

Romans, pt.4, 2.17–29

Presumption: Trusting In All The Wrong Things

Introduction:

1. Two commercials during Super Bowl 39;

Two of the best commercials shown during Super Bowl XXXIX were sponsored by Ameriquest Mortgage Company. Both had the same message: "Don't judge too quickly."

In one ad, a convenience store shopper is standing at the counter and talking on his cell phone. He says to the person on the other end, "You're getting robbed." The two clerks hear those words and react by squirting the man with pepper spray, slugging him with a baseball bat, and then zapping him with an electric cattle prod.

In the second commercial, a man is preparing a romantic dinner. He chops vegetables with a large knife, while tomato sauce simmers on the stove. A white cat knocks the pan of sauce onto the floor and then falls into the mess. Just as the man picks up his tomato-splattered cat, his wife opens the door. She sees him holding a cat dripping with red sauce in one hand and a large knife in the other. The scene appears to be unmistakably horrific.

As these ads show, things aren't always as they first appear.

Richard Kauffman, McDonald, Pennsylvania, as seen during Super Bowl XXXIX (2-6-05)

2. Stephanie's student who knew Mozart's phone # 1756 - 1791;
3. Presumption can be deadly - WW2 veteran who had several friends killed during a friendly fire accident when an American airplane strafed and American tank.
4. Context - Paul confronts the presumptuous attitude of Jews; he is building God's case against mankind's sinfulness...1.15 - he's eager to preach the GN, but first must establish the bad news...we're all sinners & stand condemned before God...he's writing to a mixed church (Jew/Gentile) so he's covering everybody.
 - a. The Gentiles are sinful b/c they suppress the truth;
 - b. We're all guilty of the same kinds of sin & will be judged;
 - c. Don't presume just b/c you're Jewish, you have a relationship with God
 - i. These Jewish Christians living in Rome probably had a lot of pride; they lived in the center of a corrupt culture

and had not given in; they had continued with their Jewish practices and stayed away from worldly influences; followed the Law; probably felt themselves morally superior to both the general populace and the converted Gentiles.

- ii. Paul is leveling the playing field...we're all on the same page...we're all sinners...he strips away the veneer of religiosity and exposes the rotten core...
 - iii. Read the text
 - iv. This is an extremely confrontational passage; he is challenging three of the cornerstones of the Jewish faith - national identity & the Law & circumcision...think of it like you're a Jew...It is tantamount to someone challenging an American service person's citizenship...this is the type of emotional intensity that's being stirred here.
 - v. Many Jews then & today believe that b/c they are Jews their salvation is guaranteed.
5. Spiritual Presumption always leads to humiliation & potentially eternal disaster.

Don't Trust In Your In Your National & Religious Identity - 2.17, 28

- There were some highminded Jews who thought that since God had chosen them as a people that they were therefore immune to God's judgment; they presumed their relationship with God was good, b/c God had chosen them.
- Historical calling of the Jews
 - The word "Jews" comes from the word Judah; originally it was only applied to those from the tribe of Judah, but eventually applied to all Israelites.
 - Abraham in Genesis 12 & 15 - based on faith
- "Brag" - good boasting;

- **Application:** You cannot trust in your religious upbringing or religious heritage as the basis for a relationship with God...thank God for it, but don't assume that puts you in good stead with God.

Don't Trust In Your Knowledge of The Truth - 2.17-18

- They presumed that since they were entrusted with the Law (3.2 - whole revelation of God) they were in good with God.
- They thought that since they were stewards of God's law that they therefore had a better relationship with him than others.
- **Application:** Overconfidence - assuming knowing the truth is a signal of deeper spirituality; I used to assume that the guys that knew the Bible the most were therefore the most spiritual; Jesus said, "You not only need to **hear** my words, but put them into **practice**...it's like building your house on a rock."

Don't Trust in Your Calling/Abilities/Position - 2.19-20a

- God placed a special calling on Israel to be a light to the nations (Is.42 - "light to the Gentiles"). They thought that since they had that responsibility they were immune to God's judgment against sin...they stood above the sin the Law condemns
- This presumption led to a sloppy spiritual life. They weren't practicing what they preached.
- They had an erroneous sense of their own self-importance.
- **Application:** Don't ever presume knowledge & Passion & position & ability = Maturity & obedience. Whenever a follower of Jesus Christ feels superior to others the smell of rotting flesh (the smell of fleshliness) will soon follow behind him. If you find yourself in a position of great blessing, open doors, Heaven's favor & answered prayer please (for the sake of us all) maintain a humble heart. You cannot assume that gives you the liberty to have demanding and superior attitude.
 - Some people have, "I have the Spirit yes I do, I have the Spirit more than you" attitude...they share all their great stories and you have to wonder are they trying to elevate themselves in the eyes of others...God wants obedience over the long haul.
 - There is the pride of being "radical".

- Paul makes an critical observation –v.21–24. My disobedience and or arrogance can be the source of unbeliever’s blaspheming God – Is.52.5; Ezek.36.22. Whenever unbelievers see a Christian – live a double life or walk in spiritual arrogance or go down in moral defeat – it can create a question in their minds about the truthfulness of God’s message. In some, it surfaces a latent hatred towards God and Christianity; it can also hardens their heart toward the truth. “If it’s true, than why hasn’t it changed you/why are you still acting in a sinful manner?” Their sense is that it isn’t true.

Don’t Trust In your Religious Observances – 2.25–27

- Circumcision was the outward marking God ordained for his people; They were circumcised as a physical sign of God’s possessions (Gen.17.9–11)
- In Paul’s time circumcision had become a religious observance that no longer denoted inner transformation; an action with no transformation; The sign had lost its significance.
- Rabbi’s taught that circumcision would keep you from judgment;
- God wanted the outer sign supported by the inner working of the HS. Equation: Circumcision + disobedience = uncircumcision; Uncircumcision + obedience = circumcision. THIS WAS A HUGE STATEMENT PAUL WAS MAKING. This is akin to someone getting in your face & shaking you violently & stating, “You better listen to me!!”
- Application: Don’t trust in your baptism, tithing, church membership, Christian marriage,
- God has always made it clear that he wants a transformed heart; God doesn’t want form w/o faith; why do so many leave the church never to return, form w/o faith.

Bottom Line: God is looking for a transformed heart – 2.29

- True Jewishness is a transformed heart; God has always made it clear that he wants a heart of obedience, not just hands of observance – Deut.10.16; 30.6; Jer.4.4, 9.25f.; Ezek.44.7, 9
- **True Jewishness is based on an inner transformation, not outer observations or ethnic origins**; Abraham had genuine faith as the first Jew; we must follow in his footsteps of faith;

- Houston Texan fan analogy – Just b/c you live in the Houston region doesn't make you a Texan's fan; you're determined to be a fan based upon commitment, not locale.
- True Jewishness isn't determined by geography or ethnic heritage, but by a heart that is right with God through faith in Jesus..

Conclusion: Where are you being presumptuous?

- About your life – “I know the road ahead”
- That we would welcome the activity of God;
 - If Jesus Christ were to come today, people would not even crucify him. They would ask him to dinner, and hear what he had to say, and make fun of it.
- We would never find ourselves far from God
- God is always on our side (at work, school, politically, theologically, etc.)
 - One trouble with earnestness is that those who are possessed by it so often take it as proof certain that God's on their side.
- That we are in right standing with God
 - Some have a misleading religious confidence...Are you 100% sure that if today your life ended that you would be welcomed into Heaven? What would you say if God asked you, “why should I let you into heaven?”
 - Would you say: B/c I was born in a Christian family...know the truth...done some great things for others & God...faithful church member...etc
 - The only right answer is, “My faith is in Jesus.”
 - Matt Emmons had the gold medal in sight. He was one shot away from claiming victory in the 2004 Olympic 50-meter three-position rifle event. He didn't even need a bull's-eye to win. His final shot merely needed to be on target.
 - Normally, the shot he made would have received a score of 8.1, more than enough for a gold medal. But in what was described as "an extremely rare mistake in elite competition," Emmons fired at the wrong target. Standing in lane two, he fired at the target in lane three. His score for a good shot at the wrong target?—0. Instead of a medal, Emmons ended up in eighth place.

It doesn't matter how accurate you are if you are aiming at the wrong goal.

Alan Price, Chatsworth, Georgia; source: David Mordkoff, "American Emmons Misses Out on Gold by Firing at Wrong Target," [www.Spo](#)

- Remember Matt.7.21–23, “Many will say to me on that day, “Lord, didn’t we...and I’ll say, ‘I never knew you.’”
- Jesus is looking for a transformed heart...people who both know and obey the truth.