

“Circumcision of the Heart”

Sermons on Romans # 6

Texts: Romans 2:17-3:8; Leviticus 26:40-46

In the opening chapters of Romans, Paul has painted a very bleak picture of the human condition. The apostle has made the case that the Gentiles are under God’s condemnation because they attempt to suppress the knowledge of the God through unrighteous acts. They have exchanged the truth of God for a lie and refused to worship God as they should. Because of this, God gives the Gentiles over to the ever-intensifying downward spiral of human sin depicted in Romans 1:18-32. In Romans 2:1-16, Paul now turns his gaze upon the Jews, who were looking down upon Gentile behavior, all the while doing the very same things they were condemning the Gentiles for doing. Then, in the last half of Romans 2 through Romans 3:8, Paul continues to focus upon the Jews who have failed to serve as a guide for the Gentiles and who think that possessing the law and the sign of circumcision will exempt them from the judgment of God.

If the issues plaguing the church in Rome have to do with the nature of the gospel and the role Jew and Gentile will play in the future course of redemptive history, then Paul must make plain the gravity of human sin as the necessary backdrop against which to set forth the graciousness of God in Jesus Christ as revealed in the gospel. Taking aim at the Gentiles in Romans 1, Paul points out that the Gentiles suppress the truth about God in unrighteousness. As a consequence of their refusal to acknowledge God, Paul sets out a catalogue of human sin in verses 28-31. When he is finished, no one is left standing. But the Gentiles are not the only ones under the condemnation of God, so are Paul’s own people, the Jews.

In Romans 2:1, Paul shifts gears and directs the spotlight of the righteous requirements of God’s law upon Israel. Although the Jews recognized the sins of the Gentiles, what they fail to recognize is that they are doing the very same things that they accuse the Gentiles of doing. To expose their hypocrisy and make the case that the Jews are every bit as sinful as the Gentiles, in Romans 2:6, Paul reminds his readers of one of the most fundamental points in all of biblical revelation: God will give to each person according to what they have done. As the apostle makes plain in verses 7-10, all those who persist in doing good, will gain eternal life, while all those who continue to do evil suffer eternal loss.

But looking back on these words in Romans 2:6-10 from the perspective of Romans 3:9-20, where Paul is summarizing his treatment of human sinfulness, it is clear that for Paul there is no one who has done good, no not one. All have turned aside, Jew and Gentile. There is no one righteous, no not even one. If God is to give to everyone according to what they have done (blessing for obedience, and curse for disobedience), then the entire human race stands condemned. We have all turned away. Paul further elaborates on this blessing-curse principle in Romans 2:13, when he writes, *“For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God’s sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous.”* If the Jews obey the law, they will indeed be regarded as righteous. But the Jews don’t obey the commandments God has given to them, therefore, if left on their own, the Jews will not be justified any more than those Gentiles which the Jews were condemning.

You can just hear the fairness question bubbling under the surface among Paul’s Jewish readers—“well, if we must keep the law to be justified, what about the Gentiles who did not have the law?” “How are they to be justified?” “What standard will God apply to them?” While the Gentiles were never part of the covenant God made with Israel at Mount Sinai, so that the Gentiles did not receive the commandments

from God on tablets of stone, nevertheless, the Gentiles do indeed have the law written upon their hearts. This is because all men and women have been created in the image of God and are under the covenant of works, which God made with Adam on behalf of the entire human race. Even though such people suppress the truth of God through unrighteous acts, they know that their actions are wrong and that God has every right to condemn them. This is why the Gentiles invent every conceivable form of false religion to help them push from their minds the fact of an inevitable day of judgment yet to come.

This brings us to the latter part of Romans 2 (vv. 17-29), and the first 8 verses of Romans 3. Paul finishes up his case against the Jews, before going on to cite a litany of Old Testament passages in Romans 3:9-20, which conclusively demonstrate that both Jew and Gentile alike are under sin and that apart from the mercy of God, all of us deserve the condemnation of God. But after setting out the bad news of human sin, beginning in Romans 3:21, Paul will set forth with great power the good news of the gospel through which a righteousness from God is revealed. The apostle will demonstrate how God saves sinners in the person of his son, through the preaching of the gospel, in which the power of God is revealed and through which all those who trust in Jesus will be delivered from the day of wrath.

As we start to make our way through our text (Romans 2:17-3:8), we begin with verses 17-20, where Paul deals with the Jew's false sense of confidence in the law of God—a confidence which in reality is nothing but hypocrisy.

In verse 17, Paul, for the first time, specifically identifies the Jews by name, although it is clear that he was been speaking to them from the beginning of chapter 2. There is every likelihood that throughout these verses, Paul is using the exact same language regarding these Jewish claims, that the Jews themselves were using when boasting about their superiority over the Gentiles.¹ This is evident from the way in which Paul states his case, beginning in verse 17: “*Now you, if you call yourself a Jew; if you rely on the law and brag about your relationship to God;*”²

The situation indicated by Paul's language, at the very least, implies that the Jews were bragging (boasting) to the Gentiles that they were the people of God *because* God had given them his law. Let us be clear here. Paul is not saying that being the chosen people of God and having the law is a bad thing. It is not even a bad thing to boast about what God has done. But what is a bad thing is boasting about these things, based upon the false assumption that because the Jews were chosen by God and were given the law, the Jewish people were somehow exempt from that judgment which is coming upon the Gentiles. Receiving the law of God is not the same thing as obeying the law of God!

This theme of exposing Jewish hypocrisy continues on in verse 18, when Paul writes, “*if you know his will and approve of what is superior because you are instructed by the law.*” Paul now adds two more distinguishing marks of a Jew, and about which the Jews, were apparently bragging to the Gentiles. The first of these marks is the knowledge of God's will—which is revealed, of course, in the law. The second mark is closely related. Because the Jew knows the commandments of God, the Jew, therefore, should

¹ Cranfield, Commentary on Romans, I.164.

² (E1+ the present indicative) has the sense of an affirmative statement, not a conditional sentence. The NIV inserts the “if” in the following sentences. See Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, p. 130.

also know what is superior (i.e., what is best).³

Paul lists five blessings in verses 17-18 historically enjoyed by the Jews and about which they were bragging. In verses 19-20, Paul now mentions four areas in which the Jews should be functioning as an example to the Gentiles, but are not. Thus Paul asks, *“If you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light for those who are in the dark, 20 an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of infants, because you have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth,”* then perhaps, you should think again!

The first of these four areas deals with the fact that the Jews are convinced that because they have the law, they are serving as a guide to the blind, i.e., those who do not have the law (the Gentiles). The Jew is convinced of this fact. Furthermore, the Jew is convinced that he providing light to those in the dark, that he should be able to instruct those who are dull of mind and who are functionally children or babes in all of these matters pertaining to the knowledge of the will of God. Because the Jew has been given the law, Paul says, the Jew possesses the very embodiment of the knowledge of the will of God and the truth about what God expects from his creatures. This means that if we want to know what God requires of us as creatures, we simply look to the law. God has not hidden these things from us. He has published them on tablets of stone as well as having written them on our hearts. This means we should never be at the mercy of those who tell us that they know what God’s will is for our lives, or who claim to have secret revelations from God. God has told us everything we need to know in his word.

Despite all of the privileges which God has given to Israel, the Jews became proud of the fact that they possess these things, while the Gentiles do not. The Jew is proud that he does not live in darkness like the Gentile. He is proud that he knows the will of God. Because this will was revealed to Israel in the form of the Ten Commandments, the Jew has been spared from the kind of downward spiral into ever-deeper depths of sin like the Gentiles. But, the Jew has forgotten that the possession of these things is not his own doing. The Jews possess these things because they are gracious gifts from God and therefore, the law and the knowledge of the will of God are not things for the Jew to brag about. Rather, these are blessings from God and therefore are to be received with gratitude and humility. Furthermore, these things are blessings which certainly bring with them a greater measure of responsibility, as seen in the fact that to brag about them is to violate the commandments of God with which Israel was entrusted.⁴

This is why in verses 21-24, Paul breaks off from the earlier sentence construction—if, then—to now deal with the fact of the Jew’s abysmal failure to live up to the very commandments which God had given them.⁵

Paul now asks a series of very pointed questions in verses 21-22 which expose the fact that the Jew has not lived up to the demands of the commandments with which they have been entrusted. How can you brag about the law, when you yourself don’t obey it? Asks Paul, *“you, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal? 22 You who say that people should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?”*

³ See the discussion in Moo ([The Epistle to the Romans](#), pp. 160-161) on the difficulties in translating this phrase.

⁴ Morris, [The Epistle to the Romans](#), p. 133-135.

⁵ Morris, [The Epistle to the Romans](#), p. 135; Cranfield, [Commentary on Romans](#), I.167-168.

The first question Paul raises gets right at the heart of Israel's proper relationship to the Gentiles. Since the Jews have been entrusted with the revelation of the will of God in the form of the Ten Commandments, Israel is to serve as a teacher of the Gentile nations. Thus Paul asks of the Jews, "You who teach, have you learned what you are teaching?"⁶ This is an echo of our Lord's words in Matthew 23:1-3, when Jesus "said to the crowds and to his disciples: 'The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. 3 So you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach.'" Paul and Jesus are saying the same thing.

The second question relates to theft. Do those of you who preach about stealing, steal yourselves? The word "to steal," here (κλέπτειν), refers to the actions of a sneak thief or a bandit, so the reference to stealing likely goes beyond mere theft to include all forms of dishonesty as well.⁷ The third question relates to adultery, which was forbidden among the Jews, but was widely practiced throughout the Graeco-Roman. Thus Paul is asking, "Do you Jews who condemn the practice among the Gentiles of taking mistresses, take mistresses yourselves?"

The fourth question comes as a bit of a surprise. What about idolatry, which the law condemns, and was the thing the Jews objected to the most about Gentile behavior? It is interesting that Paul does not ask the Jews whether or not they worship idols in the same way as the Gentiles were doing—Jews didn't and would do such a thing. But Paul does ask the Jews if they rob temples, probably a reference to the fact that certain Jews were known to manufacture and sell idols and implements of idol worship to the Gentiles, and in doing so, turn a handsome profit. But a broader principle is also at stake—to condemn any pagan practice, while making your living supporting it, is for Paul an act of out-right hypocrisy, spoken of here as robbing a temple, in the sense of withholding what is rightfully due to God.⁸

The inconsistency between Jewish words and Jewish actions is apparent in verse 23, when Paul simply asks: *23 You who brag about the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law?*" Paul's point is very simple. You Jews brag about being given the law, supposedly demonstrating your superiority over the Gentiles. But all the while you break the commandments and bring dishonor to the God whom, you say, has chosen you over the Gentiles. You say one thing, but do something else! And the consequences of such hypocrisy are tragically spelled out in verse 24. Paul laments, *As it is written: "God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."* Not only is this tendency for the Gentiles to blaspheme Israel's God self-evident from the actual circumstances which existed between Jew and Gentile in much of the first century world, but Paul even has biblical support for his contentions, citing from Isaiah 52:5. The current state of Israel's piety (deplorable) was predicted by Israel's prophets. In Paul's day, as in our own, any form of hypocrisy on the part of God's people, is not only an obstacle to the church's witness to world and to the preaching of the gospel, but Christians lose all moral high ground from which to address the theological and ethical issues of the day.

⁶ Cranfield notes that this was a common theme among the Rabbis. See, Commentary on Romans, I.168.

⁷ Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, p. 136.

⁸ Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, pp. 136-137.

In order to deal with Jewish hypocrisy, Paul has to discuss the law. But Paul hasn't yet mentioned the sign of membership in the covenant of grace, which is circumcision. And so in verses 25-29, Paul now deals with the meaning of circumcision, especially the fact that the sign of the Abrahamic covenant is useless without the reality to which it points.

In verse 25, Paul writes, *“Circumcision has value if you observe the law, but if you break the law, you have become as though you had not been circumcised.”* The NIV omits the word (“for”—γὰρ) which connects these verses to the preceding. If the Jews were confident because they were given the law, that misguided confidence was greatly bolstered by the covenant sign of circumcision. Once again, Paul's words of response to the Jews make perfect sense in light of the blessing/curse principle set out in verse 6: *“God will give to everyone according to what they have done,”* which is reiterated in verse 13, when Paul writes, *“For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous.”*

Paul's point about circumcision is very simple and straightforward when viewed in light of Romans 2:6 and 13. If you are a Jew and obey the law, then circumcision is of great value. It is the sign confirming that someone truly observes the law, that they have kept God's commandments and are thereby justified. They are righteous and have earned life. But the problem is that the Jews have not obeyed the law. Like the Gentiles, they are sinners, as seen in their hypocritical behavior. Despite the Jewish confidence in circumcision, since the Jews have broken the law of God, their circumcision is now useless. The Jews are now in the very same boat as the godless Gentiles whom they despise. Since they are sinners, like the Gentiles, God regards them as though they had never been circumcised.

Let us not forget that the converse is also true because this point hinges upon the blessing-curse principle. As Paul puts it in verse 26, *“If those who are not circumcised (i.e., the Gentiles) keep the law's requirements, will they not be regarded as though they were circumcised?”* God will indeed bless those who persist in doing good with eternal life, whether they have received the sign of covenant membership or not. This becomes very clear in the first part of verse 27: *“The one who is not circumcised physically and yet obeys the law (the Gentile) will condemn you (the Jew) who, even though you have the written code and circumcision, are a lawbreaker.”*

Paul will not let his Jewish reader off the hook. The Gentile who obeys the law of God written upon his heart, will condemn the law-breaking Jew, even though the Jew was given all of the advantages that the Gentile never had, the law (the written code) and circumcision. Because the basic covenant principle is in view, that God blesses obedience and curses disobedience, once the Jew is regarded by God as lawbreaker, he is also regarded as though he had never been circumcised. He may be citizen of national Israel, but he is not a member of true Israel, a distinction Paul will make in Romans 9:6. Therefore, possessing the law and undergoing a surgical procedure cannot spare the Jew from judgement once he has sinned, any more than the Gentile sinner will be spared from that wrath which is come. But if it is not possessing the law and receiving the sign of circumcision which makes someone a true Jew and part of the people of God, then what is it?

Paul addresses this matter head on in verses 28-30, making an important distinction between the outward act or sign (circumcision), and the inward reality, which is what someone is inwardly, i.e., in their hearts. Says Paul: *“A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. 29 No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God.”* This distinction between the sign and the reality is not something invented by Paul. Indeed in Leviticus 26:40-46 (our

Old Testament lesson), Moses spoke of Israel's struggle to repent as being the direct result of an uncircumcised heart, that is a lack of trust in the power and promise of God to save his people.

The reality then—circumcision of the heart—leads to the response of faith to that which is promised in the outward sign. But the covenant sign without the inward reality (a circumcised heart) only brings condemnation. And this is the very point that the Jew was missing. In fact, circumcision is sign of both blessing and a warning of curse.⁹ The promise depicted by circumcision is that through faith in the promise, God will save his people through the shedding of blood of the coming seed (Messiah), who is the mediator of the covenant of grace. But circumcision is also a sign of curse to all those who take the sign, but who do not believe the promise. Like nothing else can, circumcision is a graphic picture of an unbeliever and all their descendants being cut-off from the people of God for generations to come.

According to Paul, God is not at all impressed by outward religious acts and removal of certain pieces of skin. These things are not meritorious, nor will they spare us from God's wrath upon our sins, as the Jew mistakenly assumed. To be a true Jew and an heir to all of those things promised to Abraham, is to believe the promise of God that he will redeem his people from the guilt and power of sin. The person who believes this promise, however, does so because they are the beneficiary of the inward work of the Holy Spirit, who, figuratively-speaking, circumcises the human heart, so that sinners believe the promise and renounce their own righteousness.

Therefore, any person who believes the promise of God to save sinners is not someone looking for praise from men because of the outward religious acts he performs. Rather, God blesses the response of faith—that which he sees in the circumcised heart—and which is created in that human heart through the power of the Holy Spirit through the means of the preaching of the gospel which Paul has described earlier as the power of God for the salvation of all those who believe.

Now that Paul has exposed Jewish hypocrisy in relationship to the Gentile—that the Jew self-righteously judges the Gentiles while doing the very same thing the Gentiles do—in verses 1-8 of Romans 3, Paul must deal with the matter of whether or not there are any advantages of being a Jew, as well as certain questions raised by his comments. Given the situation Paul has described, it may sound to his Jewish reader like it might be better to be Gentile, since being given the law and circumcision have not exempted Israel from God's judgment! In fact, having these things have only exposed the Jews to greater judgment!

As he so often does, Paul makes his point by asking a rhetorical question and then immediately answering it. After pointing out that the possession of the law and circumcision will not exempt the Jew from judgment, Paul now asks in verse 1: "*What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision?*" In other words, if being given these gifts from God has only served to render Israel all the more guilty before God, wouldn't it be better to be a Gentile? Paul's emphatic affirmative answer—"*Much in every way*"¹⁰ indicates that God does keep his promises to the people, and that

⁹ See Meredith Kline, By Oath Consigned (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1968), especially pp. 39-49.

¹⁰ Paul uses the phrase, *πολὸν κατὰ πάντα τρόπον*, which indicates that Paul is concentrating upon Jewish advantages, without dealing with the question of whether or not the Gentiles had any. See Cranfield, Commentary on Romans, I.177.

possessing both the law and the sign of the covenant, major themes in the Old Testament discussion of our redemption, are a great blessing from God, especially when the Jew, who now trusts in Christ, sees these things in the light of the coming of Jesus Christ. This is why Paul can affirm at least one important advantage of being a Jew in verse 2.

“First of all, they have been entrusted with the very words of God.” Unlike the Gentiles, who have but general revelation through that which has been made, God entrusted Israel with his word written. This is an amazing assertion by Paul because the inspiration of Scriptures moves beyond the thoughts and ideas of the biblical writers, to the very words which they write. As Paul will put it in 2 Timothy 3:16, *“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.”* The Old Testament does not contain the word of God. Rather the words of the prophets are themselves are the words of God, which he breathed forth,¹¹ giving Israel a knowledge of God’s will, which no Gentile nation ever possessed. This is a great blessing and has preserved Israel from many of the consequences of the downward spiral of human sinfulness that Paul has preached of the Gentiles.

But why have the Jews failed to respond in faith to the promises contained within that word? Does this demonstrate Israel’s sinfulness, or does it mean that God is not faithful to his promises? In verse 3, Paul asks for the first time the critical question that he will spend three chapters in Romans 9-11 answering in great detail: *“What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God’s faithfulness?”* This time Paul’s answer is emphatically negative.¹² *“Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar. As it is written: ‘So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge.’”* Paul will not even entertain the thought that Israel’s present spiritual condition might stem from God breaking his promise to his chosen people. Paul denies this emphatically as he can. What he does say is that God’s judgments are always right, that God prevails when he judges, and because this is the case, if anyone says otherwise, they are the liars.¹³ The Jew is under the judgment of God, because he too, like the Gentile is a sinner, and therefore under God’s curse.

The questions raised by Paul’s line of argument continue in verse 5. While this particular question may be yet another hypothetical question that Paul feels needs to be addressed, nevertheless this question has the ring about it of a question that someone in the Roman church may have been asking. *“But if our unrighteousness brings out God’s righteousness more clearly, what shall we say? That God is unjust in bringing his wrath on us? (I am using a human argument.)”* Paul’s answer in verse 6 is once again emphatically negative. *“Certainly not! If that were so, how could God judge the world?”* Here we find an objection which was probably as common in Paul’s day, as it is in ours. If our condition is our own fault, and demonstrates God’s graciousness toward sinners, why are we still held accountable for our actions? Paul’s reply is to call this a human argument and he quickly dismisses it as nonsense by reminding his reader that God will judge the world’s inhabitants according to what we have done. Yes, God is gracious, but that does not mean that grace eliminates justice. Because God is also holy, he must punish all sin, necessarily. Either Christ is punished for us, or we will face God in the judgment and be

¹¹ See the magisterial essay by B. B. Warfield, “God-Inspired Scripture,” in The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishers, 1948), pp. 245-296.

¹² Here we find the emphatic, μή γένοιτο, which means something like, “no way!” “Never.” “Of course not.”

¹³ Morris, The Epistle to the Romans, p. 156.

judged according to what we have done, whether good or evil!

A final question is raised in verse 7, and answered in verse 8. Only this time the question is far from hypothetical. Someone is actually asking it and answering it in a way which provokes the apostle to ire: *“Someone might argue, ‘If my falsehood enhances God’s truthfulness and so increases his glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner?’ ‘Why not say—as we are being slanderously reported as saying and as some claim that we say—‘Let us do evil that good may result’? Their condemnation is deserved.”* This question runs along the same line as the question, “Can God make a rock so big that he can’t lift it?” Or even better, “Have you stopped beating your wife?” However you answer the question, you are trapped. The problem with these things is that the premise of the question itself is invalid, just as it is here.

Is God’s grace magnified by our acts of sin? If it is then we should sin all the more and to even greater depths of depravity to demonstrate how gracious God really is! We should do evil so that good may abound! The false premise is simply that because God is gracious, this somehow excuses human sinfulness. But God’s grace and holiness cannot be pit against each other. This is the kind of question raised by those who hate the fact that salvation from sin depends upon God’s mercy and not human goodness or effort. Paul writes of those who accuse him of saying such a thing—*“their condemnation is reserved.”* Paul might enjoy the saying of one evangelical wag who proposed that in hell, God makes people who ask such questions write on the wall three trillion times, “that was a dumb question.”

By time Paul is finished, Jew and Gentile stand condemned and as if he has not made it clear enough to us, in Romans 3:9-20, our text for next time, Paul will open the Old Testament and prove to his reader that not one of all the human race have earned a right-standing before him—well, one accepted, Jesus Christ, who fulfilled God’s law perfectly and was without any sin whatsoever.

What then, should we take with us from these this section of Romans?

It should now be clear that the human race failed to obey the commandments of God—as they have been revealed in both nature and in the Scriptures. While the Jew has every advantage being given the word of God, the Ten Commandments and the covenant sign of circumcision, the Jew came to believe that salvation came through simply possessing these things, rather than through obeying the God who gave them. So when Jesus Christ came as the second Adam, to fulfill the covenant of works and obey the law of God, the Jews could not grasp the significance of this. They were saying to the Gentiles, “we have the word of God,” “we have the commandments,” “we have marked our bodies with the sign of God’s covenant.” Being a Jew is superior to being a Gentile. As Paul makes plain—it is only those who obey the commandments who will be justified. Possessing the law and being circumcised are useless to sinners. The Jews are every bit as sinful as the Gentiles, and these things cannot save us from our sin.

Until Paul’s Jewish readers comprehend the fact that they are sinners in need a of Savior, who not only dies for their sins but who can provide them with a perfect righteousness which does meet God’s righteous requirements, it is as though they had never been given the law, and as through they has never been circumcised. They are just as the guilty as the Gentiles they had come to despise.

What they need is not the removal of a piece skin, but a circumcision of the heart, wherein God removes the scales from their eyes and grants them an understanding of their true condition before God so that they seek a righteousness from God in the person of Jesus Christ. Barring this work of the Holy Spirit, they will continue to trust in what was cut with a knife, what they do with their hands, and in the fact that they don’t do the horrible things the Gentiles were doing. They will continue to speculate, ask ridiculous

questions, and look down upon others. These actions condemn them, not save them.

This is why there can be no good news of the gospel, without the bad news of human sin. Unless we realize that we stand naked before God and the outward acts of piety and religious ceremonies are of no value in saving us from our sins, we will never look to Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and for the gift of a perfect righteousness. But once we have grasped the fact of our sin, where else can we look, but to the Son of God, who gives us all we need to stand before God on the day of judgment, and hear the words, “not guilty.”

Let us pray.