

It's a Matter of the Heart

Today we come to chapter 2 of Romans, where we will see that Paul is continuing to show that the entire world is guilty before our holy God. Paul is showing here in chapter two that the person who relies on his good works and the Jewish people are in need of a savior also. Just because they have the Law it does not mean that they are a separate category of people who doesn't need to trust in God for their salvation. He is logically proceeding from the Gentile world to the Jewish world in this chapter and showing how both groups are in desperate need of Jesus Christ and the forgiveness that can only come from Him. This section will climax in chapter 3 with the famous verse Romans 3:23, "for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." This is the verse that we need to keep in the back of our minds throughout this section that began back at Romans 1:18. From 1:18-3:23 Paul is showing that all people have sinned, and that all people need to refer back to our key passage Romans 1:16-17 **"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "But the righteous man shall live by faith."** Remember that this is the main point of the entire letter. Paul wants to show the Roman Christians that salvation comes by faith alone, faith in Jesus Christ alone. Anything that is added on to that is a false gospel, which can only lead to condemnation. So, today we have two thoughts to keep in mind as we go forward. One is that all people have sinned. Last time we saw the Gentile world as the sinners that they are apart from God, and in today's text we see that the Jews are guilty as well, but for a different reason. The second point to remember is that Paul is proving to the Romans that we can only have salvation by faith in Jesus Christ.

Pray

In preparing for this message it became obvious to me that we need a practical word from this passage today. We can all read the words and comprehend what Paul is saying, and realize his intent. But if we just leave it at that we will come away with some academic knowledge, which is great, but I believe we will be better fitted for our Christian lives if we try to dig a little deeper here, and see what else is in the word. After studying this passage, and reading it several times I saw that it says some very compelling things about the heart, or our inner being that can help us in our walk with the Lord. So, there are three points about the heart that are revealed here. The first is the problem of having an unrepentant heart. We will look at an example from the Old Testament of what an unrepentant heart looks like. Second I saw that there is a pathway to having a clean heart. And third I want you to see that God peers into our hearts, and He is ultimately concerned with what is on the inside, not what our outside appearance is. So, we have the Problem, the Pathway, and the Peering. So, that is where we are headed, but I wanted to cover a couple of other points first before we get into the real meat.

It is extremely important to know the context of passages when studying the Bible. Romans, of course, is no different. As with other books if the verses are taken out of context, or misapplied, bad theology will be the result. Therefore, it is critical to know

who the author is writing to, and exactly to what he is referring. Romans can basically be broken into three sections. Chapters 1-8 make up the first section, which is primarily about doctrine, followed by chapters 9-11 as a parenthetical reference to Israel, and finally, chapters 12-16 as the practical section of the letter. The chapters and verse numbers are not inspired, and they do not appear in the original texts, but they have been added for our benefit to aid in organization and for memorization purposes. It is important to keep in mind what section we are dealing with, and to whom Paul is referring. Now, obviously, in our study we are in the first section, again, chapters 1-8. The main point of chapters 1-8 is to show that all people are in need of salvation, that we do not attain salvation by good works, and that salvation only comes from having faith in Christ. We've seen the necessity of faith, and we have seen how the Gentile world is guilty of horrendous sins in the face of our holy God. Chapter 2, again, shows how the Jewish nation is guilty in spite of having the Law given to them. By showing that both the Gentiles and the Jews are guilty of sinning, Paul shows that the whole world is guilty of sin. Dr. Chuck Missler says that Paul describes three types of people in the last half of chapter 1 and through chapter 2 in his book, "Learn the Bible in 24 Hours." The people we studied last time were the pagan people, and two groups are covered here in chapter 2. The first half deals with the moral man, and the second half deals with the religious man. We will see that in more detail to come. So, there is a lot to think about when you are studying the Bible. To get the most out of your studies possible thinking about these things is a necessity. You should always remember the context of the passage, and to whom the author is speaking. There are very few passages that you can just read without considering the context and gain the full meaning. Sometimes it is down right dangerous to do this, other times you can just miss out on some great truths. So, keep in mind here that Paul is writing this letter to a group of Christians, but he is telling them the truth of salvation. He is making sure that they have a clear understanding of their faith, and giving them a clear description of what true faith in Christ looks like. In the first couple paragraphs of chapter 2 he is talking to them as if they are not saved, and have never heard the gospel before. It is almost like he is saying that they are the people who he just got done describing in the second half of chapter 1. Notice in verse 1 the term "everyone". **Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.** In the KJV it says "O man," instead of everyone. If you look down in verse three the term appears again, O man. The word is anthropos, and in verse one it is combined with the word pas, which as we have seen earlier means all or every. Paul is not referring to the hearers as brothers or fellow Christians, but as "men". He is not referring to a specific problem in their church, or to specific people who are going around condemning other people for wrong actions, while doing the same things themselves. He is speaking in general terms. He is speaking of the moral man, the one who thinks he can get to heaven because his good will out way his bad. Paul wants to give the Roman church this truth so that they can pass it along to others. He does not know their hearts, or their inner most thoughts, in which they may be harboring these feelings, but he really just wants to convey the idea that the ultimate judgment comes from God, and He judges based on the reality of truth.

This idea of judging is one that I just can't pass up. I've said before, that it seems like in today's contemporary society that the 11th commandment is, "Thou shalt not judge." This, of course, is nowhere to be found in Scripture, at least not the way people use it. When people say, "you shouldn't judge" today, what they really mean is, "don't point out the sin in someone else's life." It just isn't nice. Pointing out sin or error is not judging. We can see from this passage what judging is, which is something that only God can do. Every time the word judge, or judging is used in this passage in reference to a person doing the judging it is a verb in the sentence. Every time that the word is used in reference to God it is the noun in the sentence. Notice that when it is speaking of God's judgment, it says "the judgment." Emphasize the "the's". **And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things. 3 But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God?** In this passage when Paul is speaking about judgment he is speaking of something that only God can do. Notice that it isn't really the judging that is getting the people into trouble here. Rather it is their actions that are the problem. Look at verse 1 again. **Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.** The people are being condemned because of what they are doing; they are condemning themselves because they are DOING the same thing. We know that this does not mean we cannot have discernment about other people's sin. Matthew 18 is a perfect place to go for instruction on this. Jesus is here speaking to His disciples, giving them instruction on various topics. The Gospels are particularly challenging to interpret properly. Especially Jesus's words, as He spoke about three different periods during His time on the earth. He spoke of the time of the Law, which was still in effect during His lifetime, the time of Grace, which was to begin after His ascension, and He spoke about times in the future. So, keeping straight which time period He is speaking of is extremely important for a proper interpretation. But, notice in Matthew 18 that Jesus refers to the person sinning as a "brother". That means they are a fellow Christian, we can also see that He is speaking about the Church age because He uses the term "church" in verse 17, which is pretty rare in the Gospels. So, we know that Jesus is speaking of the time that we are living in now in this passage. **If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. 16 But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. 17 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.** Clearly Jesus is not saying here that we should ignore other people's sin. He is giving instruction on what is to be done if a person is in sin, or has sinned against you. Therefore, we can conclude that we are to use our discernment when it comes to sin, and that if our brothers in Christ are living in sin we should confront them. It is much easier to just let the sin go, but here Jesus is giving us explicit instructions on how to handle the problem. Paul is not contradicting the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 18 when he tells the Romans that they are condemned when they pass judgment. Notice again that the verse continues back in Romans 2, it says that they are condemned because they practice the same things. So, it is what they are doing that is causing the problem, not necessarily the passing of judgment. The judgment is something only God can do. We see further down

in the passage that Paul is talking about the judgment that is to come at a future date when in verse 6 he says, **who will render to each person according to his deeds**. This is judgment. The fact that every person will stand before almighty God is well documented in the Scriptures. When this will happen, and whom this is specifically talking about is a whole other series of sermons, so we won't get into that today. But, we can conclude that Paul is talking about a future judgment that only God can do, and He can do it because He is all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-holy. Only God can look into a person's heart and see what is really going on in there. Notice also that it says in verse 16 that this judgment is done through Jesus Christ. Verse 12 and verse 16 is one thought, with verses 13 through 15 being a parenthetical addition by Paul. The KJV has the parenthesis, but the NAS does not, so it may be confusing if you don't see the parenthesis. So, if we read verse 12 and verse 16 as one complete sentence without the parenthesis the thought is clearer. **For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law; on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.** So, God will judge people based on the truth of Jesus Christ and the person's relationship to Him. People harbor their secrets in their hearts. The Holy Spirit also dwells in the hearts of all Christians. So, it then becomes very apparent that a person's heart condition is extremely important for their eternal destiny. How the person relates to Christ is of the utmost importance in this regard. So, let's take a look at some of the references to the heart in this passage and see what we can glean from them since they are so critical in our relationship to God, through Jesus Christ.

The Problem

Let's go back up to verse 1 again and I'll read through verse 6. **Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. 2 And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things. 3 But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God? 4 Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? 5 But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, 6 who will render to each person according to his deeds:** The "therefore" is important also. It refers back to the end of chapter 1, which was speaking of all the horrible sins of the Gentile people. He says, therefore you have no excuse if you are condemning people for doing the same things that you are. In other words, you know they are wrong, because you are saying it is wrong for other people to do it, but you are doing the same thing. Notice the thing that is the real problem for the person here. It is in verse 5. Here we have our first P in the outline, The Problem. **5 But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.** The problem is the unrepentant heart. Paul also says that this person is stubborn. Stubbornness is a horrible quality to have. I know because on occasion, very infrequently I might add, I have been known to be stubborn. So, I can

speak from personal experience in saying that it is a bad quality. Here we see that it can be dangerous. If we are stubborn against God and His leading, or the Holy Spirit's conviction in our lives it can have horrible consequences. For the people Paul is referring to he says that they are storing up wrath against themselves on the Day of Judgment. This is obviously something that we want to avoid. We do not want to have anything to do with God's wrath on the Day of Judgment. What is an unrepentant heart? This is a person who is harboring sin in their heart. They do not recognize that they are sinning against God when they sin, and they do not realize the impact their sin is having on their spiritual condition. An unrepentant person may be hard to spot. He may be very sad and sorrowful over what has happened even though they haven't truly repented of their sin, or turned away from it. They are most likely sorrowful because they have been caught, or because of the consequences of their sin. Let's look at an example from the OT. Saul is a wonderful example of an unrepentant heart. 1 Samuel is where we see the story of Saul being made the King over Israel in spite of God's wish that they would not have a King. After being made the King, God through the prophet Samuel, tells Saul that He wants Saul to utterly destroy the Amalekites for the way they mistreated the people of Israel when Moses was leading them in the wilderness. 1 Samuel 15 tells the story of Saul's unrepentant heart. Verse 2-3 tells what Saul was supposed to do. **Thus says the Lord of hosts, 'I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel, how he set himself against him on the way while he was coming up from Egypt. 3 Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.** Notice the Lord says, "I will punish Amalek for what he did to Israel. Saul totally missed that. God will do the punishing, not Saul. Unfortunately for Saul he did not utterly destroy the Amalekites. Verses 7-9 continue. **So Saul defeated the Amalekites, from Havilah as you go to Shur, which is east of Egypt. 8 He captured Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. 9 But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were not willing to destroy them utterly; but everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.** Saul was told by God to utterly destroy the Amalekites, and he did not do it. Of course the Lord will not let this stand, so He sends Samuel to confront Saul about his sin. Notice in verse 12 that it says that when Samuel went to look for Saul, people told him that Saul had made a monument for himself in Carmel and then proceeded to Gilgal. This tells us a lot about Saul's heart. Not only did he not carry out the Lord's command, but he did not give the Lord credit for the victory Israel had, but made a monument to himself. Then notice how Saul tries to flatter Samuel when he sees him. Verse 13 says, **Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, "Blessed are you of the Lord! I have carried out the command of the Lord.** Blessed are you of the Lord, Saul has the nerve to say knowing what he had done. This is vain flattery that Saul is doing trying to distract Samuel from his mission of reprimand. Samuel goes on with his mission however, and points out to Saul that he did not do what the Lord said to do. Verse 15 is Saul's initial response. **15 Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and oxen, to sacrifice to the Lord your God; but the rest we have utterly destroyed.** Basically, he blames the people for his own sin. He is the one responsible for the nation and the army, and he shifts the blame to the people. They have brought them from the

Amalekites, Saul says. Saul repeats his blame shifting in verse 20 when Samuel gives him another chance to explain himself. **Then Saul said to Samuel, “ I did obey the voice of the Lord, and went on the mission on which the Lord sent me, and have brought back Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. 21 But the people took some of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the choicest of the things devoted to destruction, to sacrifice to the Lord your God at Gilgal.** He adds on to his blame shifting this time by saying that they were going to use the animals for sacrifices to the Lord. Saul then goes on to show how truly unrepentant he is in verses 24-31. He adds plenty of excuses for his sin here as well. **Then Saul said to Samuel, “ I have sinned; I have indeed transgressed the command of the Lord and your words, because I feared the people and listened to their voice. 25 Now therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me, that I may worship the Lord.” 26 But Samuel said to Saul, “I will not return with you; for you have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel.” 27 As Samuel turned to go, Saul seized the edge of his robe, and it tore. 28 So Samuel said to him, “ The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to your neighbor, who is better than you. 29 Also the Glory of Israel will not lie or change His mind; for He is not a man that He should change His mind.” 30 Then he said, “I have sinned; but please honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and go back with me, that I may worship the Lord your God.” 31 So Samuel went back following Saul, and Saul worshiped the Lord.** Notice he said he feared the people. This is a person who had absolute rule over the people of Israel, he had the power of life and death over each one of his subjects and yet he feared the people? Then he says that he is sorry for his sin, and you can almost see him saying, “ok, I’m sorry, now can you forgive me, so we can go worship the Lord?” This is not repentance. This is an unrepentant heart. He is not recognizing the depth of his sin and rebellion against God. He even tries to show how sorry he is by grabbing Samuel’s robe, and he tore it in the show. Then in verse 30 again he says that he has sinned, but please honor me before the people, so they see how important I am, and then let’s go worship the Lord. Saul must have thought that worshipping the Lord was some kind of magic formula that would bring him benefits from the Lord, if it is carried out in the correct manner. Well, we know that the Lord is not concerned with outward appearances; he is concerned with the heart. Saul had a serious problem with his heart here. He was unrepentant. He did not realize the depth of his sin, and the true consequences of his sin. And we can see this in the way he reacts to his sin after it is pointed out to him. He uses vain flattery, he shifts the blame, and he makes excuses for his sin. This is an unrepentant heart, and we see from our Romans passage that a person with an unrepentant heart is storing up wrath for himself in the Day of Judgment. Unfortunately we don’t have time to go into what a truly repentant heart looks like, but I would refer you to a study of David and his horrible sin to see what a truly repentant person looks like. Psalm 51 is a great place to go as well. Primarily, a repentant person takes responsibility for their sin, they recognize it as a sin against God, they do not make excuses, and they try to make amends for their sin like Zaccheus did. So, there we have the problem, an unrepentant heart.

The Pathway

Now let's move on to the pathway. If you go back to Romans verse 5-7 we will see the pathway of the pure heart. **But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, 6 who will render to each person according to his deeds: here's the key to the pathway, To those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life.** The pathway of a pure heart is perseverance in doing good and seeking for glory and honor and immortality. It says that these people will have eternal life. We have to be careful here, because if this is taken out of the context of the whole message we could say that this proves that doing good works leads to salvation. But, we know that this is not true because earlier Paul said that salvation comes from having faith. In fact, as we know that is the point of the entire letter. Our works don't lead to salvation, only our faith does. And besides, it says that this person is seeking after immortality, which is eternal life, which Paul has already says only comes from faith in Christ. So, this is really like the pathway that a person with a clean heart is on. They walk on this pathway because they have a clean heart, not in order to receive a clean heart. A couple of passages come to mind that are similar to this one. One is from the Sermon on the Mount, blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. This person is showing himself to be approved; he is showing others that he is saved by his actions. He is showing that he is a child of God by his works, just like James said in that "faith without works is dead." Our faith is of no use if it is not manifested in works, our faith does not benefit anyone besides our self if we do not put it into some sort of action. Another passage that is very similar is the parable that Jesus told in Luke 8. This is the famous parable of the sower. Jesus tells the people how the word of God goes out, and how different people react to the word in this parable. Since it is in parable form though, the disciples did not understand the meaning, so fortunately for us, Jesus explained it to them, and we have that interpretation in Luke 8:11-15. **"Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God. 12 Those beside the road are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they will not believe and be saved. 13 Those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away. 14 The seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity. 15 But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.** Notice that in the first person the word goes out, but it falls on the path, or the hard ground, and the devil comes and snatches away the word before it can grow. Verse 12 says that the devil comes and takes the word from their heart. The hardened ground is their heart. Their heart is not prepared to receive the word, and the word does not penetrate the heart, and it doesn't bear any fruit. That is just to set the stage that the ground represents the person's heart in this parable. The hard ground is like the person with the hard heart. Now notice the person in verse 15. **15 But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.** These people heard the word

with an honest and good heart. Notice the similarity between this and verse 7 in Romans 2. **to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life;** These people have a heart that is prepared to hear the word and then bear fruit. When a seed is planted in good soil it will sprout into a plant. If the gardener then tends to the plant and the soil around it, by pulling the weeds, and turning the soil over periodically, and watering the plant, it will bear fruit. This works for people and the word of God also. If the heart has been prepared to hear the word, by confessing sin and prayer to God, the word will be received into the heart, where it can grow. If the person continues to tend to their spiritual health, which is contained in the heart, then that initial seed will grow into a plant that can bear spiritual fruit. Again, we tend to our hearts by keeping a short sin list with the Lord, and by maintaining fellowship with Him in prayer, and by reading and studying His word, thinking pure thoughts, and purging anything from our lives that is not pleasing to the Lord. This is the pathway of a person with a clean heart. Jesus said in Matthew 7:13-14 **Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. 14 For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.** We should persevere in our good works to show that we have a clean heart to the world and to our Savior.

The Peering

So, we have seen the problem in the heart is being unrepentant, and the pathway of the clean heart is preparing our heart for the word of God and then persevering in good works. Now we move on to the peering into the heart, which only God can do. Again in verse 16 we see that God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus. People contain their secrets in their hearts. So, God is looking into the hearts of people and determining if they have a right relationship with Christ. After this Paul transitions to talking about people who claim to be Jews. These people think that just because they are Jews that they will be judged by God to be good on the Day of Judgment. They believe because they were among the people whom God chose to give the Law, and those who were circumcised that they will have eternal life. Paul here says that this couldn't be any further from the truth. Verses 17-24 say, **But if you bear the name "Jew" and rely upon the Law and boast in God, 18 and know His will and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law, 19 and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, 20 a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth, 21 you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that one shall not steal, do you steal? 22 You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? 23 You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God? 24 For "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you," just as it is written.** They are doing the same thing that the Gentile people were doing in the beginning of the chapter. Paul is saying that they are condemned also because of their wrong actions. He asks if they taught themselves about not committing these sins since they are doing them as well. Paul then gets on to the heart of the matter in verse 28-29. He tells them that their physical circumcision has no bearing on whether

or not they actually keep the Law. An uncircumcised person can theoretically keep the Law better than a circumcised person, in which case they would have a good standing before God, and their physical uncircumcision would be of no consequence. Then verses 28-29, **For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.** God is not concerned with what is on the outside; He is concerned with what is on the inside of the person. He looks into our hearts and judges us based on what He finds. Only a holy, omniscient God can do this. He is the only one who is qualified to determine what is righteous, since He is the only righteous one. And from verse 16 we know that this judgment is made through Christ Jesus. Jesus's teachings are filled with references to the Pharisees being condemned because their hearts were unclean even though their outward actions were supposedly perfect. He called them white washed sepulchres full of dead men's bones. Basically, they were just a tomb that had been cleaned up and painted, but inside it was still just a place for dead people to reside. Well, as a Christian we have the Holy Spirit residing within us. This is true of every Christian. 1 Corinthians 3:16 says that we are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in us. Romans 8:11 also says that the Holy Spirit is in every Christian. **But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.** He resides in our heart, which is our mind. So, we are like the temple, in that the Holy Spirit dwells inside of us, like He dwelt inside the holy of holies in the temple. And this Spirit is what gives us life as Christians. Unlike the Pharisees who were full of dead men's bones, we have the Holy Spirit inside of us. Now, the Holy Spirit not only gives us eternal life, but He will give us a more abundant spiritual life here on earth if we are yielded to Him. This is what God looks for when He judges us. Do we have the Holy Spirit dwelling inside of our hearts? If the answer is yes, then He judges us through Christ, and God sees us as righteous through the death of Christ, and He will usher us into eternal life with Him in heaven. If the answer is no, then we are not acceptable to God, and our eternal destiny will be one of separation from God and His heaven. The Holy Spirit will only come to reside in us if we have placed our faith and trust in Christ and His death on the cross for the payment for our sins. This is the Gospel of Christ that Paul is not ashamed of.

Conclusion

Since our eternal destiny is determined by our heart condition, then this should be of the utmost importance to us. We need to be very concerned with what is on the inside. Are we like Saul, unrepentant and stubborn, storing up wrath for ourselves on the Day of Judgment? Are we the person who has a heart that is unprepared to receive the word? Do we have unconfessed sin, or are we out of fellowship with the Lord? Or are we like the Pharisees who were only concerned with outward appearances while their hearts were hardened and black with sin? Do we think that just because we are in a family of Christians that we are a Christian also? The Jews thought that just because God gave them the Law, and that they were circumcised this put them in the family of God. Do we rely on outward observances for our right relationship with God? Do we read our Bibles,

or go to church simply to get on God's good side? I pray that we can all answer all of those questions with a hardy "NO". I pray that we all repent of our sin, we confess it to God and turn away from it never to do it again. I pray that we prepare our hearts to receive His word by maintaining close fellowship with the Lord. And finally I pray that we all realize that God looks to the inside of our hearts, and that He is not concerned with only outward appearances. He wants us to want to pray to Him, He wants us to want to go to church to worship Him, and to fellowship with our fellow believers. He wants us to be close to Him because we love Him and want to serve Him because of what He did for us. So there we have the practical side of Romans 2. The academic portion is that Paul shows that the Jews are guilty of sin and in need of a Savior because they do not keep the Law. The practical side is the problem of the unrepentant heart, the pathway of the clean heart and the peering of God into our hearts. May God help us all to have the hearts that He desires for us to have.