



**Sermon Transcription • Romans 2:12-16 (NIV)**

**Round 2: More Bad News for Good People**

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**[Please Note: This transcript has been lightly edited for ease of reading. Also, some headings have been added in square brackets to aid the reader in locating portions of the sermon.]**

A friend of mine - she's an older friend - she went to the first *Star Wars* movie in about 1978. Do you remember 1978? Do you know *Star Wars*? Yes, I know *Star Wars* as well and it's about space ships. [Laughter] The *Star Wars* movie in 1978, you'll know the *Star Wars* franchised - the thing that you walk away with, the saying is, "May the force be with you." Right. They talk about the force at every turn, right. There's a good side of the force and there's a bad side of the force. The movie's about the force. If you walked out, somebody interviewed you, "What was the movie about?"

"It's about the force." Well my friend, she was at this movie with her husband, and she was watching this entire thing and listening to them talking about the force, the force, the force, the force, the force - right. At the end of the film there's this, this scene where a ship is coming out from the sky and it's landing on this new planet, and I'm sorry I'm not enough of a *Star Wars* geek to know the name of the planet, some of you will know that. That it's a wooded planet, okay there's all sorts of trees everywhere and it looks like it's landing in like one of the forests around Pemberton. You know just coming out of the sky and all you see is trees. And when she saw this, she leaned over to her husband and whispered in his ear, "Is that the forest?" [Laughter] May the forest be with you. Later on she said that when she saw it the second time it made way more sense, this film, right - when she understood that there wasn't actually a forest that we were looking forward to the entire time. Sometimes you don't get it the first time around, right.

When I was in seminary I had a class and the professor was talking. It was an hour and a half class and he started by giving this really kind of provocative idea theologically. And I remember being a little off put by it and listening, listening, listening. I went to a secular university right, so my graduate school, my graduate seminary education, I was kind of a newbie coming into that kind of setting. And so all the other guys in the class, a lot of them had gone to Bible college so they knew exactly what he was talking about and they were nodding approvingly. And I was sitting there going, "Huh? What are you...Huh?" And about an hour and a half into the class I raised my hand and said, "So you're saying..." and I repeated something that he said like an hour and a half earlier, and he said, "Well welcome to the class." And everyone laughed and turned and when "<smirking> You're so ..." And I went up afterwards and said, "Okay so explain this to me again." So he explained it a second time. Have you ever had an experience like that where you just needed a second go at it. Sometimes you need a third or a forth, or a fifth go to know it's not the forest, right.



I say that because this sermon's a lot like the last sermon. Romans 1 and 2 - Paul is actually trying to make a really clear argument, okay. And it's this: everybody, and by that he means, Jew and Gentile - he separates the world in those two categories. *Everybody* is without excuse when they stand before God for judgement. Gentiles are without excuse, Romans 1, because the way that God's revealed to them is the created order, they have rejected. They suppressed the truth in unrighteousness. They have responded to his revelation, his kindness, which is seen, and his character which is displayed in that revelation. They have responded to that by shoving him aside. Right, like they're rebelling against him and God in return hands them over to what they want. The world is in the state it's in because God has handed them over. So they are *without excuse*. That's the main idea. And then in Romans 2, Paul turns his attention toward the Jews, who were kind of unsuspecting when he does it. Cause they're applauding his, his decrying of Gentile sin, in Romans 1. They're plotting him when he says, that you know, these people are condemned. And Paul says to these Jews, "So are you guys. Because you respond to the revelation you have, right, the law that was given to Moses. You respond by rejecting it. They respond by rejecting their revelation, you respond by rejecting your revelation. You're condemned." That's his argument. You have a law and you're condemned because you don't keep it. Everyone is without excuse when they stand before God, for judgement.

### **[God Will Judge Us Based on What We Do]**

This passage, Romans 2:12-16 is kind of describing that judgement, a little bit more. Three things I want to point out about it. Number one - God will judge us based on what we do, that's the main idea. Second - God will judge us according to the law we have. And third - God will judge us for our secrets. He'll judge us based on what we do, according to the law we have, and for our secrets. So look that will kind of guide our time together. Here's the first of those. God will judge us based upon what we do. Look at Romans 2:12-13 with me,

"All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous."

So, just a second ago I said that Paul's main thrust up to this point has been both Jews and Gentiles alike are without excuse. Now you have to picture in your mind, say Paul's saying that in a room with a Jew and a Gentile. And they're nodding a long saying, "Okay I follow what your saying." But what they're thinking is that actually they do have an excuse when they stand before God for judgement. They're not expressing it, but they're thinking, "We have an excuse." In the Jews case, the Jew is saying, "Actually when I stand before God for judgement, what you don't know is that I have a get out of jail free card. God gave us the law, that is evidence that he likes us more. He didn't give the Babylonians the law did he? Didn't give the Romans the law did he? He gave the Jews the law. We are his chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation. God didn't need to select Abram out of all the people of the earth at that time, but he did, and he made a covenant with him, and so as a Jew, I have my Jewish identity card, and when God is asking me, 'Why should I let you into my eternal bliss?' I will slap that card down on the table, slide it across and say, 'You know why, cause I'm a Jew. Cause you made the covenant, that's why, because I'm in. So I don't know - let me in, just sign it off there,



because you know the deal”. So the Jew is saying, “I have an excuse because I have the law.” Gentile is sitting there saying, “No I have, I have an excuse as well. And my excuse is I *don’t* have the law. How can you hold me to an account that you didn’t give? There’s a standard that you’re holding me by that I was never made aware of? I mean come on.” If an American police officer came up to Canada and started to express American law over Canadians, how would you respond my Canadian friends? “Um, go home. You have no authority here, man, because the law that you’re appealing to isn’t our law. We don’t have that law. You can not use a standard and apply it to me if it was never applied to me.” Get it, so we have an excuse because we don’t have a law. Hmm? So in their minds, these two guys in the room are thinking, “Yes that’s really nice your argument Paul, but we both have an excuse.”

Now here’s what Paul’s going to do. He’s going to engage both of these guys okay? The first guy, and if you like Bible study this is for you just for a second, okay, you like how Paul structures his argument. What Paul’s going to do is going to say, “Okay here’s the deal. I want to first address those without the law.” Who are those - Jew or Gentile? Gentiles, yup, okay, and he’s going to address them in the passage we’re studying here. Romans 2:12-16, okay. But those with the law - who are those? The Jews - he’s going to address those in Romans 2:17-29. So he does what we call framing. He frames his argument here. Now if you’re like, “That’s really neat, thanks for sharing.” Here’s the point, okay here’s the point. Romans 12:13, it’s his overall point so if you miss anything - here’s his overall point. It’s not those who hear the law who are righteous in God’s sight, it’s those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. It does not matter what law you have, it’s whether you keep the law you have. Get it? You will be judged based on what you do.

I had a friend when I was in high school who’s getting his driver’s license. Do you remember the days when you got your driver’s license? Some of you are still planning on that. 16 years old in the United States, in the Seattle area where I lived, you got your full license at 16 years old, and so like 6 months prior you got your learners permit and then you could take the final test. My birthday’s late in the year, and so my friends would all get their driver’s licenses before I did. And the way it worked is you would be studying, you know we had a little book back there called the *Driver’s Guide*. Now they have an app for it. But, *Driver’s Guide*, and people would pour over the *Driver’s Guide* and they’d go take a written test and then they’d take the driving test. And there was also a day where they took it and then the next day - and all of us knew the day, your birthday, you go take your driver’s test and then the next morning you’d show up at the school with your minivan and we’d all go to Dairy Queen together right? My friend had a birthday, it was like, “Sweet, I’m bringing my money, cause we’re going to Dairy Queen.” In your new car with the minivan, it’s going to be great. So this happens throughout the entire year. I had a friend who ... everyone’s studying for this ... but I had a friend who did not study at all. And we would all sit there with our little books open from time to time that he would have no book and he’d just be looking off into the distance or doing something else - talking about something else. And finally I asked him, “Why is it that you’re not taking, why is that you don’t have the book, why aren’t you studying?” He said, “My dad is working at the Department of Motor Vehicles, and he’s the test guy.”

“So your dad works at the DMV?” Right, must be an exciting guy. [Laughter] Anyway, so I said, “Really?”



“Yeah, so I don’t know, it’s not going to be a big deal.”

“Okay.” So this guy’s birthday comes up, and the next morning, I remember, showing up the next day at school, I had like my \$10 in my pocket, right, for Dairy Queen. Came to him and said, “Are we going to lunch today? Did you bring your mom’s minivan?” Like where’s it? And he said, “Ah no.”

“Did you drive?”

“No I didn’t drive today?”

“You got your license and you didn’t even drive?” He said, “Well I didn’t get my license.”

“What? Your dad didn’t give you your license?” He said, “Yeah, I failed the test.”

“You dad failed you?” He said, “Yeah dude, when I got in the car, he was a totally different person.”

[Laughter] Right, you thought you were going to pull out the card, “Hey your my dad so just don’t worry about what I do.” No it matters what you do. See driver’s licensing is not that complicated, it’s not based upon whether or not your my kid. It’s not based upon what kind of background you have, it’s based purely upon: can you do the work? Can you fulfill the law? Can you fulfill the requirements over you? *That* is Paul’s point. Doesn’t matter what your excuse is, you have to do the law you have. Now listen all the Gentiles are sitting in the room saying, “Yeah but we don’t have a law.” Right, like we don’t have one so you can’t hold us to account. Ready? Here’s what Paul says in response.

### **[God Will Judge Us Based on the Law We Have]**

Here’s point two. First one, God will judge us based upon what we do. Second, God will judge us according to the law we have. Romans 2:14-15,

“Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them.”

So what’s his answer to the Gentile, you know, objection. Gentile’s saying, “We don’t have a law.” And Paul’s like, “Oh yeah you do.”

“Oh where is it?”

“On your heart, boy.” God wrote on the heart of human beings as part of the image of God that’s in them, a moral code. And in this passage, actually he points out three really important things about the conscience that I want to point out to you, okay. Here’s the first of those. Everyone has one. Everybody has a conscience.

I was watching a movie on Netflix the other day, called, *First Contact*. It’s not the *Star Trek* version. It’s actually, Netflix *First Contact* is actually about these people in the Amazon jungle, near Brazil, who have lived isolated from all other contact with everybody else on the planet until the last couple of years. The law in Brazil is, that you can not, if you know that they’re there. Cause sometimes they fly those helicopters over the top of the Amazon Jungle and they look down and they see their huts and stuff. You can not, according to the law in Brazil, go in there and find them and say, “Hey, how’s it going? I’m Jeff.” You cannot make contact. You cannot make first contact. *They* have to choose to come out to you. So the story, this story is about a tribe that has decided to come out and has already



made some kind of preliminary steps that way by standing across the river and looking at some hunters and others who are in that region. And so words gotten back to the government, and the government sends an anthropologist and his team up the river - eight days trip up the river - and they stand on the other side of the water waiting for these guys to come out. And they come. There's a few of them and they start coming across the river and they kind of meet halfway, and everyone's tense, right, because you don't know, "Are they trying to kill us? Or are we trying to kill them?" Like, a lot of people die in these first contact sort of scenes. Well they live and they start to realize, these anthropologists ... the story of the film, of the documentary is them going into these people's tribe and start finding out how it is that they live. Now these people have been a part from everyone else on the entire planet, they've never read the Bible, they'd not the Koran, the book of Mormon, they've got nothing, no religious background of the religions that you and I would think. They are completely isolated from everybody else. And when they go in there, the first thing that they notice is that these people have a moral code. And it's a familiar moral code. Like they wear some clothing on certain parts of their body, not all of it, but certain parts of their body. So the question some of the anthropologist's have is, "Why are you wearing clothing at all." Like it would seem ... like why are you wearing clothing. And the answer that they give is that it's shameful to be naked. That sounds like the Bible. They find out that one of the men in the tribe, he had a wife and his wife cheated on him with another man. And so the tribe kicked them out, and the question was, "Well, why did you guys kick them out of the tribe? And what was forcing you to do that?" "Well it's obviously wrong for you to cheat on your spouse with another. So we punish them because them that is immoral," says this tribe who's never been touched by anything. Where did they get that? Well the requirements of the law are written on their hearts. Their consciences bear witness.

Everyone has a conscience. Even today, let me try to argue it this way, or try to press this in a little bit more okay. Let me ask you a question. It's sort of a thinking man's question okay. So here you go. Why don't Darwinian Naturalists follow their philosophy to it's necessary conclusions. Now some of you are like, "What?!" Okay, why don't Darwinian Naturalists follow their world view to its necessary conclusions. What I mean by Darwinian Naturalists, is the belief that you and I evolved from Amoebas, that there is this spark in the ooze and you and I started to grow up from that. And then we evolved into fish, and then fish evolved into animals, and the animals evolved into apes, and apes eventually evolved into you and me. So the belief is that there is no God that's in ordering the world. There's no creation and no purpose or meaning. And there's no moral absolutes, right, because if you get rid of God and we are just the product of evolutionary biology, who are you to say, we should do this or shouldn't do that. For you to say that is crazy. So my question is: Why is it that Darwinian Naturalists, people who believe this - which is the entire, mostly the entire scientific community, and many of the universities in our world. Why do they not follow that world view to it's natural moral conclusions. And the natural moral conclusion is that everyone should be able to do what they want right. I mean if we're just animals, just do what animals do, do whatever. There's no moral code. My dog doesn't have a moral code, really he does not. He defecates wherever, it's cool. He wants to kill the next door cat, for what? I don't know, for being a cat. There's no moral code in animals, so why is that Darwinian naturalists don't want to follow that world view to it's necessary conclusions.



I'll give you a few examples here okay, just pressing the question a little bit further. So I was talking to this young woman, she's a friend, and she doesn't believe in God. She believes in evolutionary biology which is great, she's a good friend, we talk. She started to tell me how angry she was at how many people were eating shark fin soup. And I said to her, "What?!"

"Oh it is wrong." I said, "It's wrong for people to eat shark fin soup?" "It's evil," she said. "Wicked." "Okay it's wicked for people to eat everywhere at all time? Is it wicked for all time? It's like an absolute moral standard."

"Yes it's absolutely true!" I said, "You can't say that."

"Why can't I say that?"

"Because you believe in evolutionary biology, that's why." You don't believe God is there ordering, like you don't believe in God. So if you don't believe in God, you don't believe in moral absolutes, and here you are using a moral absolute." "Well it's wrong," she said. Now where did she get that from? She should follow her worldview to its natural conclusion, which is, that everyone can do whatever they want, and if I want to eat shark fin soup, bring ... it ... on. And put some sushi on the side. But she's incensed, morally incensed, by me doing it. Why, why is that?

There's a guy named, Peter Singer, an Australian ethicist. Peter Singer's argument is, "Listen if we are product of evolutionary biology, which we all know we are, then shouldn't we act like the animals when it comes to making up our rules? Shouldn't we do stuff that works for us, in other words. So here's the deal. I know that a lot of early parents, you know in the first year of their kids lives. They get really frustrated with those kids and they realize maybe six months into it, that I don't really want to have this child anymore. Right, so this is really putting a cramp in my style. And we as a culture agree that abortion is fine, according to Peter Singer, and it's great because we can solve the problem of an unwanted pregnancy early on before the baby's born. But why is it that we say that when the baby's born we should stop. Like if we are just the product of evolutionary biology and there's no God and no moral absolutes, shouldn't we do what works for us. And you know what works for us, let's be honest, six months into you should be able to choose to kill your child." Now he writes about that, Peter Singer. How do you think he's received? You think he gets clapped for when he enters the conferences. No! People are incensed, they write horrible - people who agree with evolutionary biology, Darwinian Naturalism, they argue, "No, no, you are wrong. We should still hold onto this morality." And he's like, "You guys just don't want to follow the world view to it's natural conclusions." Why is that people don't want to do that?

One more, just for fun. Randy Thornhill and Craig Palmer are the names of two authors. In the year 2000 they wrote a book called, *A Natural History of Rape*. Their book, *A Natural History of Rape*, argues that listen, if we are all just the products of the ooze growing into fish and we just product evolutionary biology. What we should do is realize that in the animal kingdom, in order for an animal, a male animal to spread its DNA and therefore preserve it's better chances of its children flourishing in the future right. It spreads it's seed as broadly as it can, with consent and without. So rape, is something animals do. Male animals just do it, and if we are male animals, why is everybody freaking out about rape? Like we're not saying that it's good necessarily. But we also not saying that it's bad. It just is, everything just is. There is no moral absolute, cause there's no God, we grew up from the ooze get it? So stop freaking out about rape. How do you think that they get welcomed to the committee, to





the group. People freak out at these guys. I've read articles that are against their book, rightly so. But my question is, the people who hold those premises, those Darwinian Naturalists premises - why is it they're so uncomfortable following that worldview to it's natural, and I would say, necessary conclusion. You know the answer to this question.... <whispering> conscience. You can't get rid of this thing this conscience, this moral code in your heart. You can't, it's there. So even these people who don't believe in God, prove the reality of God by the fact that they have a moral code that only can be there if God's there. Everyone has a conscience.

That's the first one that this passage says. Here's the second one. Everybody follows their conscience sometimes. I mean you see that at the end there, their thoughts - verse 15, other times defending them. So sometimes when they stand before God, their thoughts will defend them. Cause people have done their conscience. You know when the little angel, the little white guy, dressed in the white robe is on this shoulder, and the little like devil guy, and pitchfork, and pointy red hat is sitting on this corner. A lot of times people listen to the little white guy, right. Like you don't need to be a faithful Christian to listen to that little white guy. People do it all the time.

I was in New York City a number of years ago with a friend. He was running the New York City marathon. We were in, late a night, we were in a subway stop with *nobody* else around and we were completely lost. We were standing there looking at the board. If you ever go to the subway with the board with all the lines going everywhere. You're like, "Man I don't know where I am at all. We in New Jersey? No I think we're in New York, I think we're over here."

"Are you sure, cause this says Brooklyn and I don't think we're in Brooklyn." We didn't have a clue where we were. So all alone, late night, dark, in a very dirty subway station. And down the stairs off to my left comes five young men, all white men, tattoos on their arms with hoods on like this, and one of the dudes had a big coat and there was something, he was carrying stuff under the coat. And they're walking like this. Guy in the front is walking like this <strutting> - straight toward us. I said to my friend Allan, "<whispering> Allan, Allan, just look over there for a second." And Allan turns and he looks and he's like, he turns back to me and goes, "Ahhh, ahhh, ahh." We're two seminary students right. These guys walk right up next to us and we're trying to almost hug the board. Guy in the front comes right up next to me and stands right next to me and looking right over my shoulder at the board. And I'm not moving. And he goes, "You have a problem?" And I said, "<laughing> Ah no." He goes, "No, do you have a problem?"

"With what?"

"Well finding your way."

"Ohhh, um yeah ... yeah ... yes." [Laughter]

"Okay, where you need to go?" I'm like, like I'm going to tell you right.

"Where do you need to go?" And then Allan blurts it out. He's like, "<scaredly talking> We need to go back to this place... our hotel's over there."

"<whispering> Allan! Now they know." This guy goes, "Oh yeah, I know where that is, I've been there lots of times. You take this line over here and you go over here and .....blah, blah, blah" And we're obviously looking a little freaked out cause his friends are all surrounding us, right, peering over our shoulders. We're looking a little freaked out. So the guy actually ends up saying, "You know what," he looks at our faces, "you know what, we'll just take you there."



“Ahhhh man.” [Laughter] So he turns around, we stand at the edge of the thing and we’re standing there and we wait for like a couple trains, he goes, “Yeah get this one.” And I’m like, “I don’t even know.” We get onto the train and we learn very quickly that these young men are not, you know the nearby Christians going out for an evangelism night, right. They are very committed to doing other kinds of things as they’re talking, and they ride with us all the way back. We make one train change, and we go all the way back. And seriously, he drops us off at the doorstep of our hotel. And we walk off this platform and I’m standing there and I turn around thinking, “Oh you’re going to follow us to our room and kill us, right. This is it, you want more money.” I turn around and he goes, “You guys okay?” And I’m like, “Yeah.”

“Okay, see you later, nice meeting you.” And they walked away. I was like, “Ohhhhh yeah!!!” You ever had this happen, this kind thing, where some stranger who in the moment of crises, or you have a need - it doesn’t matter, whether they’re Christian or not, or whatever. They helped!

Here’s the reason I tell you all that. When you read through Romans 1-3 you can really come to the conclusion very quickly - it’s not the conclusion Paul wants you to come to, but you can come to this conclusion quickly. That everybody is horribly, awful all the time. There’s no one who does good, their throats are open graves. I mean, my goodness, you can come to that conclusion. You can end up saying that. I’m telling you that everyone has a conscience and sometimes they follow it... sometimes they follow it. Isn’t that great, that God’s image still is in them. That even though marred by sin, they show the image of God off by creating beauty, by helping, this is a remarkable thing we should praise God for, his common grace. Everyone has a conscience, everybody follows it sometimes, but you know the next one. Everybody doesn’t follow it all the time. He says that in Romans 2:15, “Their thoughts sometimes [accuse] them.”

You know the little two guys on your shoulder, sometimes your like, the little white guy, “Shut up.” Right, “I want to do this thing and you need to go away. I know it’s wrong, but you need to go away. Get lost, get lost, get lost, get lost.” And you follow the little red guy. Here’s the thing. If you want to follow the little red guy and not the white guy, you got to keep the white guy shut up. Like he’s going to pester you, you know that. That’s the nature of the conscience. He’s just going to keep bugging you, so you got to quiet him. You got to figure out a way to shut him up. And so we get really creative with this.

World War II, one of the big questions coming out of World War II was: why is it that so many Germans watched the Nazi’s kill so many Jews and knew about it, but did nothing. Is that just something that Germans do? Those are some of the attitudes of the day. Why are so many Germans standing by watching Nazi’s kill Jews? Cause they did some research and study and The Nuremberg Trials took place. They ended up coming to some conclusions. There’s several reasons for this. But one of the reasons that why it is they sat by and watched was because the Germans were really good at their propaganda. The Germans actually tried to show through all of their propaganda, like posters and messages and things. They tried to show repeatedly that Jews are not people, they’re rats, they’re vermin. Whenever you read Nazi propaganda about the Jews, they talk about them in terms of them being rat like. What do you do when a rat comes into your kitchen? You see the rat sitting there in the middle of the kitchen. Do you think to yourself, well let me get you a bowl of milk. No you kill the rat.





It's easier to kill a person if you think they're a rat. It's easier to kill a person if you don't think they're a person. So that little guy on the shoulder's saying, "Don't do it, don't kill them, don't kill them." But you reason yourself into it, thinking, "Well yes, it's wrong of course to kill people, but they're not people." They're black in the south in the slave days. They're not people. Today the baby in your womb is not a person, it's tissue, it's a fetus, it's easier to kill if you don't call it a person. That's how you shut that little white angel up. You rationalize yourself into it. But you know, the conscience keeps nagging you and listen, everybody shuts their conscience up, by repeatedly dismissing it. Everybody at some point or another, no matter who you are, you have a conscience, you follow it sometimes, but you don't always follow it.

Now here's Paul's point in all of this. God will judge you by the law you have. The fact that you shut your conscience up, condemns you. Francis Schaeffer had a wonderful image, he said - he's a philosopher kind of in the 1960's, 70's, & 80's. He actually said, look, here's the way it's going to work. Everyone has some sort of recording device that God has placed essentially around their neck, and when you stand before him in judgement, that recording device will be lifted off your neck. This recording device listen to all the moral pronouncements that you made in life. Whatever you drove, whenever you got mad at your neighbour, whenever you talked about how the dog shouldn't do this. Should do this, shouldn't do that, should, shouldn't ... recorded all those moral codes that are coming out from within you. All those things that are coming out from your conscience, that you said out loud and thought even. He's going to take that, lift it off you and, "Let's just play this and let's see if you kept the very thing that you said. We're just going to judge you by your own law." How do you think you'll do? It's those who obey the law that will be declared righteous. Everybody has a law, yeah you do.

### **[God Will Judge Us for Our Secrets]**

It actually gets a little bit worse, here's the last one, Romans 2:16, God will judge us for our secrets. He says,

"This will take place on the day when God judges people's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares."

That's an interesting ... like at this point in this argument for Paul to bring up the term, secrets, is just mean. In other words, it's not public you, it's not presentation you, that God is going to judge. It is secret you. There's a difference right.

I was listening to a radio program a while ago, and it was an interview with a couple of teenage girls who were really active on Instagram, right, like posting 20, 30 times a day. And what they were posting at every turn, was a picture of themselves - selfie. So this guy interviewed them and says, "So why are you doing this?" Right, this cultural thing, this has never happened before, people posting pictures of themselves online. So why is it that you guys are doing this? And the girls said, "Well because ... I'm going to get the likes."



“Okay, but what kind of process goes into, before you post it? You just take a picture and just send it immediately online?”

“Oh no! We take the picture and then send it to three or four of our friends and they respond back to us by saying, ‘Oh you’re so hot, or you’re beautiful, or gorgeous, and I wish I was you.’ If those things come back then I will post it online. And then I’ll see how many likes I get and then I’ll post another one. And we do this, this is our life, we end up sharing all of these things. And I’m always responding to people, ‘Hey that one doesn’t look so good, this one does look so good.’” And the guy said, the interviewer said, “Yeah but that’s not the real you right? Oh no, no that’s not the real you.” He said, “You never like post one, have you ever posted one when you just get out of bed?”

<laughing>No are you kidding me? We always post the pouty lips and the hair pulled. Like makeup on, that’s what you do!” And one of the girls said at that point, “Look, there’s the person that you present to others,” listen to what she said. “There’s the person you present to others, and then there’s the real person you are.” Instagram’s about the first. Facebook is about the first. It’s the person you want everyone to know.

Look maybe you’re not on Instagram, maybe you’re not on Facebook, but you invite people over to your home. If we invite you over to our house someday, here’s what’s going to happen 30 minutes before. My wife, who’s going to walk through the house like cracking the whip with my boys <whipping sound> who are making a mess everywhere cause they just got papers and junk, and like clothes and dirt everywhere. She’s like, “Come on! Get all this stuff up, they’re going to be here in 30 minutes.” They’ve got a timer on there. “Come on! Get going!” Right, and the kids, my boys, what will they do? They’ll pick up their stuff with their arms, right, after they’ve finished the show they’re watching. And then they’ll pick it up, and they’ll walk it down the hall, into their bedroom, open the door, drop it on the floor and close the door. Or maybe that’s not what you guys do, maybe you just have a closet. Do you have a closet? Like we have a closet, man you like go in there, look out. Right you got to kind of open it slowly cause it might all come out on you. You got a drawer? Got all the junk in it. Don’t look in the drawer. You come over to my house, there’s a presentation me, the living room, the kitchen, one bathroom, they’re going to be clean. Everything else, probably not. We lock the doors. We keep them closed. You say, “Well can I look in here?”

“No you can’t look in here, get out of there!” [Laughter]

Here’s the thing that Paul’s saying. He’s saying, “Listen, when it comes time for God to judge, he’s not going to ask for your Instagram profile. He’s not going to ask you about how your Facebook page revealed you to be. He’s not going to ask about like, living room you. He’s going to ask about closet you - the real you. How’s it going to go? <Pause> You going to be declared righteous on that day according to your own law, based upon the secrets. <Pause> Man I’m pausing here, because I want you to feel a heavy weight sit on you now. Because you don’t have any hope unless somebody else can do it for you. And here we are again, right. If you’ve been to church in the last few weeks, we’re going to the same place every time. It’s the same basic message and I’m hoping that this time through, right, you don’t just say, “Oh it’s the forest.” I’m hoping that this time through you realize how remarkable it is, this gospel. That Paul mentions according to his gospel in the last ... you know what the gospel is? Here’s what’s happened. Jesus has gone to the cross and he has taken on your punishment for failing to keep the law, and he has given you, by faith, his righteousness that is rightly



due him because he did keep the law. Here's what this means, this means that you are righteous by rule, by contract. You can walk before God, Almighty, the judge and ruler of all, and you can say to him, "You owe me." Not because of you, but because of Christ. Listen if you were working for a company and they say, you make 1,000 widgets this year and you'll get a million dollars. At the end of the year after making 1,000 perfectly good widgets, you know testified by your co-workers, checked through quality control, and you get to the time when it's payment and you stand before your boss, and he says, "I'm not going to pay you." You pull out the contract, you slide it across the table, you point to it with your boney finger and you say, "You owe me, I have a covenant with you. The work was completed now the benefits and rewards belong to me." You can do that before God because of what Christ has done for you. And if you don't feel the scandal there, listen if you don't feel the scandal, the outlandish craziness, "No I would never do that!" Yes you would, and you better, because that's what it means to be a Christian. To receive all the rewards of the covenant, all the blessings of God being lavished on you, not because of anything you've done, but because he kept it and he gave it to you. Scandal. Outrageous. Beautiful. Magnificent. We should smile more Christian. Scandal. Isn't that good news? Even for good people. Let me pray for us.

Father, I'm so thankful for your grace and for your word and that we get to come out of each one of these at the same place Lord. Again, I pray that the repeated nature of this would just sink in. It's going to require your Spirit to do it in us though. And I pray Father that you'd take it and massage this gospel into our hearts and make our lips wrap up at the ends in a smile, knowing that you love us, even while we were yet sinners. You love us. Oh thank you, in Jesus name. Amen.