


A Faith to Share  
No One is Good

2022.1.9



# TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS

A publication of  the adult discipleship ministry of **Triangle Community Church**.

**Talk** together about the glory of God's kingdom. —Psalm 145:11  
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —Joshua 22:5

## Questions for Reflection or Discussion

- Read Romans 2:12-29. What are the two broad categories everyone on earth fits into (v. 12)? Into which category do you fit? How do you know that?

According to v. 12, both groups have something in common. What is it?

- According to v. 15b, our conscience/thoughts accuse us sometimes and defend us at other times. That means that some of our thoughts/actions are sinful while others may not be. So, does God “grade on a curve”—if your good deeds outweigh your bad, you go to heaven?

What does James 2:10 have to say about that?

- God will judge our “secrets” (v. 16)—**how** does he do that? What do the following verses tell us?  
Psalm 139:1-3      Luke 8:18      Hebrews 4:12
- Jews had the Law, but didn't obey it. Gentiles didn't have it, but still disobeyed their conscience. What's worse: knowingly disobeying God or to ignorantly disobeying him? See Luke 12:47–48.
- Claiming to know and follow God (as the Jews were doing), yet disobeying him dishonors God (v. 23), and gives non-believers (“Gentiles”, “the uncircumcised”) occasion to blaspheme God (v. 24). According to Titus 2:7-8, what **should** we who claim to know God be doing?
- What dishonors God more: a person wearing a cross as he sins, or one without a cross sinning? Why do you think that? What do you think we can and should do about it?

### Talking To God About This Week's Message

*“Heavenly Father, today I want to be a ‘doer’ of the Word, and not just a ‘hearer’. Amen.”*

### Talking To Others About This Week's Message

If a neighbor or friend at work asks you, “*What kind of stuff do they talk about at your church?*”, how would you summarize the most important elements of this week's sermon and the key lessons you intend to apply to your life? Can you explain it in **plain language** anyone could understand?

## Sermon Summary (Key Text: Romans 2:12-29)

Everybody has beliefs. For example, most people believe that humans have rights, and that those rights should not be violated. Now, I happen to hold that belief too, but it's only a belief—you cannot prove it scientifically. But many people object when religious beliefs are shared. Why is it that “secular beliefs” get a pass, while religious belief is singled out for censure? That's not fair. So, in a pluralistic culture like ours, how can we be open and honest about what we believe, while being respectful to those who disagree with us? How can we keep from shouting at one another? We can keep conversations civil by asking questions such as: “Where do your moral convictions about right and wrong come from? What do you base them on? How do you determine what is right and wrong?” These questions slow everyone down and cause us to think rather than argue. In Romans 2, Paul gives **the most ingenious and creative answers** to these sorts of questions!

**I. No one can succeed in being a relativist.** (v. 12-16) Paul noted that some people have the Scriptures, while others do not. On what basis will those without the Scriptures be judged? Paul says that they will be judged according to the moral standards they have within them. Well, that sounds fair enough. But in fact, no one will be able to pass that standard on Judgment day. We all violate our own standards. God doesn't judge us according to a standard we don't have, but against one we do: our conscience. Nobody truly is a relativist. No one thinks literally anything goes. No one thinks it's OK to torture people just for fun. No one thinks that betrayal of those you love is a virtue. No matter how hard a person may try to convince himself that objective moral laws don't exist, our conscience tells us otherwise. No one succeeds in being a relativist. It just doesn't work.

**II. You can't succeed in being a moralist either.** (v. 17-24) Next, Paul addresses those who do have the Law of God, who try to live according to its precepts and to serve as a moral guide to others. Moralists are as guilty as their lawless counterparts because both break the moral code which they embrace. Moralists are condemned both as hypocrites and as idolaters. Hypocrites, because Jesus said that the heart attitude is sin, even if one doesn't act upon it (Matthew 5:27–28). Idolaters, because moralists are greedy, which is idolatry (Colossians 3:5). So to the relativist Paul says, “Even though you don't have the benefit of the Scriptures, you will stand guilty before God on Judgment Day because you violate your own moral standards.” and to the moralist he says, “While it is true that you have the Scriptures, you have no reason to be smugly self-righteous. The very things you tell others they should not do, based upon God's revealed moral law, you do yourself. You too will be declared guilty on Judgment Day!” So, what hope do we have?

**III. Therefore, our only hope is a transformed heart!** (v. 25-29) A very strange discussion concerning the Jewish rite of circumcision clarifies our only source of hope. Salvation has always been by faith in God; never as a result of keeping the Law. Law-keeping is an instrument of sanctification, not of salvation. But over time the Jews came to misunderstand the purpose of God's law. They began to see it as a means of salvation. Their reliance wasn't on God's grace, but on their ability to keep the law. We do that too: “I have a relationship with God because I read my Bible, because I try to treat others the way I want to be treated... I, I, I, I...” But James 2:10 teaches that if we keep all of God's Law except for one part, we're a law-breaker. So we're all in big trouble. God's law shows us our need for a savior (Galatians 3:24).

Our neighbors desperately need to hear about Jesus. It's important that we be able to be open and honest about our faith. But we live in a pluralistic culture that wants to ban religion, especially Christianity, from the public square. So, how do we have discussions about faith and morality without it devolving into an argument? Rather than argue, I am suggesting that you ask questions that will open up a dialog. Ask: “That's an interesting perspective. Why do you believe that? What has led you to that conclusion? What evidence would you point to for that conclusion?” And you listen patiently. At some point you might ask, “Well have you thought about this or that?” We are neither relativists nor moralists. We're not relativists because we know that God's moral law is important (so important that Jesus had to die on the cross!). Neither are we moralists: our reliance isn't on the law, but on Jesus. We obey the law out of gratitude. We have nothing to boast about, but our desire is for our friends to discover the same salvation we have. Our heart's prayer is, “God, allow me to sow a seed of faith in their lives.” That's who we are—seed sowers!

## Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

**Monday**—Read Romans 2:12-16.

- Do you know what is the “Law” to which Paul refers? Read Exodus 20:1-20.
- The Gentiles didn’t have the Ten Commandments, but what did they have? Read Romans 1:19-20.
- If you own a Bible, you qualify as having “sinned under the Law”. By what will you be judged?
- “Doers” of the Law will be OK—but how much of the Law must be kept? Read James 2:10.
- What role does your conscience play (v. 14-15)?
- How will God judge your “secrets”? See Psalm 139:1-3, Luke 8:18, and Hebrews 4:12.

**Tuesday**—Read Romans 2:17-23.

- Read Micah 3:11-12, Matthew 3:7–9, and John 8:31–34 to see how the Jews abused their favored position as the people of God.
- How are v. 19-20 an example of “Do as I say, not as I do”?
- Read v. 21-23. What’s **worse**: to knowingly disobey or to ignorantly disobey? See Luke 12:47–48.

**Wednesday**—Read Romans 2:23-24.

- How do you think God feels about his name being blasphemed because of his children’s actions?
- Claiming to know and follow God, yet disobeying him, dishonors God (v. 23) and gives non-believers occasion to blaspheme God (v. 24). Read Titus 2:7-8 to see what we should be doing.
- Read Ezekiel 20 to see how God feels about his name being profaned. (“Profaned” occurs 8 times.)

**Thursday**—Read Romans 2:25-29.

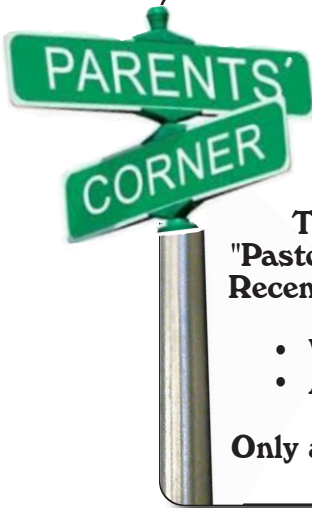
- What dishonors God more: a person wearing a cross as he sins, or one without a cross sinning?
- Read Genesis 17:11. What was circumcision supposed to say about a person?
- Circumcision was an **outward** sign that a person claimed to be in covenant relationship with God.
- But **to what** is outward circumcision **supposed to point**? What do these verses say?
  - Jeremiah 4:4
  - Jeremiah 9:25–26
  - Ezekiel 44:7 & 9

**Friday**—Let’s explore **heart** circumcision:

- Read Leviticus 26:41. “Heart circumcision” leads to a “heart that becomes \_\_\_\_\_ so that a person makes \_\_\_\_\_ for their iniquity.” Are you doing that?
- Read Deuteronomy 10:16. A person who circumcises his heart \_\_\_\_\_ his neck no longer. Are you doing that?
- Read Deuteronomy 30:6. When God circumcises a person’s heart, they “\_\_\_\_\_ Yahweh with all their heart and all their soul.” Are you doing that?

**Saturday**—Are your **ears** uncircumcised?

- That’s how Stephen described those who killed Jesus and him (see Acts 7:51)!
- Read Acts 6:7—7:60. List all of the things we must avoid in order to not be like them.



Our children and students are being bombarded daily with moral relativism—in the classroom, in social media, and in entertainment.

Think of a recent example of Romans 2:15 from your own life—a time when "God's law, written on your heart, accused you that you were doing wrong."

Then, tonight, at the dinner table, share your story, beginning with these words: "Pastor Doug said that we all know, deep in our hearts, what's right and wrong. Recently I..." (Then, screw up your courage, and tell your own "sin story".)

- When you're done, be quiet and wait for their responses and questions.
- Answer them as honestly as you can—without any defensiveness.

Only after they've explored your story, then ask if they've had a similar experience.

## Two New **PointMan** OPPORTUNITIES

### 1 GENESIS—THE BOOK OF BEGINNINGS:

You want to know the Bible better.  
You want encouraging friendships.  
You want to be stronger in your faith.



2



### Men Moving Mountains

"I tell you the truth, you can say to this mountain,  
'May you be lifted up and thrown into the sea,'  
and it will happen."

—Jesus

- Guided prayer using the Psalms
- Tuesdays, over your lunch hour
- Connect virtually or in-person
- Drop in for as long as you're able
- E-mail Pastor Dan to connect  
Dan.Clement.TCC@gmail.com