

Are Yew a' Practicin' What Yore a' Preachin'?

Romans 2:17-24

Sermon-in-a-Sentence: It's not the professors nor the possessors nor even the proclaimers but rather the practitioners of God's Word who are justified in His sight.

Paul was writing to the Jews but what he wrote applies to us today. He wrote about: 1) their Relationship to God; 2) their Reliance on God's Word; and 3) their Reputation in the community, all of which applies to us. If we're not "practicing what we're preaching", all of these blessings and privileges we claim for ourselves are of no help to us.

Does the testimony of your life match and give credibility to the witness of your lips?

I'd Rather See A Sermon

Edgar A. Guest

I'd rather see a sermon
than hear one any day;
I'd rather one should walk with me
than merely tell the way.
The eye's a better pupil
and more willing than the ear,
Fine counsel is confusing,
but example's always clear;
And the best of all preachers
are the men who live their creeds,
For to see good put in action
is what everybody needs.

I soon can learn to do it
if you'll let me see it done;
I can watch your hands in action,
but your tongue too fast may run.
And the lecture you deliver
may be very wise and true,
But I'd rather get my lessons
by observing what you do;
For I might misunderstand you
and the high advice you give,
But there's no misunderstanding
how you act and how you live.

- Ezra 7:9-10 – "The good hand of his God was upon him [Ezra was experiencing God's blessing and favor on his life and ministry. Why?] For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel." [Because he was practicing what he was preaching. His lifestyle matched his message.]
- The difference between *hypocrisy* and *integrity* is *practice*.

17 Now you, if you call yourself a Jew...

- The Jews boasted of their relationship with God.
- The word "Jew" literally means "praise". (*F.F. Bruce, Romans, p. 98*)
- The Jews of Paul's day believed they were worthy of praise because they were called Jews. If you were a Jew, you were automatically the recipient of God's blessing of salvation.
- A lot of people today believe they are saved by calling themselves Christians. But the name does not necessarily equal the reality!

...if you rely on the law...

- The Jews boasted of the fact that they were the recipients of God's law.

- They thought that the mere possession of the law exempted them from God's judgment.
- They believed that they were surely saved and in right relationship with God because He had given them His law. (cf. John 5:39)
 - Not that the Scriptures told them *the way* to eternal life, but that *they were automatically saved* because God had chosen to give the Scriptures to them.
 - "We do not earn [eternal] life by [possessing or] studying the Scriptures, nor do we gain great spiritual merit by possessing a certain Bible. But by studying the Scriptures we can meet the source of life: Jesus Christ the Son of God." (*Life Application Bible Commentary*)

...and brag about your relationship to God; 18 if you know his will and approve of what is superior because you are instructed by the law...

- Knowledge of God and His Word does not automatically equal salvation!
- "There are those who are attached to form, ceremony, liturgy, religious precepts and practices, and all the attitudes that go with such attachment, and who are yet alien to the grace of God. They have ritual without redemption, works without worship, form of service without the fear of God in its proper sense, and thus they come under the condemnation of God." (*Donald Grey Barnhouse quoted by Swindoll, Insights on Romans, p. 58*)

19 if you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light for those who are in the dark, 20 an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of infants, because you have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth—

- All kinds of good works, religious works, do not automatically make you a Christian.
- Associating with a church on a regular basis does not make you a Christian.
- Good works are important in the Christian life, not because they *earn* us salvation but because they are the *evidence* of our salvation.
- The reality is not what you *say* with your *lips*—it's what you *do* with your *life*.

21 you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal? 22 You who say that people should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? 23 You who brag about the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law? 24 As it is written: "God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."

- The possession of God's Word, even the proclamation of God's Word, does not automatically guarantee that we have appropriated the truths of God's Word for ourselves.
- It is the practice of God's Word that demonstrates that we have truly appropriated it.
- "The profession of religion, even though it be divinely revealed religion, is not enough if the one who professes the religion is not in some sense transformed by it... Behaving correctly on the outside will do nothing to cleanse on the inside. That's the definition of religion, after all; doing external things to make the inner person worthy of salvation. Invariably, this disparity between inner and outer righteousness inevitably leads to hypocrisy." (*Swindoll, Insights, pp. 59, 61*)
- cf. Luke 6:46-49.