



Christian Life Fellowship

Becoming fully devoted followers of Christ



Head Knowledge VS Heart Knowledge

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Introduction:

Romans 2:12-28

I hope you have been working on repentance and issues of sin in your personal life and using the mercy of God toward you to bring you closer to Him and preparing for the Day of Judgment. This morning we continue in the second chapter of Romans looking at the law. We are challenged today to look at the law, the implications of living what it says and how that translates our love to God. Keeping and observing the law is a demonstration of our respect for authority and understanding of the protection the law provides. The law was not given to restrict.

John 14:15- If ye love me, keep my commandments. The motivation to please me and obey me and observe and live by the law or boundaries I have set up for you is love. You cannot keep a law just because it is the law. There has to be motivation and understanding for you to submit yourself and observe that law.

I. Loving God goes beyond knowledge.

Jesus said it well: we demonstrate our love for Him by submitting to the commandments He has given. Love God and love one another. The Ten Commandments or law that we read in the Old Testament is summed up in these two directives. If we love God we are going to worship Him alone. If we love God we are not going to covet things that belong to other people. If we love God we are going to honor our parents. If we love one another we will not commit adultery. If we love one another we will not kill, we will not take something that belongs to others and we will not lie or be deceitful.

The answer for the problems in society can be summed up in Jesus' words. LOVE GOD and LOVE ONE ANOTHER. If He did that, things would be

quite different. The law is there to set boundaries; the law is there to teach us what is right and wrong.

Galatians 3:24-25- Let me put it another way. The law was our guardian and teacher to lead us until Christ came. So now, through faith in Christ, we are made right with God. But now that faith in Christ has come, we no longer need the law as our guardian.

Paul wants to make it clear to the Jewish believers that just knowing the the law doesn't make them holy or better than anyone else. The law or covenant was of no value to them unless they lived by it. Each of us will be held accountable not for what we know, but how we act on the knowledge we have. We have to allow what we know to impact our lives and how we act and re-pond. Those who know God's written Word and law will be judged by them.

Listen, just because I know the judge personally doesn't mean that I can violate the law which He must enforce. Paul says very clearly that you may want to be a guide for those who are lost, and you may think you can instruct the ignorant and teach people the ways of God. That is all well and good, but if you are going to teach the law, then you have to live by the law yourself and be an example to others. Paul uses some examples here. If you tell others not to steal, do you do that yourself? If you tell others not to commit adultery, do you practice that? If you condemn idolatry, do you worship money, possessions or careers? Practice what you preach. You know the law but dishonor God by breaking it.

Parents – this is critical when it comes to your children – set the example. We tell them not to use drugs, that alcohol is a drug and they shouldn't use it. But when they go to school on Monday and the trash is out by the curb, what do they see but beer bottles and liquor bottles? We tell our kids they can't look at pornography but then we watch some of the lewd suggestive programs on TV or on the internet. We are teaching by example and if we indulge, then they will take their cue from us and say it is OK.

In Paul's writings he says everything is permissible, everything is OK, even eating meat that has been offered to idols. But for the sake of the conscience of a brother or sister, I will set aside my liberty and not bring them to sin because they are weak and struggle. If our behavior does not line up with what we know, then we are no better off than unbelievers.

We should not expect people who are not followers of Christ to live in the same way as those who follow Christ. These Jewish believers knew the law and they knew that living a life that followed the law was a lifestyle of separation. They were to be clean in their relationships, with touching things that were dead, with cleaning food, eating certain meats and on and on.

God wants us to live a holy life. What does that mean? It means a life that pleases Him. It means a life that is separate from the way the world would choose to think and act.

Love not the world neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world the love of the

Father is not in Him. We are in the world, but not of it. It is our job to be so filled with the Holy Spirit that we influence the culture. The culture around us should not dictate their values, their ways, their belief systems to us; we should be influencing them by our lifestyle, speech and conduct. Paul goes on to point out that the Jewish people had outward action based on the law, not inward attitude from the heart. The very law they were proud of was the very instrument that condemned them.

II. Dealing with our heart.

Proverbs 4:23- Above all else, guard your heart, for it affects everything you do. The heart is the place where we rule or Christ rules. At the core of our heart is our true identity. The heart is the center of our emotions and feelings and responses to people and situations. Protect it from getting infected when wounded; protect it from straying from Christ. Understand that what is in our heart affects everything we do. If you want to know what is in someone's heart, listen to what they say. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

At the end of this 2nd chapter of Romans, Paul talks about circumcision. You must understand the significance of this rite to the Jewish people. Circumcision was the mark of the covenant between the people of Israel and God. It was established under Abraham. It reminded them of the fact that God had made a promise to them that He would send Messiah to be their deliverer and Messiah would come from a righteous branch and seed. Circumcision was the prerequisite for one to enjoy the privileges of the Passover. It was a seal of righteousness. Paul makes it clear that the only value of circumcision to the Jew was if he kept the law. According to Paul this rite or act meant nothing if they didn't keep the law.

Being confirmed, baptized, taking out church membership is not enough. These are all important steps in our faith journey, but without the relationship, without the heart change, we are like the circumcised Jew who did not keep the law. Circumcision of and in itself was not enough. God wants our heartfelt devotion and obedience.

Paul completes his thought here by clearly stating that a true Jew is one whose heart is right with God and obeys Him. A true Jew is one who had an in-

ward, spiritual experience in his heart, not just an outward operation. Membership in God's family is based on internal qualities not external markings or cuttings. Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart. Circumcision is a metaphor for holiness. **Deut. 30:6- "The LORD your God will cleanse your heart and the hearts of all your descendants so that you will love him with all your heart and soul, and so you may live!"**

When Paul speaks about the circumcision of the heart, he is talking about cutting off the old sin nature that dominates every single person. Without dealing with the old nature in such fashion, we cannot be holy people set apart to enter into a covenant relationship with God. Indications of a circumcised heart include obedience, righteous behavior, new thought patterns, Christ control not flesh control, purity, new desires in line with God's will and His word.

Conclusion:

The challenge today is to look at the law and our heart. We can have knowledge but unless we act on that knowledge from our heart, we are no better than the person who has no knowledge. The law will not save us; it will show us where we are weak and tempted and fail. The law will point out our inability in our own strength to always keep the law. If our hearts are truly changed, we will become the people God wants us to become...fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ within the context of the family of God.

I close with this story. When I was a student at ORU, we had a code of honor that we would sign each year. It basically said, "I will live a life that pleases God." I knew students who would balk at that every year. I told them, "If you are living a life to please God, you are already doing these things." They looked at that code of honor as the law, giving specifics of what they could and could not do. If they only realized that as followers of Christ they were already living the kind of life that a follower of Christ would live.

If you are following Christ, keep in step with Him. If you have strayed in your journey with Him, get back on the path. If you haven't started following Christ, this morning you can start that journey of faith.