as Jesus says... Born again...
 - ◆ They have been born of the Spirit as He tells nicodemus in John 3
 - ◆ They have been baptized with the Spirit of God
 - As John the Baptist said of Jesus.... And Jesus said of Himself...
- **So... that is probably the easiest way to understand the Purpose of Circumcision**
- **Now**, from God’s point of view... the outward sign was merely outward...
 - He was looking at the heart...
 - The circumcision was to be set as a reminder to the person...
 - That... Hey... I am a follower of God...
 - I am a sinner... and I need God...
 - **There we go... a brief definition... or description...**
- **Why is Paul going here? Why is he talking about the circumcised and incircumcised?**
 - **2 Reasons I think...**
 - If you remember Paul’s point throughout chapters 1-2
 - ◆ **1) It is to show everyone** that they are sinners and in need of God...
 - You would be surprised at how many people do not see that...
 - ◆ **2) Many Jewish People believed** their circumcision made them right with God
 - ◆ The rabbis taught this... the mere outward sign of circumcision
 - Was all a person needed to get into heaven...
 - That is it...
- **Ok... Moving on Now... But... Do you see what God is explaining to us?**
 - **Because all of this parallels us today...**
 - **Many in the Christian church today trust in their baptisms...**
 - **When their heart is far from God...**
 - **You can be baptized a million times and still split hell wide open when you die...**
 - **Here me on this... because this is the application...**

❖ **2) Who is a Jew and Why Does it Matter to You?**

- I am not going to spend a lot of time bogged down here...
- Only enough to show you why it is important...
- **So... Who is a Jew? This is not a cut and dry answer....**
 - First let me tell you why it matters to you...
 - Because you need to be a Jew...
 - ◆ What???? Really???? Yep... that is what Paul is saying...
- **The word Jew comes from the name Judah...**
 - It referred to people living in the Southern Kingdom of Israel....
 - Israel had split into two kingdoms... the northern kingdom...
 - And the southern kingdom...
 - The southern kingdom was known as the Judea Region...
 - Because the main tribe here was the tribe of Judah...
- **Anyway...** the name has morphed over the years to include other people...
 - It **references** all people who are children of Israel...
 - He was once called Jacob and he had 12 sons...
 - ◆ They essentially make up the 12 tribes of Israel...
 - ◆ So... All people of Israel were and are considered Jewish people...
 - **Also...** Many even refer to Abraham and Isaac who came before Jacob and his sons
 - They refer to them as Jewish people...
 - When in fact Abraham was from the land of the Chaldeans...
 - ◆ Modern day Iraq and Ancient Babylon...
- **Today, Judaism, in my understanding, refers to all the descendants of the Abraham...**
 - Through Isaac and Jacob... as Jews... on a National and religious level...
- **But...** Paul is going to use the term here in Romans in a deeper way...
 - He is going to use Jew to refer to children of the promises of God...
 - The promises that were made to Abraham
 - A Jew is someone in Paul's mind... who is a child of God
- **A True Jew is a child of God...**
 - So... why is this important to you....
 - Because... you want to be a child of God right?
 - So... you want to be a Jew in the sense the Paul is using it...
- **Paul is connecting the use of this term to:**
 - People who are given the promises of God and believe in them...
 - And He will liken them to Abraham...
- **Following me?**
 - A Jew... here in the context Paul is using... is someone who has inwardly...
 - Had a heart change by the Spirit of God...
 - And is therefore a Child of God...
- **And why is this important...**
 - Because you want to be a Child of God right?
 - You want to receive the promises of God for eternal life correct?
- **Again.... Why is Paul going here? Why is Paul distinguishing true Jews from fake Jews**
 - **1) Many believed because they were Jews... that they were right with God...**
 - All it took was to be born into the nation of Israel...
 - And you are a chosen person, end of story be who you want to be
 - **2) He trying to make sure that the person of Jewish descent...**
 - Saw His need of the gospel and repentance toward God...
 - He wants them to see... their heart had to be right with God...
 - That God is concerned with the inward parts of man, and not where He was born...
 - ◆ Cause that never made sense... and that was never true...

- **3) In both cases I think he is also trying to invoke jealousy...**
 - ◆ He wants these natural descendants of Abraham Isaac and Jacob...
 - To be jealous over gentiles being the people of God...
 - He says as much later in
 - **Romans 11:13** ¹³ Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry ¹⁴ in order somehow to make my fellow Jews jealous, and thus save some of them.

➢ **Application: You see why God is making this point to us today?**

- How many people in the Christian church...
- Place their eternal security in being called a Christian...
- Or maybe because they were born in a Christian church
- Or they have a Christian name...
- Or they go to a Christian church...
- Or they follow some Christian rules....
 - **The parallel to us today is staggering and we must study this...**
 - Because deep down behind all the terminology:
 - ◆ Are very important principles...
 - ◆ Principles that show us God's mind...
 - ◆ That show us God's thoughts toward us...

❖ **That didn't hurt too bad did it?**

- All that technical stuff and defining terms...
- Hopefully... it is rich and helps you understand this text...
- I think you need to understand those things to understand the text....

❖ **Look at the Text: Let's Run through it again... so we can see the main points**

➢ **Namely:**

- 1) God is Concerned With the Heart of Man
- 2) The Spirit of God Changes the Heart of Man

➢ **3) Keeping the Law**

➢ **Before we look at this...** Let's remember what Paul means by keeping the law...

- And what he means by breaking it...
- **Perfection is not in view here...**
 - I believe when He says.... Obey the law, or keep the law...
 - ◆ He is referring to habitually following God's commands...
 - ◆ Not perfectly... but that is their main habit...
 - ◆ **And it is not a weighing of the scales either...**
 - **Meaning... if I kept it more than I broke it... then I am a keeper of it...**
 - And breaking the law was someone who was habitually breaking God's commands...
 - ◆ That is how their life is defined...

➢ **Don't Miss the whole point of the book of Romans here...**

- Remember 2 weeks ago how we defined keeping the law...
- We studied verses 11-16...
 - ¹³ **For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified.**
- **Doer of the law parallels keeper of the law... same thing...**
 - **We said the doer of the law**
 - ◆ Loves God – loves the law – recognizes sin – hates his sin – confesses his sin – falls before the mercy of God
 - Or in summary

- ◆ 1) Loves God... 2) Depends on God to live the law
- ◆ 3) Trusts in God when they stumble
 - Faith is at the center of the man who is a doer of the law...
 - Just like Abraham's faith made him right with God
 - The whole point of Romans is that: Man is made right with God through Faith
 - **Back to the text**
- **25 For circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law, but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision.**
 - **Notice...** the covenant sign of being circumcised... only had value for those who followed the law...
 - **If you were a habitual law breaker...** there is no value in it...
- **26 So, if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?**
 - **Here... Paul is making the same argument... but in reverse...**
 - He says... those who do not have the covenant sign of circumcision
 - But keep the precepts of the law....
 - They would be considered as part of the covenant...
- **27 Then he who is physically uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the law.**
 - **Paul then... makes the point...**
 - Not that gentiles will be given a seat of judgment over natural born Jewish people
 - ◆ But... their action of keeping the law... will stand in judgment...
 - ◆ Because... even without the written law... and without the sign of the covenant
 - Circumcision.... They kept the law....
- **28 For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical.**
 - **Paul is making the point...**
 - Being a Jew... or Chosen Child of God... is not an outward thing...
 - It is not physical... rather...
- **29 But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God.**
 - Again... Paul says... It is an inward change that makes a person a Jew...
 - Or a chosen Child of God...
 - It is done by the Spirit of God... not by the letter of the law...
 - **The person who is changed from within...**
 - Does not need man to affirm him... doesn't need other men to say... you are a Jew
 - God has placed His Spirit within the man... it is with God's praise He is concerned
 - **He does not need others to praise His outward physical characteristics...**
 - Of being a Jew...

Now... let's look at the two main points Paul is making to us today: (Needed to get the technical stuff out the way first.... Wasn't sure you would stay with me if I reversed the order)

- ❖ **1) God is Concerned With the Heart of Man**
 - **29 But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart**
 - **This is the principle in play when God chooses David over Saul**
 - **1 Samuel 16:7 The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.**
 - God looks in your inward parts... He knows us deep down
 - **Psalm 51:6 Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being,**

- There is a connection between the Heart being right before God and Faith...
- **Faith in God is the matter of the Heart...**
 - Faith in God... true Faith in God means the Heart is right before God
 - Romans 4:16 That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham,
 - **And notice: Oh please notice... the faith is not of self...**
 - **Rather it is of Grace... It is of Grace.... It rests on the grace of God**
- **Abraham is the great Example:**
 - We know the story of Abraham....
 - He believed in the promises of God...
 - God told him to follow Him... and Abraham did...
 - God promised to him a child in his old age... and Abraham believed God...
 - ◆ Because Abraham believed God...
 - It was counted to him as righteousness...
 - His heart was right before God...
 - Romans 4:9-12 For we say that faith was counted to Abraham as righteousness. ¹⁰ How then was it counted to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised. ¹¹ He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the father of all who believe without being circumcised, so that righteousness would be counted to them as well, ¹² and to make him the father of the circumcised who are not merely circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.
 - **Notice** in these verses that Abraham is the example for both types of people
 - ◆ Those who followed the covenant sign of circumcision
 - ◆ And those who did not...
 - **Why?** Because He believes and has faith and is right with God...
 - ◆ Before He is circumcised...
 - ◆ And it is the same after He is circumcised...
 - **Abraham** is meant to stand as an example to the rest of mankind...
 - ◆ That the sign is merely a sign... that is it...
 - ◆ It is the matter of Faith that is important...
 - **This Faith gives to Abraham a righteousness from God...**
- **Notice our call to Faith... it is the same as Abraham's**
 - **We too are faced with the opportunity to place the faith of our heart in God....**
 - Right there at the end of ch 4. Paul explains how we too can be right with God
 - Romans 4:23-25 ²³ But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone, ²⁴ but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, ²⁵ who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.
 - Look... We can have righteousness credited to our account... by faith...
 - **Faith in what?**
 - ◆ Faith in believing in him who raised Jesus from the dead
 - ◆ Faith in believing Jesus was delivered up for our trespasses
 - ◆ Faith in believing Jesus was raised up for our justification
- **So... God is fulfilling a promise by doing this... a prophecy...**
 - In deuteronomy 30... Moses is reaffirming the covenant b/w God and Israel...
 - And he pretty much tells them that that will sin and go away from God

- And God will discipline them by scattering them throughout other nations
- But He promises to bring them back... and when He brings them back...
- **This is how Moses says He will do it...**
 - ◆ Deut 30:6 ⁶ And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.
 - God will fix their hearts... so that they will love God...

➤ Now... Here is the transition... How does God fix the hearts...

- Well... we have already said it is by Faith... but how?
- **Let's Go to Ezekiel... and then we will look at our last point...**
- Ezekiel 36:25-27 ²⁵ I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. ²⁶ And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.
- It is the Spirit of God that changes the hearts of man...

❖ 2) The Spirit of God Changes the Heart of Man

- ²⁹ But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit
- **The Spirit of God is the agent of heart change...**
 - Without the Spirit of God moving... their would be no Faith...
 - There would be no change of heart...
- **Jesus teaches this plainly in John 3 to Nicodemus..**
 - John 3:1-8 Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. ² This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him." ³ Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." ⁴ Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" ⁵ Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' ⁸ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."
 - Expound on this mystery....
- **God takes His Word... and namely the Gospel...**
 - And it is by the Spirit of God that He moves in a person's heart...
 - And there is no turning to God except by the Spirit of God...
 - And therefore... we have no room to boast in our right standing before God
 - Because the Holy Spirit of God has done the Work....
- John 6:63 ⁶³ It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

❖ Invitation:

- Finally: Seek the Praise of God and not Man
 - **His praise is not from man but from God.**