

SUNDAY - August 30, 2026

UNASHAMED - Romans 2:12-29 - Unreliable

SERMON SUMMARY:

Romans 2:12–29 shows that conscience, knowledge, and religious rituals cannot make us right with God. Everyone has some awareness of right and wrong, but none of us consistently lives up to even our own standards. Knowing Scripture and correct doctrine is important, but simply knowing the truth is not enough if we don't live it. In the same way, outward religious practices like baptism, traditions, and ceremonies have value, but they cannot replace genuine faith and a transformed heart.

Paul's point is that we cannot rescue ourselves through being good, knowing the Bible, or practicing religion. When we trust those things, they can actually lead to pride and hypocrisy because we begin judging others while overlooking our own failures. What we truly need is Jesus. God isn't looking merely for outward religious behavior; He wants inward transformation. Our hope is not in how much we know or what religious things we do, but in Christ's grace that forgives us, changes our hearts, and makes us children of God.

SCRIPTURE:

Romans 2:12-29, Luke 12:41-48, 1 Corinthians 8:1, Acts 9, 1 Corinthians 11, Acts 15:10, Genesis 15, 17,

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. According to the passage, what is the difference between merely hearing the law and doing what it says?
2. What does it mean that God's law is "written on their hearts," and what evidence does Paul give for this?
3. The text warns against a specific danger that comes with knowing God's will. What is that danger?
4. What analogy is used to describe someone who is trusting in an outward ritual but lacks an inward reality?
5. Why is the possession of biblical knowledge or correct doctrine, by itself, an insufficient foundation for a life that honors God?
6. How can a person's own conscience, which is meant to guide them, ultimately become a source of condemnation?
7. In what ways can religious rituals and traditions become a "dangerous trust" that actually reduces a person's perceived need for Christ's work on the cross?
8. The passage describes a pattern where confidence leads to hypocrisy and ruin. How does a lack of prayerful dependence contribute to this downward spiral?
9. Is there an area of your life where you find it easier to study or discuss what is right than to actually obey? What is one practical step you can take this week to move from hearing to doing?
10. Your conscience testifies to a standard of right and wrong. When was the last time your private thoughts or actions violated your own standard, and what does that reveal about your need for mercy rather than self-justification?
11. Consider a religious tradition or practice that is meaningful to you (e.g., baptism, communion, church attendance). How can you ensure it remains an outward sign of an inward work of grace rather than a substitute for it?
12. Has your certainty about a biblical issue ever led to arrogance or a judgmental attitude toward others who see it differently? What would it look like to hold your convictions with humility and prayerful dependence?
13. Where are you most tempted to place your confidence—in your own moral sense, your knowledge of doctrine, or your participation in religious activities? What would it look like to actively transfer that confidence to Christ's rescuing grace this week?