

***A Walk Down the Roman Road***  
***The Universal Solution to a Universal Problem***  
***Romans 2:17-29; 3:23-36***

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**Series Introduction:** The phrase, “The Roman Road,” has been used in various ways as a gospel presentation in helping someone to see what Jesus has done for them. The Roman road usually refers to Romans 3:23, 6:23, 5:6-8, and 10:9-10. These Scriptures tell us that (1) all of us are sinners, (2) only Jesus by His death on the cross can remove that sin, and (3) what we must do in order to receive Jesus’ forgiveness. For the next four Sundays, let’s take our own walk down the Roman Road to discover and/or re-examine a relationship with Christ. We begin with understanding that **Jesus is the universal solution to a universal problem.**

**Text:** <sup>17</sup> Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God, <sup>18</sup> and know *His* will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, <sup>19</sup> and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, <sup>20</sup> an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law. <sup>21</sup> You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? <sup>22</sup> You who say, “Do not commit adultery,” do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? <sup>23</sup> You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law? <sup>24</sup> For “*the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,*” as it is written.

<sup>25</sup> For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. <sup>26</sup> Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision? <sup>27</sup> And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, judge you who, *even with your written code and circumcision, are* a transgressor of the law? <sup>28</sup> For he is not a Jew who *is one* outwardly, nor *is* circumcision that which *is* outward in the flesh; <sup>29</sup> but *he is* a Jew who *is one* inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise *is* not from men but from God.

<sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup> whom God set forth *as* a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, <sup>26</sup> to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

**Introduction:** Romans is not always an easy book to understand. My friend and cartoonist, Joe McKeever, captured the difficulty of Romans this way. (Slide of Cartoon)

With this difficulty in mind, I would like to point to a verse that helps us to clarify the message of Romans.

**The Key to Unlocking the Mysteries of Romans:**

*Romans 11:32—“For God has committed them all to disobedience so that He might have mercy on all.”*

- *Key Position of this verse:* This verse helps us to unlock the mysteries of Romans because of its key positioning—chapter 11. The book of Romans is divided into a theological section (1-11) and a practical section (12-16). This division is clearly marked by the transitional word “therefore” that begins chapter 12. Because of this key positioning, we could say that 11:32 is the summation of the theological section.
- *Key Proclamation of this verse:* The verse seems to make a key proclamation.

***You cannot trust in anything or anyone else, except Jesus for your salvation and eternity.***

Here is the message of the entire book. First, everybody is a sinner in need of a Savior. No matter what your family heritage is, no matter how good you are, no matter what church you belong to or that your family belongs to, no matter who your grandmother was, etc. Everybody is in need of a Savior. The second part of that message is that Jesus is the only one who can save you for eternal life. But, folks in Paul’s day didn’t always grasp that message. Likewise, people still try to gain their salvation today through means other than Jesus. In fact, many would say that it is arrogant and exclusive to claim that Jesus is the only way. So, we must learn this lesson again. Here’s a message that is good affirmation for the believer as well as a confrontation for the unbeliever.

***Don’t trust in a label for salvation.***

*Romans 2:17-24*

That’s what many people try to do today. What are our labels? Family. Church affiliation. Church denomination. Even, nationality, sometimes. Lack of another label sometimes gives us our label—I’m not Jewish or Buddhist, or Muslim—so I must be a Christian. Being a Christian is not a label—being a Christian is a relationship and a decision, so much more than just a label.

**The Indictment:** Here’s Paul’s indictment to the Romans. They called themselves Jews, but they were far from authentic followers after God. They were not who they said they were. That is true of many who call themselves Christians. They distinguished themselves from the Gentiles, who they considered to be depraved, but Paul indicted them with the confrontational news that they were no better off than unbelieving Gentiles if the title Jew was just a title.

The Inconsistencies: Next, Paul underscored the inconsistencies with being a Jew in name only.

1. There was the danger of the failure to live according to the profession.
2. There was the danger of being responsible for unbelievers being misled and confused by inconsistent behavior
3. There was the danger of God's name being despised because of their inconsistencies.

How the same is true today! You call yourself a Christian—are you? Is it a name? Or, is it that you really choose to follow Christ. There is a difference. There is not going to be one person in Heaven because he or she was a Baptist. There is not going to be one person in Heaven because he or she was a member of First Baptist Church. You are going to be in Heaven one day because you believed in Christ for your salvation.

***Don't trust in a symbol for salvation.***

*Romans 2:25-29*

In verse 25, Paul moved from the attachment of a name to an attachment with a symbol. For Jews, the symbol was circumcision. God had given the symbol to Abraham as a sign of a covenant. Over time, Jews began to trust more in the sign than the covenant. That is evident in Romans 2. Many today trust in a symbol. What's our symbols? Baptism. Communion, church membership, walking the aisle. All symbols. Are they good? Yes, but we must understand several things about these symbols.

The Problem with a Symbol—Some begin to trust in the symbol rather than what the symbol represents. Most married people wear a symbol of their commitment—the wedding band. However, it is easy enough to see that wearing a wedding band does not mean one is faithful to his spouse—it's just a symbol.

The Purpose of a Symbol—The purpose of a symbol is to show what God has already done. Baptism is a good example of that. But the symbol is of no value if the person has not committed himself to the relationship with Christ.

The Limited Potential of a Symbol—The symbol has no power to change us—no power to save us. There is another symbol that many of you perhaps have. It's the symbol of an old high school or college letter jacket. Just because you put that letter jacket on, you do not suddenly become 16 years old again.

***Don't try to do what only God can do.***

Here's the point of Romans. Don't try to save yourself. Chapter 1 in Romans deals with those who have been obvious sinners. Chapter 2 of Romans deals with those who have

not been as obvious to be sinners. The point is clear. It does not matter if you are good or bad, religious or irreligious, you are still apart from God without faith in Christ.

I like the example that I have used before of the person trying to swim from the coast of California to Hawaii. You have no chance. Whether you or a non-swimmer, a good recreational swimmer, or an Olympic swimmer, you have no chance. You need a Savior.