



World Christian Fellowship

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Romans 38 False Security-01

Romans 2:17-18, *Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God,¹⁸ and know His will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law,*

Romans 1:18-32, God has revealed His wrath in judgment against the sinful pagan world because the world is guilty of rejecting His revelation and then of descending into idolatry and horrifying vice.

Romans 2:1-16 are a single section and gives us the principles on which God judges men.

Romans 2:17 to 29 deals with false security.

Security: Dictionary defines as to be secure is to be free from and not exposed to danger. To be free from any apprehension, any fear, any worry, or any doubt.

Everybody wants security. We seek that comfortable sense of freedom that comes when we are confident there is no threat of danger or trouble.

Security is the absence of threat, the absence of fear, the absence of danger, that comfortable freedom that says everything is under control.

People talk about economic security; they want to have enough stashed away so that they are really set and in no financial danger at all.

They want to have job security. They want to get a job which offers to them a future, which gives to them a certain guarantee that they are not going to be out on the street.

They want marital security, the confidence that they are loved and beloved by a trusted, faithful partner.

People want even home security. They put bars on their windows and burglar alarms and buy big, ugly dogs that growl at mailmen.

Insecurity is a killer because insecure people tend to have psychological, emotional, and personality problems.

Very difficult to live in this world without a sense of security, a sense of well-being.

Spiritual security is to be free from anxiety about death, to be free from apprehension about facing God, about divine judgment, to be free from the fear that your sins are going to be brought up and held against you.

Now we can find a certain measure of economic security by diversifying our investments or by having a big sock somewhere in the closet.

We can gain a certain amount of job security by having long-term contracts negotiated by a union, or any assortment of other secure factors.

We can find a measure of marital security by devotedness and love.

We can find a certain amount of security in our homes by arming the house or getting a dog or a wall or whatever it is that makes us feel secure.

But most people are hard-pressed to find any kind of spiritual security.

Yet there is a tremendous pressure on people to try to find some way to secure themselves, so they do not live under the fear of death and the fear of judgment.

People do not like to talk about the end of the world. They do not like to talk about facing a holy God, standing before the divine throne to be judged.

They want to be confident that there is not going to be a damnation, they are not going to be sent to hell. So, everybody must deal with this one way or another.

Paul in **Romans 2:17-29** speaks specifically to destroy the false securities of the Jews. But in so doing he also lays bare the inadequacy of many false securities of people today.

Having dealt with irreligious people and generally religious people, he now zeroes in specifically on the covenant people, the Jew.

He catches the pagan, the moral person and the covenant people, the Jew, and all of them are brought to the tribunal, as it were, to be told that they are sinful, and they come short of God's glory. Nobody escapes.

But in verses 17 to 29 he deals with the people who had the highest and the greatest privilege.

The people who at the same time felt themselves the most secure, but Paul devastates their false securities.

This is an act of great kindness. We do people a tremendous favour when we tell them that their security is insecure.

Example: When you tell them that they are putting their money in a bank that is going to be bankrupt.

When you tell them that they are holding onto a rope that will snap. That is kindness.

Paul is very honest and gracious in so indicting the Jew because he makes them to face the inadequacy of false securities.

From **Romans 2:17-29**, the Jew had three great privileges which gave him a false sense of security.

1. Part of the nation of Israel. Heritage
2. Possessed the law of God. knowledge
3. Symbol of circumcision.

Having these great privileges, the Jews felt himself greatly secured by them, and believed that, because he was a Jew, because he possessed the law, because he had the symbol or the sign of the covenant in circumcision, he was therefore free from any fear about judgment.

So, what Paul does is take each of these three and systematically destroy them all as securities.

In doing so he strikes a killing blow at the supposed security of many so-called Christians and so-called religious people in the church today.

V 17, *Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God,*

For the first time the word "Jew" appears in this letter. Paul zeroes in and he shatters the walls of their security and exposes them as they attempted to hide behind them.

Any adequate presentation of the gospel because basically everybody has built up some sense of false security, every unregenerate person. You must, to maintain your sanity.

Some people's security is in the fact that they do not believe God could do anything to them because they have done a lot of good deeds. A very common thing.

Most people have the impression that someday they are going to come to the judgment, if there is a judgment, God's going to weigh the good and the bad, if you come out with better than bad then you are fine.

Some people have a false security since they do not believe there is a God, and that is the way they deal with it. There never will be a judgment and will never face it. But everybody will inevitably put-up wall to hide behind because nobody can live without a sense of security in the face of death and judgment. Everybody has it.

So that at any presentation of the gospel, before you can introduce them to the true security, you have got to attack their false one.

Look at our discipleship materials, course, or the book first we deal with the sin.

You ask a person,

What right do you have to enter heaven?

Why do you ask them that?

You ask them that for a very simple reason, they probably have an answer.

They have some belief or attitude or something that makes them feel like they are going to make it. That is the only way they can survive.

They are going to say,

"I have been to church." Or,

"I am basically a good person."

"I love my husband. I like my kids. I do a fair day's work."

Some way or another people have built some wall and so you must attack that.

Now Jesus is the perfect model of this. Jesus arrived in the scene in Judaism in Matthew. Jesus gave a sermon, chapter 5 to 7, He spends the entire sermon literally demolishing the walls of Judaism.

Matthew 5:20, *For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.*

There goes that security.

Your attitudes are wrong.

Your view of Scripture is wrong.

Your human relationships are inadequate.

Your words are inadequate.

Your praying does not right.

Your fasting does not right.

Your giving does not right.

Matthew chapters 5, 6 and 7, Jesus strips Judaism threadbare naked without securities. That is the approach that you always must take in a presentation of the gospel. The person must be

led to the place where they know they have no resource, they have no protection, they have no hope, they have no solution, they have no security. So, we are not surprised to see Paul do this.

Now, of course, there are the pagans. Their security is that they just do not believe anything.

We have the moral people in **Romans 2:1-16**, and their security is their self-righteousness and their religiosity.

Now the Jew.

They possess the law of God, and they are the covenant people as indicated by the sign of circumcision.

How much more secure can you get than that?

But Jesus said it is just those kinds of people who are going to show up at the judgment.

Matthew 7:21-23, *“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²²Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’*

Their security will be shattered.

The Jews tended to boast about their privileges, advantages, about their blessings. In fact, they were incessantly boasting about that. They did so as a sort of a reinforcement of their sense of security.

1. Heritage

V 17, Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God,

There are three words that are indicative of these people.

- a) They could be called Hebrews. The word "Hebrew" basically indicates their language.
- b) They could be called Israelites. That basically indicates their land, the land in which they live. Although that was given as a very special name it came to be identified with their land, the land of Israel.
- c) They could be called Jews, and that indicates their nationality. That is the unique point of their pride.

There is pride in their language,
There is pride in their land, and
There is pride in their nationality.

That was true in Paul's time. The name "Jew" is first used in the Old Testament in 2 Kings 16:6 and became a frequently used title for these people, both during and after the exile.

The term "Jew" spoke of nationality, of race, of heritage. It spoke of their distinctiveness from all the other nations, from all the Gentiles. It was the mark of their uniqueness to be a Jew.

There might be other people in the land and there might be other people that spoke the language, but a Jew was the unique people of God. So, it became a title of honour.

It designated them as the special people of God. The word even came from a Hebrew root meaning "praised." They were named "praised" because of the tremendous privileges that they had.

When you called yourself a Jew, there was a bragging and boasting there!

By using the term, they pride themselves that we are better than everybody else. It is interesting how things have changed. Nowadays they choose to call themselves Israelis because they identify more with the land and the political aspect than they do the Abrahamic identity.

Paul identifies the fact that they are proud to call themselves Jews. They were bragging about it. For them it meant they were better than everybody else.

God had called this people and said, "You go to the world, and you take the message to them." But they were so proud about who they were and the uniqueness of their relationship to God that they did not want to tell anybody.

Remember Jonah?

That is why Jonah did not want to go to Nineveh. He did not want any Gentiles horning in on Jewish faith. They began to sort of love their exclusiveness and they turned within themselves.

Mordecai was proud about being a Jew.

Esther 3:4, *Now it happened, when they spoke to him daily and he would not listen to them, that they told it to Haman, to see whether Mordecai's words would stand; for Mordecai had told them that he was a Jew.*

There was something very special, lovely, and honourable about Esther, who was a Jew. But it was the spirit in which it was said that was the issue. Mordecai, when he said, "I am a Jew" was not saying, "I am a Jew and thus I am superior to everybody." He was saying, "I am a Jew and oh how gracious and good is God to have so blessed me." That is different!

It would be like saying, "I am a Christian and that makes me better than everybody else." As opposed to saying, "I am a Christian, and isn't it wonderful that God was so good to me that He should make me a Christian?"

The Jew is no longer seeing his Jewishness as a revelation of God's goodness and God's grace, but he is seeing it as an indicator of his own superiority. They felt they were superior.

They were boasting. They were bragging about their unique identity.

The best to be a Jew, the best to have God as your God. The worst, to think because you are a Jew you are superior and to think because you have God you are some special kinds of person that God is sort of obligated to.

Now the term for boast is used many times by Paul. The word group from which it comes is a very familiar one. It sometimes is used for God-centred glorying, and sometimes for man-centred boasting.

This passage indicates that it should be here as the self-confident boasting of a man who thinks that God owes him something because he is superior to everybody else.

We can see it repeatedly even in the minor prophets — but the effect of this was that they thought they could live their life any way they wanted, and everything would turn out okay because God was obligated to them because they were so superior to everybody else.

The leaders judging for reward, that is being bribed.

Priests teaching for money,

Prophets divining for money.

Micah 3:11, *Her heads judge for a bribe, Her priests teach for pay, And her prophets divine for money. Yet they lean on the Lord, and say, "Is not the Lord among us? No harm can come upon us."*

In other words, they could live with any kind of sin they wanted, they could do anything they pleased, license was theirs, but because they were Jews, God was obligated to them. That was their attitude. They felt secure as the children of Abraham.

Genesis 12:2-3, *I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."*

God promises His blessing to that people. He reiterates that promise to all the patriarchs. We are the blessed. We are secure. God is our God and we have monopolized Him.

God will favour us because we are superior. So, they were secure in their heritage. They thought they could live any way they wanted to live, and they would be okay.

In the gospel of John primarily has reference to the Jewish leaders. So, Jesus says to the Jews who believed on Him, in other words, there was superficial assent to the fact that He was who He claimed to be.

John 8:31-32, *Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. ³²And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."*

If you continue, you will show yourself to be true and you will know the truth and so forth. The truth will make you free.

This immediately angered them because that just began to take a shot at their security.

John 8:33, *They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, 'You will be made free'?"*

Now that is a ridiculous statement. At the very minute they said they were bondage to The Roman Empire.

Prior to that, it was the Greeks.

Prior to that it was the Medo-Persians.

Prior to that it was the Babylonians'

Prior to that it was the Egyptians.

They had been in bondage to everybody. But that shows how they were blinded to reality.

We are Abraham's seed. Nobody can really get to us. What do You mean, "You shall be made free?"

They really loved their supposed freedom. They exulted in the liberty they believed they had. They were so secure as Abraham's seed, they could do anything they wanted. They could live any way they wanted to live no matter what was going on around them. They feel that because they have a heritage from Abraham, they have unbroken liberty.

Jesus said to them,

John 8:34-36, *Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. ³⁵And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. ³⁶Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.*

You think you are sons of Abraham, but I am telling you that you are slaves to sin, and a slave does not live in the house forever, only a son does. So, you make think you are sons of Abraham, but I am telling you are slaves of sin.

John 8:37-41, *“I know that you are Abraham’s descendants, but you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. ³⁸I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father.” ³⁹They answered and said to Him, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would do the works of Abraham. ⁴⁰But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. ⁴¹You do the deeds of your father.” Then they said to Him, “We were not born of fornication; we have one Father—God.”*

If you were truly the seed of Abraham, you would act like Abraham acted and Abraham did not go around killing the people who had a message from God.

John 8:42-44, *Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. ⁴³Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. ⁴⁴You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no*

truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.

You cannot get any more confrontive than that. You think you are secure because you are physically coming from Abraham?

You are not the true seed of Abraham spiritually.
Spiritually your father is the devil.

Why?

Because he is a murderer, and you are seeking to murder Me and he is a liar and your whole system is made up of lies. You betray your true father.

John 8:56, *Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."*

In other words, you prove that you are only physically descended from him. You are not spiritual because you do not perceive what he perceived.

John 8:57-59, *Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"* ⁵⁸*Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."*

⁵⁹Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

What did Jesus do in John 8?

They thought they were spiritually secure because they were of the seed of Abraham. Jesus attacked that security and He said, you are physically from Abraham but spiritually your father is the devil. It is not the physical that matters, it is the spiritual.

So, Jesus is literally destroying their security in John chapter 8, the security of their heritage.

John the Baptist did this before Jesus did it.

In Matthew 3, John is out by the Jordan.

Preaching the kingdom and baptizing these people. The Pharisees and the Sadducees and they come up to him.

Matthew 3:7-12, *But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"⁸Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance,⁹and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.¹⁰And even now the ax*

is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ¹¹I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹²His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

We have Abraham as our father.

Because that was forever their security.

God is able out of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

Do not hide behind that.

Paul is just doing what John the Baptist and Jesus did!

There are a lot of people like that today who are holding onto some Christian heritage. They are assuming that because they live in a country with Christian roots, they are Christian. This is not only true in our country but in a lot of countries.

There are people who think they are saved because their parents were Christians.

Or they attended church as a child, or they are religious. They have a sense of security because of some Christian heritage or some Christian roots.

Parents have expressed the fact that even though their child is wayward and even though their child is indifferent to the cause of Christ, the child is still saved because they were born in the covenant and their salvation was affirmed in their infant baptism.

Where does this come from?

The whole thing comes from taking the false security of Judaism over into Christianity. The reason for infant baptism is simply that it is a replacement basically for circumcision.

It is a new sign of the covenant. They believe that since we are the new Israel of God and the old Israel is forever set aside, we as the new Israel of God have our sign of identification, being born into that covenant, and that is infant baptism.

2. Knowledge.

V 17, Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God,

From verse 17 to 24, the heart of it is knowledge.

This is the security in their knowledge.

Now they basically had the knowledge, no question about that. They had received the truth from God.

Their confidence was that they were secure because they had that knowledge.

Now there are four points that Paul makes here.

- a) Learned
- b) Taught
- c) Did
- d) Cause

Paul talks about what they learned, what they taught, what they did, and what they caused by the knowledge.

a) Learned.

They felt themselves secure because of what they had learned.

Now this term "law" it embraces the entire revelation of God. It encompasses all the truth about God and His nature and His work. It encompasses all the Mosaic systems.

It incorporates the adoption and the promises and the covenants and the rites and the ceremonies and the priesthood and the sacrifices and the instructions and the legislations and the promises and the blessings and the cursing and everything else.

They had it all and they knew it all because they were instructed in it from the time of their childhood. It was a part of their upbringing to be exposed to and trained in the law.

Nehemiah 9:13-14, *“You came down also on Mount Sinai, And spoke with them from heaven, And gave them just ordinances and true laws, Good statutes and commandments. ¹⁴You made known to them Your holy Sabbath, And commanded them precepts, statutes and laws, By the hand of Moses Your servant.*

They were resting in the possession of it rather than in the keeping of it!

They were resting in their own self-effort to try to maintain it. They rested totally in God's law. They had no other source of information. They endeavoured with God's law to try to keep it. Now follow this thought. They endeavoured to try to keep God's law.

Could they?

Of course, not!

God gave them some laws that were just impossible to keep just to prove that to them, and maybe had no other purpose than just their impossibility. But they had these laws, and they could not keep them.

So, if they could not get saved and justify themselves by keeping the law, there was only one other logical step. And that was just to feel that because they had the law, they were secure.

They could not get any security out of keeping the whole law because they could not keep it, so it just sort of deteriorated to the point where they felt that because we possess the law then we are fine.

They thought that God would not do anything to the people who are the caretakers of His law.

But that was never God's purpose. God's purpose was not to just give them the law. All that did was make them more responsible. But they did not see that.

Jeremiah 7:1-7, *The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, ²“Stand in the gate of the Lord’s house, and proclaim there this word, and say, ‘Hear the word of the Lord, all you of Judah who enter in at these gates to worship the Lord!’ ” ³Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: “Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. ⁴Do not trust in these lying words, saying, ‘The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these.’*

⁵“For if you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings, if you thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour, ⁶if you do not oppress the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, or walk after other gods to your hurt, ⁷then I will cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever.

Here is the temple, it is the temple of the Lord and it is in our midst and that means God is on our side and everything's fine. Do not keep saying that!

It was not just possessing, it was obeying.

V 18, *and know His will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law,*

They were boasting about resting in the law and about knowing God's will. We know God's will.

To know God's will makes you more responsible!

If they possess the law of God, they possess the will of God because His will is made manifest in His revelation.

- They knew what God required,
- They knew what God forbid,
- They knew what God commanded,

- They knew what God prohibited.
- They knew what God approved,
- They knew what God disapproved.
- They knew what He rewarded,
- They knew what He punished, and
- They knew His will.

Psalm 147:19-20, *He declares His word to Jacob, His statutes and His judgments to Israel. ²⁰He has not dealt thus with any nation; And as for His judgments, they have not known them. Praise the Lord!*

God had revealed His will over and over. Throughout the revelation came His will. So, they were right on target. They had the law and they had in that law the will of God.

They had also learned to approve the things that are more excellent. This is discernment.

They had the revelation.

The revelation gave the knowledge of the will of God.

The will of God gave them the ability to discern what was right or wrong.

So, the progression is obvious.

They were able to test things. They were able to approve things.

They can discern right and wrong. They know God's will. Therefore, they know what is right and wrong, they know what's good and bad.

The law gave them that knowledge.