

ROMANS

THE HEART OF TRANSFORMATION

WEEK 4 | BRAD BEGGS

KEY POINTS

- The heartbeat of Romans is the gospel as the power of God for salvation, received by faith and producing genuine transformation from the inside out.
- Paul confronts religious confidence placed in history, words, and outward signs rather than in Christ Himself, warning that proximity to the truth is not the same as surrender to the truth.
- Hypocrisy is defined as the gap between the truth professed publicly and the life tolerated privately, and Paul warns that this gap causes the name of God to be dishonored among unbelievers.
- Circumcision in the Old Testament was a covenant sign, but Paul argues it only has value when it points to the inward reality it represents, a heart transformed by the Holy Spirit.
- Tim Keller's concept of dead orthodoxy is applied to show how churches and individuals can slide their confidence from Christ to correctness, experience, ceremony, or causes.
- A circumcised heart is marked by three qualities: softness that yields to the Holy Spirit rather than resisting, hunger that pursues God's presence through genuine relational prayer, and dependence that rests in the finished work of Christ rather than self-effort.
- The cross is the ultimate fulfillment of the circumcision sign, as Jesus was cut off and forsaken so that believers could be made right with God through faith in Him alone.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

Romans 2:17-29

Romans 1:16-17

Deuteronomy 30

Ezekiel 36:26

Colossians 2:11

Hebrews 10

2 Corinthians 12

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Paul writes to a people who had serious spiritual pedigree, yet he challenges whether that pedigree had produced genuine transformation. How do you personally guard against mistaking proximity to the truth for surrender to the truth?
2. Tim Keller's concept of dead orthodoxy describes how churches and individuals can slide from trusting Christ to trusting correctness, experience, ceremony, or causes. Which of these tendencies do you think is most subtle and dangerous, and why?
3. Prayer is described as 'keeping company with God.' When prayer becomes only transaction or obligation, it reveals that our confidence has drifted away from Christ. How would you honestly describe your current relationship with prayer, and what does that reveal about where your confidence truly rests?
4. Paul's argument in Romans 2 builds toward the conclusion that no one could keep the covenant, which is precisely what points us to Jesus. How does recognizing your own inability to transform yourself change the way you relate to God and to others who are struggling?
5. Paul concludes that true circumcision is a matter of the heart by the Spirit, not the letter, and that genuine praise comes from God rather than from people. What would it look like for you to stop seeking the approval of others as a measure of your spiritual standing and instead rest fully in what God alone sees and declares about you?

***TO CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION,** check out the additional Week Four Discussion Guide under Small Group Materials in the North Way app under Romans.