



Sermon Growth Guide

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Broken Witness | Romans 2:12-24

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Key Verse: “You who boast in the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law? (Romans 2:23)

Big Idea: Big Idea: The Christian Jews and Christian Gentiles were all on the same playing field. Believing in one’s superiority damages the witness of those who follow Jesus.

Foundations

Have you ever attended a church with members who taught Bible stories in the nursery and members who weren’t sure if it was David or Moses who killed Goliath? The Roman church was similar. It was comprised of Christians with vastly different histories wanting to follow Jesus.

In 2:12-17, Paul addresses both the Jewish Christians and the Gentile Christians. His goal is clear. Regardless of your history, we are all on the same playing field. If you are a Jewish Christian, God has given you the Law of Mount Sinai. If you are a Gentile Christian, God has written on your hearts the requirements of the law. Whether by the Law of Moses or the “unwritten law” acknowledged by the Greeks, Paul establishes that both the Jew and the Greek are unable to keep the law and therefore need the righteousness of God found in the gospel of Jesus.

Paul hones in on the Jewish Christians in verses 18-24. The Jews are the chosen people, they were given the Law, they were called into a special relationship with God. Paul’s description of the Jews as “a guide for the blind, a light for those in darkness, an instructor of the foolish” was a common belief among the Jews. In Genesis 12:2-3, God makes it clear that they are blessed to be a blessing. They saw themselves as salt in a rotting culture. How Paul’s words must have stung when he asks, “You who boast in the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law?”

Understanding God’s Word

Read through the passage aloud and exchange the word Jew for Christian in verse 2:17. Can you see how Paul’s accusations to the Jews in his time might apply to those of us who claim to be Christians in our time? Where in this passage do you see God’s grace? On what basis might we be a light to the world?

Applying God’s Word

We have been blessed by incredible access to God’s Word. Where might we be guilty of partaking of this blessing but ignoring the very things we are taught. Do we take God’s commands lightly because we are “saved”? Do we gossip? Sow discord? Ignore the Sabbath? Indulge in things that take our minds away from what is holy? Forget to give thanks? Covet the freedoms of others? And then, return to our Bible studies, morning devotions, Life Groups without conviction or repentance? We are called to be obedient followers of Jesus equipped by the Holy Spirit. How can we become more faithful followers?

Witnessing God’s Word

Has your heart ever been broken by a well-known Christian who is caught cheating, or lying, or stealing. The tabloids and respectable news sources are quick to seize on such stories as if to mock our faith and thereby mock our God. It’s easy to think of them and feel smug. Yet, how is your witness in the world? How are you the fragrance of Christ? How are you salt and light in a broken world?