

Romans 2:1-16

Verse 1:

--Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things,

--Here, Paul is going to address anyone who thinks the truths of the last chapter do not apply to them. He is anticipating the objector as a Gentile moralist or a religious Jew who would despise the blatant sins of the pagan world and consider themselves morally superior. These are the “good person” types. They see their moralism as an escape from God’s wrath.

--All men are inexcusable because where they judge particular sins in others, they ignore the specific sins in their own lives, particularly those secret sins or sins in good standing.

--Paul wants all men to understand the judgment of God. This is important because when we meet God, we will not meet Him as we wish Him to be, but as He said He is.

Verses 2-4:

--Paul describes the just judgment of God in seven different ways.

--(2-3) But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God?

1) *God’s judgment will be according to truth.*

--There will be no excuses before God. God’s justice must deal thoroughly with all sin, or it is really injustice. Anyone betting on the injustice of God’s character related to sin will be very disappointed.

--The same Bible that declares that God is love (a message hijacked by the world!) also clearly declares that God is righteous.

1 John 2:29: If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.

--Anyone hoping their particular “special case” will warrant an exception will be disappointed. Many defend their sins even when they would freely admit they would condemn the same standard in others. *You wouldn’t accept your pastor living with a woman who is not his wife because of “finances,” but you accept that excuse for yourself.*

--The **you** here is emphatic and gives the sense of: *Do you think you will escape—you?!*

--No one will escape God’s judgment like they may human judgment: Crime not known; Beyond jurisdiction; Failure/Loophole in court; Break out of prison; or even on the run till death, but none of these will work with God.

1 Timothy 5:24-25: Some men’s sins are clearly evident, preceding them to judgment, but those of some men follow later. Likewise, the good works of some are clearly evident, and those that are otherwise cannot be hidden.

--We are blind to the truth of our sin, save by the light of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. Praise Him that He loves us enough to open our eyes so that we can see our maladies.

--(4) Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

--Here we have an exhortation not to despise God's particular work of kindness toward us.

-Goodness: sometimes translated *kindness*, is also used of the fruit of the Spirit in **Galatians 5:22** as well as the Father's eternal revelation of ***the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:7)*** and that through the eternal ages!

--God's goodness is His inclination to deal bountifully with His creation.

-Forbearance: This is a unique word that means to *hold back* or *delay* and is used only here and in **Romans 3:25**, where Paul is specifically speaking about God's patience in waiting to deal with the sin of all humanity in Christ on the cross.

--The image is that of God holding up the wrath and judgment due to crash down upon them.

Think of how children come to gain gratitude for parents who bear with us in our youth.

--We should not despise God's goodness or patience. He allows some to reject Him for 70 or 80 years, and in the pre-flood past, even 800 to 900 years! **We never know where the line is for us personally, so we shouldn't push it.**

-Longsuffering: This is also the same word used of the fruit of the Spirit in **Galatians 5:22** and describes: *patience, endurance, and steadfastness*, especially with people as opposed to circumstances.

--The longsuffering of God was quite personal for Paul. Something he knew by experience, embodied in life, and taught to others!

1 Timothy 1:16: However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.

2 Peter 3:15: And consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles.

--Beware the deception of allowing the incredible goodness and patience of God to lead you into presumptuous sins. **Well, God will forgive me. He has to. Vs. He can't at this point.**

Titus 3:4-5: But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 5:

--But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,

2) God's judgment will involve guilt and sinful accumulation.

--God's grace and patience, once refused, harden the heart. *So many verses that tie hardness and hearts together.*

Proverbs 28:14: *Happy is the man who is always reverent, but he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity.*

*Govett (On Romans): *"Now he forgets his daily constant transgressions, but the Most High does not. And vainly does man forget, if God remembers, and will punish for each sin."**

--We live in a special day of God's mercy and forgiveness, but that day has an end. Just as God's patience and forgiveness in this day is amazing, so too will His judgment and indignation be in the day of His wrath.

--There is contrast and irony here in these verses. We were confronted with the ***riches of His goodness***, but now we see a sinner ***treasuring up for yourself wrath***, which is a fearful enrichment indeed!

Luke 17:26-30: *And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.

Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.

Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.*

--Materialism will blind and enslave us to the very end of time.

*Thomas Watson: *"To be hardened under God's patience makes our condition worse. Incensed justice will revenge abused patience! Go was patient towards Sodom, but when they did not repent, He made the fire and brimstone flame about their ears. Sodom, which was once the wonder of God's patience, is now a standing monument of God's severity. Long forbearance is no forgiveness. God may keep off the stroke awhile, but His justice is not dead—it only sleeps. God has leaden feet but iron hands. The longer God is taking His blow, the sorer it will be when it comes. The longer a stone is falling, the heavier it will be at last. The longer God is whetting His sword, the sharper it cuts!"**

--The ***day of wrath*** will also be a ***revelation of the righteous judgment of God***. Where God's methods of mercy and judgment are sometimes puzzling to us now, on that day, it will be revealed to all (even the unrepentant sinner) that their damnation is just. *Not only will they be forced into hell, but they will be forced to see that their judgment is just—a work only God could possibly do.*

Verses 6-10:

--who “will render to each one according to his deeds”: eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

3) *God’s judgment is according to works.*

--We do not obtain salvation through works, but we do obtain eternal reward or loss through works. *The doctrine of eternal reward balances the message of God’s grace.*

--Displaying true humility, the commentator Frederick Dale Bruner writes:

*Bruner, Frederick Dale (The Letter To The Romans, 29): *“I personally, for a long time, have so reveled in Paul’s doctrine of the gracious gift of Free Righteousness to Simple Faith in the present that, for some time, I have underbelieved and undertaught the equally serious biblical doctrine of the responsible end-time judgment according to works.”**

--The Bible clearly teaches that humans are responsible before God for all of their actions, saved and unsaved, and will come to the Day when God justly rewards our works in heaven or hell. *There will be levels of reward in heaven and levels of judgment in hell.*

--These statements are a direct refutation of those who say we should never do anything just for the reward. We should all actively seek **glory, honor, and immortality (7) & glory, honor, and peace (10)!** Imagine the reward of glory and honor that is held in unfading and eternal peace. *In contrast with this world’s glory and honor that fade so quickly!*

--What are our life aims or goals? Are we aiming high (things above) or low (earthly)? We are to aim with **patient continuance**—a pursuit through a lifetime of seasons.

Luke 8:15: But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.

--Now is our season to sow eternal seeds of light!

--The fruit of disobedience is: **Indignation, Wrath, Tribulation, and Anguish.**

--The fruit of obedience is: **Glory, Honor, and Peace.**

--So, how do we relate to God?

*Morgan, G. Campbell (Voices Of Twelve Hebrew Prophets): *“‘Wrath’ is the translation of a word which in the Hebrew simply means crossing over from one side to another. The wrath of God speaks of a change created in His attitude and activity. The prophetic declaration will be remembered that judgment is God’s “strange act,” {Isa. 28:21} that is to say, it is foreign to His heart, to His desire, to His purpose, to His intention, but there are conditions upon which such wrath is inevitable.”**

Verse 11:

--For there is no partiality with God.

4) *God's judgment will be without favoritism.*

--God is not going to give anyone a pass, including the Jew. He never has!

Amos 3:2: *You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.*

--God is not at all swayed by man's place in society as peasant or king, rich or poor, educated or uneducated, etc. He is not comparing man with man. He sees their *person*, not their *place*.

Deuteronomy 10:17: *For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe.*

--We are all responsible for the light and opportunities that we have been given.

Verses 12-15:

--*For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law (for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified; for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them).* . .

5) *God's judgment will be according to obedience, not knowledge.*

--Paul is showing that even without the Mosaic law, the Gentiles knew it was wrong to steal, murder, lie, etc., by conscience. This was a rebuke to the disobedient Jew.

--If there was no work of God in them—***the work of the law written in their hearts***—then there would be no ***conscience bearing witness***.

--So neither the Gentile without the law nor the Jew under the law will escape God's judgment.

--This whole section is running to the conclusion of **3:9: *For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin.*** God, as righteous and holy, has no people in whom He excuses sin. *How does that work with the Gospel? Paul will explain later.*

Verse 16:

--*in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.*

6) *God's judgment will reveal all secrets before Jesus Christ.*

--Of course, it is impossible for humans to fully know the motives and actions of others, but it is not impossible for Jesus Christ. He can judge the visible fruit all the way down to the very roots.

--Notice it says ***the secrets of men*** and not merely *the secrets of the wicked*. There are two kinds of secrets: good ones and bad ones. Just like there are two kinds of actions in the world! God will make known which is which and who is who.

Ecclesiastes 12:14: *For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil.*

****1 Corinthians 4:5: Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.****

--We all have a secret life—not *should have*, but *do have*. The question is, do we only have a wicked secret life, or do we have a good secret life?! Our good works and obedience will also be revealed on that day. *Left hand giving—Father sees in secret and rewards openly*

--All should listen to the Gospel because there is no way through the judgment of God into eternal life but the one way God has provided through His only Son, Jesus Christ.