

Episode 119

For merely listening to the law doesn't make us right with God. It is obeying the law that makes us right in his sight.

- Romans 2.13

Before we get into the chapter of Romans, it's important to remember that each sentence and verse that we read is part of an argument that Paul is unpacking, and to take one verse and set it aside can be very misleading when we form doctrines or principles around that one idea. Tomorrow we will look at the bigger picture, particularly around the law, but what I want to highlight here is how Paul urges the Christians in Rome to be more than just hearers of the word but to allow it to take hold of their lives, changing them from the inside out.

Consider Judas, one of Jesus' disciples. Judas Iscariot had one of the best small group experiences that anyone has ever had. He had the best preacher the world has ever known. Judas had the most incredible moral example one could ever hope for, and the input he received over the years was literally supernatural.

Also, the same applies to the opportunities he had for output. Judas Iscariot was sent out with all the other disciples to minister, having been trained and equipped to get involved in peoples' lives and see God's kingdom come. He would have helped those in pain, taking moments to counsel and care, teach and heal.

However, despite all the incredible input and remarkable output, the gospel never seemed to truly take hold of him. So Paul leans in on this chapter to address those whose depth of relationship with God is purely an input, output relationship and points out that that is not what really matters.

Do you look at your theological knowledge? Judas would outshine us all. Do you look at how successful your ministry is, how many lives you change, how much good you do? These are not the questions we should be asking.

What Judas Iscariot helps us see, and what Paul points to in this chapter, is how incredibly important it is to ask "Am I experiencing the presence of God?" And, as a result, is their evidence of the fruit of the Spirit growing in my life? Not how much do I know, or how many lives have been changed through me, but rather, has my own life been changed?

Judas Iscariot did not have love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Instead, he had suspicion, deceit, greed, and betrayal beating in his chest, which is why Jesus said you will know them by their fruit.

It's not about how much you know, or how many lives have been changed through you, but rather, is there evidence that your own life has been changed?

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