

February 28, 2021 - Kent Stiles

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Preacher: Kent Stiles

[0 : 00] We welcome you to the media ministry of Bethel Community Church, knowing Jesus, making Jesus known. So with that being said, I was, you know, with the weather back to the weather, I always tell people it's all relative, right?

I mean, I feel like we have it pretty rough here. And I pulled up the weather from my sister's house up in Virginia last week, and it was a balmy 38 degrees below zero.

So our five degrees below zero didn't seem so bad. So if you would go ahead and turn with me in your Bible to the book of Romans, we're going to be spending our time in chapter two.

And as we get started today, it's a nice day out today, not terribly windy. And if I were to ask you, hey, do you want to go for a plane ride somewhere? You might be interested and you might say, hey, where are we going?

I say, I'll tell you what, we're going to go down to Spirit. They got a chartered plane there for us. We'll go wherever you want to go. Come back. There's no cost. And you'd say, that sounds pretty cool.

[1 : 03] You know, maybe I want to go to the lake of the O-Starks. Maybe we'll go to Gulf Shores. We'll go wherever you want. And I say, you can bring your kids too. And you might ask them, well, who's going to fly the plane?

And I'll say, well, I'm going to fly the plane. And let's say my dad was a lifelong pilot. My dad actually took some flying lessons, but he wasn't certified.

But let's say he was. And I said to you, you know, I've got all my dad's log books. He spent thousands of hours in the cockpit. He flew planes in the U.S., flew planes in Europe, flew planes in World War II.

He is a fantastic pilot. And your response might be, well, that's great. Did he teach you how to fly? Did you learn from him? And you, I might say, well, no, no, he never taught me.

I was never with him. But I have some of his books. And I have his pictures. And he has this aviator cap. And I wear that when I fly. And I've got a little set of wings here I put. And, you know, certainly there's nothing else I need, right?

[1 : 59] I've got all his stuff. Would you feel real comfortable going with me? No, I don't think so, right? I mean, I could hear his stories about flying. I can know that he was a pilot. But that's not going to make you feel secure when you get in that plane with me.

And it sounds a little silly, but that's exactly what the situation is, which Paul addresses in the book of Romans. And he addresses those who are or were relying on their ancestry to get them the proper standing before God.

You see, they had the pedigree. They could trace their lineage back to Abraham. And they had the books. They had the law, the prophets. And they had the insignia.

They had the sign of circumcision. So they were ready to fly. That's what they thought. If you haven't already, like I said, go ahead and turn to Romans chapter 2. And we're going to be looking this morning at the last half of the chapter, verse 17 down through 29.

And I'm going to ask you a question. How many times have you witnessed to somebody and you asked them the question, are you assured of heaven if you were to die today?

[3 : 07] And their response is, I think so. I really think so. And you say to them naturally, why? Why do you think that? Why do you not know that?

And so rather than, they start enumerating not of their virtues, but of their deeds and of their religious duty.

You know, they might say, well, I joined the church when I was 12. Or I had my first communion when I was 8. I celebrated communion every Sunday. I went to church every year at Easter.

I was baptized as a youth or as a teenager. You know, our family was involved from the church. You know, the Stiles have been members of the church for, you know, three decades. I've been a member since I was a child.

You know, all of my family, we've been Presbyterians for years, or Baptists, or Lutherans, or Methodists, and so on and so on. Have you ever had that happen where somebody points to that as the means for why they believe they will be in a right standing before God?

[4 : 13] You know, it's interesting that appealing to the religious or the ordinances or to the symbolism of what we do, oftentimes that's what people think is what's necessary or what puts them in that right standing before God.

And they have a problem. And that's what we're going to see here today with Paul. Let me ask you this question. Have you ever, in your life, made a bad investment? Anybody made a bad investment?

If I had six arms, I'd put them all up. I've made plenty, okay? You know, we kind of laugh because we all have. And I would ask, have you ever been conned?

You know, we talk about so often people make calls and they want to get your Social Security number or get your money. You might trust somebody. You know, some of us might have been conned. Well, many of us know the former American stockbroker and investment banker, Bernie Madoff.

And Bernie Madoff, he admitted to operating what has been described potentially as the largest Ponzi scheme in the history of the world. Eventually, back in March of 2009, he pleaded guilty to 11 federal felonies.

[5 : 25] And he was sentenced to 150 years in prison, the longest prison sentence that he could be prescribed. He literally built investors out of billions and billions of dollars.

And there weren't many people that were immune. Hollywood and sports celebrities. There were politicians, business executives, and ordinary people. They all lined up to invest their money with Madoff's company and somehow cash in on this magical ability to turn in a huge profit.

And they had placed their confidence in him. And they had even placed their confidence in their own flesh and their ability to make wise decisions. But thousands of these confident investors, they lost everything.

Everything, having put all their eggs in the wrong basket. And unfortunately, no one warned them of the investors of what he was up to. In fact, there were various experts that warned the government that there was probably something shady going on here.

They warned the SEC, but they never investigated. How sad. Investors had their confidence in their abilities to make the right decision, but ultimately it proved to be wrong.

[6 : 39] You see, they placed their confidence in an investment firm that was a scam. And they had confidence that their government, that deals with overseeing these investment brokers, that they had their confidence that they would protect them from anything that might jeopardize their investment.

But it had all failed. You know, and as tragic as that scenario is, if you're someone who's 70, 80 years old, you've lost everything. That's a really bad place to be. And as tragic as that is, it pales in utter insignificance in comparison to the eternal despair that will result for the man who has placed the investment of his soul in that of false religious systems that cannot save.

And that's what we're going to look at here this morning, the second half of Romans chapter two. You know, we look here in Romans, the apostle Paul, Jew, we know his story.

He's been radically saved and transformed by the power of Christ. And we see him here and his warning is to his kinsmen, the Jews, about their spiritual investment in Judaism, which was doomed ultimately to fail.

And he's warning them that this system in which they've placed their confidence cannot deliver and that Jewish leaders that they had trusted, just like the investors that we see in the story of Bernie Madoff, these leaders, they were ignorant of the lie and they too were duped.

[8 : 09] And they provided no legitimate oversight. And so Paul now is going to warn them and expose the fallacy of trusting in the flesh and trusting in religion.

You know, in doing so, what we're going to see is that he's going to expose three primary reasons that the Jews had, that in their mind made them believe that the investment of their soul was absolutely secure.

Why did they feel the way that they felt? They believe that because they were the sons of Abraham, first off, because they were God's chosen people, that they had it made.

Secondly, we're going to see that they believed that because they were the custodians of the law of God, that they were exempt from condemnation. And then finally, what we're going to see is we're going to see that they believed that God, that because they bore the sign of the symbol of the Mosaic covenant and circumcision, that these things that together in their entirety, and three, that these things protected them from any kind of divine judgment.

You know, you may, we've been studying Romans now for, I guess it's been four or five weeks. And you may recall in chapter one, that Paul explains why all men are under divine condemnation.

[9 : 34] That because of their rejection of God's revelation through creation and through conscience, all men, regardless, Jew or Gentile, are without excuse. And then in chapter two, we saw last week, he moved to on to build the case that condemnation extends even to the most moral and righteous person apart from Christ.

And so I think the overall purpose of Romans chapter one and through part of chapter three is to level humankind under sin. It's to say, it doesn't matter if you're Jew.

It doesn't matter if you're Greek. It doesn't matter if you're white, black, red. It doesn't matter. You are all under the condemnation of sin. And so Paul begins with the Gentiles who are guilty of blatant disobedience.

We saw that in chapter one, verse 18 to 32. He then pronounces the moralist guilty of counterfeit obedience. That was last week in chapter one to 16.

And then now what we're going to see this morning is in 17 to 29, Paul, who is a Hebrew of Hebrews, he goes after his own people, the Jews, and he demonstrates that even the Jew is a sinner who stands guilty before God.

[10 : 46] Well, before we get to the verses, let's just open up in prayer. Heavenly Father, we thank you for the time this morning. Lord, we just asked over the next few minutes as we study these dozen or so verses, Lord, that you would open our eyes and ears, Lord.

And while these are written, Lord, to condemn the religious rights of the Jews, Lord, there's so many practical applications for us today. And we ask that you would help us to see those.

We ask this in your name. Amen. So there's two main points that Paul's going to look at here that he is going to warn the Jews of.

Number one, he says, beware of religious overconfidence. Beware of religious overconfidence. We see that in verses 17 down through 24. And with this section, Paul, what he does is he begins a long sentence in which he piles up description after description of the Jews' privilege, of their privileges, only to show them that the blessings mean little because Jews have not lived up to those privileges.

You know, like all good speakers here, Paul, he begins with the positive. We see that in verse 17 down through 20. He summarizes these great privileges and the advantages that the Jews had over the Gentiles.

[11 : 56] If you look in verse 17, it says, but if you call yourself a Jew, and that Jew, that name Jew, it means praise to Yahweh. And the name reminded them that they were privileged among all the people of the world and that they were God's chosen people.

And so proud were they that his name, of his name, that many of the Jews living in Gentile cities used it as a surname. So you might say like, instead of Kent Stiles, MD, they might say Kent Stiles, Jew.

That would be their surname. That's how proud they were of it. Well, in the same way, many modern day churchgoers, as we look at this, I think we want to develop, where are the parallels for us today?

How does this apply to us? Well, many modern day churchgoers, they pride themselves in their names, don't they? You know, conservative, charismatic, Pentecostal, evangelical, Baptist, Presbyterian, just to name a few.

And it's so easy to brag on a preacher or a writer. It's even possible to get caught up in one's own Bible college or seminary or their degree.

[13 : 01] And yet a principle that we must always bear in mind is this, that when people are steeped in religion, they talk about names and churches. But when people are steeped in Christianity, they talk about Christ.

Excuse me. You know, so we got to be careful to distinguish between religion and a relationship with Christ.

Religion is all pain, no gain. Whereas a relationship with Jesus is the difference between pain and gain. Well, the second privilege that Paul speaks of here of the Jews is in the end of chapter seven or verse 17 into verse 18.

He writes this of the Jews. They rely on, who rely on the law and boast in God and know his will and approve what is excellent because you are instructed from the law.

You see, the Jews, they possessed the Old Testament. They were keepers of the law. They knew God's will in a way. The Romans and the Greeks never knew it. They knew what was right.

[14:05] They knew what was wrong. They were a people of the books. But sadly, they often failed to see the big picture, i.e. that is recognize that Jesus was the Messiah that was promised in the Old Testament to fulfill the primary calling to be the light to the Gentiles.

You know, I think likewise, a great danger that we face in the 21st century is getting high on our knowledge of the Bible without allowing it to affect our everyday lives.

Unlike the Jews, we utilize the full, we have the full revelation of the scripture, right? We have 66 books that we can look at. And we have multitude of versions. We have no loss for utilities and things that we can go online and get, you know, 12 versions.

And we can get the Greek. And we can get this commentary. We can get that commentary. And it goes on and on. And we don't lack for access. You know, here in America, we have the opportunity to know God's word.

But we must ensure that we don't fool ourselves into assuming that we know the God of the Bible when really all we know are the contents between the front and back cover.

[15:22] So first, privilege. And is their name? Second, privilege. And that they had the law. And third, the third privilege that he speaks of in verses 19 and 20 is that Paul lists four advantages that the Jews made for themselves.

It begins in verse 19, you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth.

Now, these are pretty heavy claims, yet Paul never contradicts them. Each of these claims is good if used in the right way. And if you widen the lens to take off all three advantages, what you're going to see is that they're all outward.

A name, a book, a series of good works. None of these things touches the heart. And since they don't touch the heart, they can all be faked.

They require no inward change. And without the change of a heart, the Jew has no advantage at all. And I think that truth, that applies to us as well, that we have to be careful not to place our confidence in our service, whether it's children's ministry, whether it's working with youth, whether it's working with underprivileged in the city, whether it be the worship team or preaching, et cetera, but that our confidence must be in Christ, not in works.

[16:56] Well, in verse 21, we're going to see Paul continue to address his kinsmen. But in 21 to 24, we're going to see a tone shift. He makes an abrupt change, I think, that he becomes more aggressive.

And so his blows, they become lethal as he condemns or confronts them with four consecutive questions, four questions, and then a statement. Four questions and a statement.

It's a series of questions in an attempt by Paul to turn the complacent Jew back on himself to search his own soul. Incidentally, I think you have to understand that the Jewish religious leaders of Paul's day, they were notorious for their inconsistency and their hypocrisy in respect to the scriptures.

And so knowing this, Paul begins with the thesis question that begins in chapter 21, and it says this, you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself?

You then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? The word then, or in some versions, it says therefore, that links verse 21 to 24 back to verses 17 to 20.

[18:03] So Paul argues that given all the amazing advantages that you have in verses 17 through 20, it seems that the Jews would teach themselves. They have all the tools that they need.

Well, in 21, he goes on, he says, then you who teach others, again, do you not teach yourselves? The Jews were, I'm sorry, those who, do you not, I'm skipping a step here, do you not steal?

The Jews were, in addition to not teaching, they teach not to steal, yet they steal from others, perhaps by collecting an extreme interest or cheating on business deals.

So they preached against stealing, yet it wasn't something that they preached to themselves.

Furthermore, he goes in verse 22, you who say that one must not commit adultery, you commit adultery.

You know, without going into great detail, the Jews had certain practices set up for themselves that when they were married, there were ways that they could have this so-called sabbatical, where they could have these windows of time when their wives were unclean to be with, that they could legally go out and have relations with other women.

[19 : 17] So they teach no, they taught no, they taught no adultery, yet they didn't adhere to that themselves. And then finally, the question again in verse 22, you who abhor idols, you yourself rob temples.

I think we know God's law commanded that when Israel would destroy a pagan temple, such as we see in Deuteronomy, the zealous Jews, they sometimes acted on the statue.

They were to destroy everything. They were not to plunder or take anything for themselves.

However, they often broke that commandment by confiscating temple treasures. And this isn't the obedience that God demands.

Now, verse, so four questions. You say this, you do this. You say this, you don't do this. You say this, you don't do this. And then the fourth, the fifth, which really isn't a question, but rather a statement, verse 23.

Again, it's likely a statement, not a question. And it's probably best translated this, you who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law.

[20 : 30] So on one hand, the Jews boasted in their knowledge of the law, yet on the other hand, they were guilty of breaking the law and dishonoring God. What would be a great word for this when they say one thing and they do another?

Herity. Herity? I call him a hypocrite, right? And what worse thing, if I were to condemn your character, one of the worst things that I can call you is a hypocrite.

Because it calls into question all other aspects of your person and your being. And that you say you're one thing, but you really do another. So while Paul's pointing out the hypocrisy of the Jews, I think it's important, though, that we look inwardly at ourselves.

And we concern this with ourselves. And the question being this, do we commit the same or similar sins that we denounce others on?

Are we hypocrites? Do we slander the welfare cheats, yet take the deduction in our income taxes when we think nobody else is going to see what's going on? Do we rebuke the pornographers publicly, but then in private, we have our own issues with that?

[21 : 40] Do we decry the breakdown of the family, and yet we are quick to divorce and move on to the next person? Are we practicing what we're preaching?

Do our lives match up with what our lips say? Well, the answer is if not, then it's a sober reminder that we need to humble ourselves and forsake the spiritual snobbery and submit our lives fully to Christ.

Religion, again, it's all pain, no gain. The hypocritical behavior of the Jews, it led to a disturbing result in chapter 2, verse 24.

And Paul explains it this way. He says in verse 24, for as it is written, the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you. What a statement to be said of the Jews.

What if that statement was said of you or me today? The name of God is blasphemed because of you. That statement by Paul can be traced back to Isaiah 52, where God is mocked by the Gentiles on account of Israel's disregard for and disobedience of the law.

[22 : 52] You know, the Gentiles, they knew that Israel, they knew that they were chosen by God. They expected them to live accordingly.

And while the Jews violated God's law, the Gentiles, they blasphemed God's name. In other words, they developed a wrong attitude about God on account of what they saw.

Their attitude was affected by the people that they watched. So on one hand, the Jews were jealous for God's name and that they would not even pronounce it. They would substitute another word for God instead.

Yet on the other hand, their conduct caused the Gentiles to blaspheme that very name. And you see, the Jews, they utterly failed in their calling to make God known.

And so the same question I think goes for us today. Will we? Will we fall into that same boat? One of my favorite, if I was a kid growing up, one of my favorite groups, as many that were my age, was DC Talk.

[23 : 55] And they had a song that was called, What If I Stumble? And at the beginning of the song, there was an intro that was being, at the intro was being played, there was a quote that was read.

And it was a quote by Brendan Manning, and it said this. It said, the greatest single cause of atheism in the world today is Christians. Who acknowledge Jesus with their lips, walk out the door, and deny him by their lifestyle.

That is what an unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable. Saying one thing and doing another. Many of you may know Friedrich Nitschke.

He's a well-known German philosopher. He once said, the best argument against Christianity is Christians. How sad is that to hear that?

That we are oftentimes our own worst enemies. You know, the acid test is not so much what we say about ourselves, but what the world says about God because of us.

[24 : 54] Jesus said, let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven. And so with that, let me ask you a difficult question.

And when I say let me ask you this question, I ask myself at the same time. Does your life, does my life, point people to a Savior?

Or does your life, does my life, cause people to blaspheme his holy name? You know, if we're striving for practical righteousness in our lives, the world will sit up and they'll notice.

And if they take a look, are they going to see lives of humility and integrity and purity? Or are they going to see a life of hypocrisy?

And that's what Paul questions here. So number one, he says, beware of overconfidence.

Secondly, he says, beware of religious association. You know, these verses, they serve as what I think I would term as a great reversal.

[25 : 59] That what Paul does here is he levels the Jews and he puts them on the same playing field with the Gentiles. Those who thought they were here and thought the others were here, he puts them on the same level. And he does so by calling out their favorite religious work, and that is circumcision.

He indicates to them that even circumcision will not ensure salvation. In verse 25, for circumcision indeed is a value if you obey the law, but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision.

So Paul is very clear here that circumcision is only valuable if you continually practice the law and keep the law. And what does James 2.10 say?

Does anybody keep the law? Whoever keeps the whole law yet offends at one point, he has broken it all. So the point isn't here that, hey, you're good if you're circumcised because you just got to keep the law.

Well, they couldn't keep the law. And so therefore, the circumcision was meaningless in that regard. For these Jews who failed to keep the law, and incidentally, that's all of them, they are relying on their circumcision.

[27 : 09] And it's then uncircumcision that Paul is essentially hitting them over the head with a spiritual two-by-four. One of the greatest insults in Judaism was to call another Jew an uncircumcised Jew.

And that is exactly what Paul is doing here. He's showing no mercy to his fellow Jews. He argues that the circumcised Jew who transgresses the law will literally, it says here, become a foreskin.

This means that he's no different than the Gentile. And this is one of the lowest insults, the lowest blows that you could cast upon someone. You know, what an indictment on these overconfident Jews.

You know, for us in 2021, here in the U.S. especially, our primary problem to approaching this verse is we don't really understand, or we don't really value, so to speak, what this verse or what this symbol meant to the Jews.

You know, to us here in the U.S., circumcision essentially is really just an optional physical act that's performed on babies, baby boys. Some are circumcised, some aren't now.

[28 : 19] Now, outside the Jewish faith, few people are circumcised for religious reasons. Most people undergo the procedure simply for hygienic purposes. But the act of circumcision, it was incredibly significant to Jews.

God first instituted circumcision as a sign, as a sign of a covenant that God entered into with Abraham and his descendants back in Genesis, that all males descended from Abraham were to be circumcised on the eighth day as a mark of their identity as the people of God.

And so to the Jews, circumcision was intended to demonstrate that a man had committed himself to obey the Lord and that he had invited God to cut that man from his heirs and that they rebelled against God.

Well, unfortunately, many Jews came to think that the mere rite guaranteed their salvation. But we know circumcision was never meant to be an end in itself.

The physical mark was meant to be, excuse me, accompanied by a deep spiritual commitment to God. And where commitment was absent, circumcision soon degenerated into ritualism.

[29 : 38] And that's roughly what happened over the centuries, that by the fifth, first century, many rabbis had spoke of circumcision as if it was an automatic ticket to heaven, that in itself, that's what got you there.

However, that's like putting a hood ornament from a Mercedes Benz on a broken down Chevy. It doesn't change the car. It just changes what it looks like on the outside.

So circumcision was a ritual meant to be an outward sign or a seal of an inward reality. And the outward ritual profits a person only if it's accompanied by an inward reality.

That outward rite, that symbol, it's worthless if it's apart from an inward change. Apart from this, it's just a ritual, just a symbol with no substance.

Do we see that in our world today? Do we see that in our church today? Baptism, confession, church membership, communion, other good works.

[30 : 40] Many regard their infant baptism, for example, it's the same way that the Jews regarded their circumcision, as a ticket to heaven. And it's never what any of those things are intended for.

I'm going to try to skip ahead here since we're running short on time. I'll go ahead and ask the musicians to come up. Sometimes the Lord gives you more time to go through things, and sometimes there are things that are better.

And I think really what I want to focus on there is just the understanding that the Lord is not looking at the outward, but rather he is looking at the inward.

Let me ask you this question. Do you like peaches? I like peaches. Of all the fruits, I like peaches. And if I were to tell you that I had a can with a label that showed peaches, and I were to give it to you today, and you were to go home, and you were to have lunch, and you were to sit down at the table with your spouse or your family, and you were to open up that can.

And when you open up that can, you realize there's not peaches in the can, but rather it's I mistakenly took the food from my dog, and I put a peach label on it.

[31 : 58] How would that come across? So with that being said, let me ask you the question.

Would you rather have the can that has the peaches inside or the can that has the dog food inside if you're having lunch with your family?

Okay. The outward appearance is outweighed by the inward contents. You know, in our day, cans and bottles, they have labels on them to indicate what's inside, and circumcision was a label, and it implied that the Jew was obedient to God.

However, if he was not obedient, the label, it was misleading. It was worthless. You know, Paul is saying baptism, it can't save you. The Lord's Supper, it can't save you.

Church membership, it can't save you or help you. Good works, they don't save you. They don't help you. I mean, these things aren't bad. They're wonderful. God expects you to obey him in each of these areas.

But unless our heart has been circumcised, unless we've been changed on the inside, the outward appearing, which is what we see with the Jews here, it was worthless. It was worthless.

[33 : 05] Paul closes, as we go through here in verse 28 and 29, he says, For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor circumcision outward and physical, but a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the spirit, not by the letter.

His praise is not from man, but is from God. No outward circumcision will ultimately earn praise from God.

Salvation is by sheer grace, for God will not share his glory with others. You know, I think the question today is, what does this mean for us?

You know, what does this mean for us? As shockingly as this may sound, and it may not shock you, it probably shouldn't shock you. There will be many people who go to church. There will be many people who claim to be believers.

There will be many people who state that they believe and that they understand the word of God who will not be spending eternity with the Lord. Sadly, the lake of fire will be populated with people from every religious persuasion.

[34 : 25] Why is that? It's because many people are locked into false religious confidence. They trusted in religion instead of Christ.

And in the end, they were too religious for their own good. So Paul builds up this case of indictment in chapters 1 and 2. And it's going to continue into chapter 3 next week where we see, unless you be confused, unless you be not sure, he says, there is none that are good, not even one.

So if we've gotten through chapter 2 and you're not quite sure if you fit into any of these verses, he'll make it solid next week. So Paul builds an ironclad case, an open and shut case.

Paul has delivered what can only be considered a disastrous indictment here in the first two chapters. But here's the thing. There's good news on the horizon.

There's great news on the horizon. In the book of Romans, he sets his foundation in the first two chapters. And what we're going to see going forward is we're going to see that there is deliverance, that there is justification, that there is reconciliation, not by us, but rather by Christ, by faith alone and Christ alone.

[36 : 00] What a great God we have. You know, we sang a song this morning at the cross, and it said this, At the cross, at the cross, I surrender my life. I'm in awe of you. Where your love ran red and my sins washed white, I owe all to you.

I owe all to you, Jesus. And while I was singing that, I thought, you know what? I owe all to him, but everything I have would not even begin to even fill up the jar of what was required to begin to pay the price of what was owed.

And so if you're a believer this morning, a child of God, aren't you glad that the debt that you owe has been paid for by the person and the work of Jesus Christ, that his sinless life and his excruciating death have turned away God's wrath and have satisfied his holy standards, that our sins, past, present, and future, have been forgiven forever, not because of what we do, not because of who we are, but because of who he is and because of what he did for us.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the time this morning. Lord, we just are encouraged by your word, Lord. Lord, we just, we know, Lord, we come to you not with anything that we can offer, Lord. We come to you, Lord, in faith, Lord, in the work of your son, the finished work on the cross, shedding his blood for our sins that we may have access to you, Lord.

We just pray that we would remember that if we go out, Lord, this weekend. And again, I pray that we would be people that not, Lord, would blaspheme your name, but people who that those in the world that is lost would look upon and would say, there's something different.

[37 : 43] There's something different. Lord, we just thank you for the grace and the mercy you bestow upon us every day. We thank you for this in your son's name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.