

PLEASE NOTE: This session is extraordinarily long. I suppose the reason is that this is Paul and the Letter to the Romans. Anyway, there is a lot of meat here. Enjoy. When you have questions, please copy this material and write your responses into the place of your questions. Then, send it to wsalmon@cox.net. The IHOP people had a deep conversation that was exciting for me to be a part.

**TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
IHOP BIBLE STUDY**

2 - Romans 2: 1 – 29, “God’s Righteous Judgment -- With Commentary
The purpose of the Letter to the Romans is to develop a “Model for Living the Awakened/Transformed Life.” **Today’s study is the 2nd of 27 lessons.**

According to our Study Chart we are studying the second section of our chart called “Awaken to The Work of God.”

WS: Before you begin today’s study, first write down your experience that defines the following words (the following is my experience):

- 1) **Righteousness:** the experience of living the Awakened life. Traditionally, this word is translated “having a right relationship with God.” Consequently, when we have an affirmative relationship with God/Love we are thoroughly awakened to our intended purpose.
- 2) **God:** God is Perfect Awakening. Love is the expression of full Awakening.
- 3) **God’s Righteousness:** Absolute unmerited Love. Permanent Awakening. Perfect At-One-Ment.
- 4) **Truth:** The way Paul uses the word Truth he implied Goodness, or God’/Love’s Goodness; also, human humaneness. When we humans act humane toward our neighbor, self and God, then we are living the truth.
- 5) **Evil:** This term is not a moral category. It is the most misunderstood theological category for people today, because they associate it with being immoral, or naughty. This is what we mean theologically with the word “sin.” Evil, on the other hand, is A LIE to convince us we are victims. Christians are not victims, we are victors. This is the significance of the Resurrection. The Devil, or the Demon are personifications of Evil; they are The Big Liars.
- 6) **Judgment:** My axiom is, “The reward for the deed is found in the deed itself.” A God of love never judges us. God only loves us. However, built into our human decisions are joy and/or tough love. The reward for bringing joy into my wife’s life is that she feels good and I do too. This is my reward. However, when I fail to observe the speed limit and get a ticket, this also is my reward. Thus, “The reward for the deed is found in the deed itself.”

Now, read the entire assigned reading.

- 7) **God’s Wrath:** Always this is God’s profound love for us. My wife is the wrath of God in my life. This means that when I am unpleasant to be around, she finally has enough of it, and confronts me. She does this because she loves me enough to take the abuse that is the result of such confrontations. She stands in the gap of my life, loving me, until I grow up enough to become humane again. This is my example of God’s Wrath.

I. 2; 1- 16, Passing judgment

A. vs. 1 – 4, Illustrate Paul’s example.

WS: Disgust at BTK horror story points to my own disgust at the things I do to others. This is my reward for being judgmental!

B. vs. 3, How is human judgment an illusion?

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WS: An illusion always in a falsehood. Human beings are created in the image of God/Love. When humans make decisions that are selfish or greedy, the result is a falsehood of what it means to be fully a human being; i.e., one who acts humanely.

Also, consider this statement: “What I know about my neighbor is what my neighbor knows about me.” ALL IS KNOWN. There is no place to hide. To believe otherwise is to live an illusion.

C. vs. 4, Give an example of the “riches of God’s kingdom.”

WS: The “riches of God’s kingdom” is experienced when we fulfill our intended purpose of being humane humans. Our neighbors love us, we love our-selves, and God loves us. (This little Trinitarian formula is the Great Commandment.)

D. vs. 5, Illustrate how we store up wrath.

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WS: We store up wrath when we live inhumane lives. We store up wrath when we push others down in order to pull up ourselves. Or consider the following: “When I think I’m something, then I’m nothing. When I consider myself nothing, then I am something.”

E. vs. 7, 8 and 9 – 11, Paul uses a literary device in using these doublets.

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What are the two points he is making?

WS: Frequently, Paul makes use of literary tricks, as he does here.

Vs. 7 – Doing humane things gives us eternal life—the life that is lived in the presence of God/Love. **Vs. 8** – Doing inhumane things leads to confrontation and accountability.

Vs. 9 – The second doublet he begins with the negative and then in **Vs. 10/11** – Paul turns to the positive. The point is the same.

However, the tag line is **vs. 11b** is profound. God shows no favoritism, however, accountability first goes to the Jew and then to the Gentile.

F. vs. 12, Illustrate the significance of “perishing apart from the law.”

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WS: The experience of “perishing” is to live outside of our intended purpose of living in the presence of God/Love. To “perish apart from the law,” is applied to the Gentiles. The point Paul makes in vss. 12 and 13 is that everyone perishes—it is the significance of being human beings. Whether we are Jews or Gentiles we all perish. For the Jews, the Law of the 10 Commandments first convicts. **HOWEVER NOTE:** All of those who obey the law will live in God/Love’s presence, whether or not they are Jews or Gentiles.

G. vs. 12 – 15, Hearing and Doing. Provide examples to illuminate Paul’s point.

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WS: The Law is a given, it is a state of being for all humans. Everyone lives by a “natural law” in their inner being. The Jews were given a written manifestation of The Law. However, the Gentiles are made human by observing the “natural law.” **Vs. 15**, for the Gentiles, this natural law was “written on their hearts, their consciences and influences their thoughts.”

H. vs. 16: God's Judgment. The human experience of God's Judgment (Agape Love) is that we humans can not hide anything: "ALL IS KNOWN." However, observe that God's judgment is through Jesus Christ (vs. 16b), "as my gospel declares." Remember, the Gospel always is the Good News that "All is Good," " Our Present is a Gift, this is why we call it a *present*," "our past is forgiven and forgotten," and "our future is open with possibilities." This little formula is a demonstration of THE GOOD NEWS.

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II. 2: 17 – 29 "The Jews and The Law."

A. Write your own definition of the word "blaspheme."

WS: Traditionally, this word means to be irreverent. The Gut Trip analysis of the word is to make God a laughing stock, a joke.

NOTE: To see a picture of what we are talking about, look at the hand drawn image on the last page of this session.

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B. Look at the "if" and "then" statements.

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1. "If" statements – vs. 17, 18, 19: Ground each one in your own experience.

WS:

Vs. 17 - Bragging on my relationship to God: I have a Dmin.

VS. 18 - I'm a Guide for leading others to know the Will of God.

Vs. 19 - I'm an IHOP teacher to the blind and desire to bring light into their darkness.

Vs. 20 - I'm an instructor in the meaning and experience of The Law. I'm a pastor.

Vs. 21 - As a master Guide, I embody the significance of the Law.

2. "Then" statements -- Vs. 21: Ground in your own experience.

The evidence for not "teaching myself."

Vs. 21 Stealing: use of church supplies for personal projects;

Vs. 22 Adultery: As a youth at Military School writing to two girl friends at once and mixing up their letters;

Vs. 22b Robbing temples: ??

Vs. 23 Dishonor God by breaking the Law: Not honoring my wife.

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3. Vs. 24, What is the result?

WS: In light of the above, any time I am viewed as a pastor and/or Guide, what people see is not me but the God I represent. My life can bring discredit to God.

C. 2: 25 - 29, the value of circumcision

1. Vs. 25 – 26 What is the value of circumcision/baptism, and for whom?

WS: What is considered for circumcision is also applied to baptism. The authority here is John Wesley. (See: *John Wesley's Notes on Romans. Pg. 20.*)

Wesley's translation uses the phrase, "Circumcision indeed profiteth. . ." Wesley makes the observation that there is a difference in the "profit" of something, and something necessary for justification. From God's perspective, being circumcised or baptized is importance because it speaks of commitment and surrender of ourselves to God.

However, these things do not awaken us to salvation.

What saves us is our doing The Jewish or the Natural Law whether we are Jews or not.

2. Vs. 27 What is the value of not being circumcised/baptized and for whom?

WS: There is no value either way. Not being circumcised/baptized has no affect on us. It is the Law--OT or the Natural Law--whether accepted or not that still convicts us.

3. Vs. 28 – 29 Who is really the Jew?

WS: A Jew is one who has surrendered his or her life to God. This is the circumcision of the heart.

Who is really the Gentile?

WS: A Gentile is one who has surrendered his or her life to God. This is the baptism of the heart.

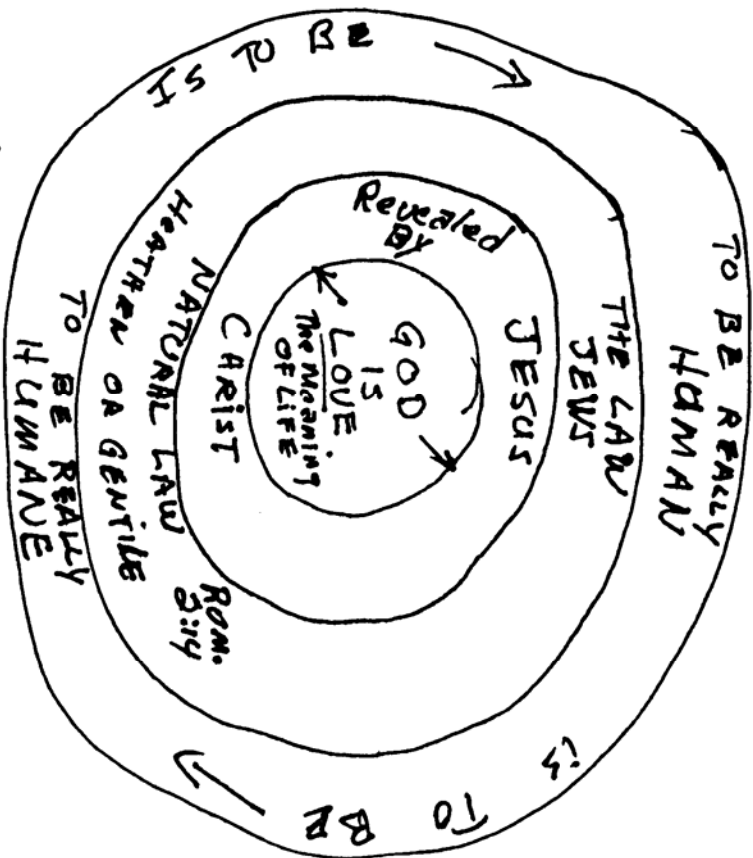
III. How does today's study help to awaken us to the work of God?

WS: A main point of today's lesson is the need for humans to surrender themselves to the heart of our inner being, i.e., to the image of God/Love in which we are created. Paul lays out for us that our rituals and faith symbols only have meaning after this surrender is done.

The best expression of our faith is demonstrated through our actions and our doings.

Doing the AWAKENED LIFE

AN IMAGE
OF
ROMANS 2



IS TO BE RIGHTEOUS
in God's sight,
i.e., TO SURRENDER OURSELVES (TO BE LIKE CHRIST)
TO REVEAL GOD'S LOVE.

By PASTOR BILL