

Romans 2:1-16

Reminder of our outline:

The wrath of God.

1:18-32 The condemnation of the primitive pagan

2:1-16 The condemnation of the self righteous sophisticate

2:17-3:8 The condemnation of the Jew

3:9-20 The condemnation of the world.

We will look at 2:1-7 this morning and 8-16 next week Lord willing.

Our context is an explanation of the wrath toward those who resisted God and God gave them over to their own desires. They dishonored themselves below animals. They showed themselves without brains, without honor, without love and without pity. These people should be judging. They should be adding things up, but they won't judge themselves or anyone else. They refuse to judge either their own evil or others.

Now, based on the context it looks like Paul is moving from the barbarian **who won't judge**, to those who **gladly** judge. It appears that Paul is talking about those who feel they are superior to the barbarian. They judge the barbarian, whose evil is less sophisticated than their own. But these people refuse to judge themselves accurately. Paul is not about to let them get on that track in their minds. He is about to derail any cars on the train of pride.

¹Therefore 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.

Note that Paul moves from saying "they" to saying "you". There may have not been barbarians in his reading audience, but evidently there may have been some judgmental sophisticates.

Inexcusable- Indefensible A position where you cannot defend yourself.

In chapter 1 verses 18-20 we see that men are not innocent because men are not ignorant. The question could be asked, "Have you looked at nature?" "Then you are inexcusable." You are without excuse.

Now in chapter 2 the question has changed. It is now, "Are you capable of passing moral judgment on a man?" "Then you are inexcusable."

Why inexcusable? Well in order to pass judgment, you must **have** judgment. You must have the capacity to judge between good and evil on some things. You show yourself to have some standard of right and wrong, some piece of conscience that works correctly. You, in essence, **know better**. Nothing in this passage says that the judgment that these people make on others is wrong. The problem isn't that they judge. The problem is that they don't apply that judgment to themselves. They reserve the right to have their own version of evil while judging others for **their** evil.

The verse goes on to say that if you judge others, you condemn yourself. Why? Suppose a man stole \$1000 from me. And I say about that man, it was evil for that man to steal that money. I at that point show that I have a standard about stealing that I have no excuse not to live up to. But then suppose I steal a stapler from work. I have just passed sentence upon myself because I have already proven that I knew better. I did the evil that I knew not to do. It isn't that the judgment is wrong but it isn't universally applied. It isn't applied to one's self.

Judge- 5) to judge

5a) to pronounce an opinion concerning right and wrong

5b) to pronounce judgment, to subject to censure

5b1) of those who act the part of judges or arbiters in matters of common life, or pass judgment on the deeds and words of others

Condemn- 1) to give judgment against, to judge worthy of punishment

1a) to condemn

Most of us are very conscience of wrongs that people commit against us. But we are slow to apply that sensitivity to our own actions. When Paul says we have done the same things, it is true. It may be if we were to judge homosexual activities as sin, as stated in the previous text, we may not be guilty of **that specific** sin. But give it ten minutes and we will judge someone else's sin that we **are** guilty of. The principle is if we have the sense to judge someone else, we show ourselves to **know** better than we **do**. We are not innocent because we are not ignorant.

²But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things.

We know- Paul has already said that 1:32 who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

The word for knowing in verse 32 was epignosko. by sight, hearing, of certain signs, to perceive.

Now he uses the word Eido- perfect tense- an action which is viewed as being completed in the past not needing to be repeated. We know, we see, we are fully aware. We are sure. This word is often used for things that are commonly known.

It's probable now that Paul has shifted over to those who know the revealed Word of God. **We**, those who are Jewish or those who are familiar with the church, know by the word of God that the judgment of God is against these sins. There was no excuse for us not to know this. It was easily knowable and commonly understood.

³And 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?

Think- to take an inventory, to reason, to reckon. The greek word is the word we get logic from. This is clearly

referring to intentional thought working with the facts to work some solution.

Dr Barnhouse was not one to use slang in his preaching. But in this instance he thought it would be useful to give clarity to the meaning of the text. He paraphrased the text by saying this.

“You dummy, do you really figure that you have doped out an angle that will let you go up against God and get away with it? You don’t have a ghost of a chance.”

When we display the ability to judge soundly on at least some points, and then we live a life that violates the judgment we have shown that we have, how dumb do we think God is? Do we think that he will use his perfect standard against others and use some sub perfect judgment on us because we are so likeable or special or something?

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

So the first question is, do you think you **have an angle** to escape judgment? The second question is essentially, are you showing contempt for the qualities of God that would **win** you to Him and away from sin?

Despise- to disdain, to think little or nothing of

We despise the riches of God’s goodness when we judge others but refuse to direct that same judgment toward ourselves. We despise God if we judge others but refuse to repent ourselves.

Not knowing- To ignore through disinclination. Both of these words underlie a failure to care, a failure to prioritize, a failure to consider. The context shows us that these facts are not unknowable. They can be known easily enough. But a person must care about them. And the next verse will explain what the problem is that creates this symptom.

The rest of this verse will refer to the common grace that God shows to all men. The fact that a person is alive, is

breathing God's air, is eating God's food, is working and making money enough to buy food clothing and shelter are all God's common graces. All of that goodness should have an effect. But on the common man it is completely ignored.

Do you despise the RICHES OF HIS GOODNESS-

Riches- wealth, money, abundance. God is very rich in the following qualities. He has no lack. The problem is never that God is stingy in goodness, forbearance or longsuffering. The problem is that the unregenerate man has no interest in it. It is not something he cares about.

Goodness- Moral goodness, integrity, good of its kind. If we have any sense, we will not **think little of** or **care little for** the goodness of God. God is our moral compass. He is what good is. It is God's goodness in his treatment to us that leads anyone to repentance that comes to repentance. Paul is the only person in the New Testament who uses this word. This is the word that is used in Rom 3:12 where it says that there are none who have done good.

This goodness is the same goodness we see that affects a man like Isaiah to cry out " "Woe is me, for I am undone!

Because I am a man of unclean lips,
And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips;
For my eyes have seen the King,
The Lord of hosts." Is 6:5

When John saw Christ this is what He did.

Rev 1:17 And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me, saying to me, "Do not be afraid; I am the First and the Last. 18 I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen.

The goodness of God, when experienced, is the sheer realization of who God is. By contrast it immediately shows us what we are. We realize the **righteousness** of his judgment upon us. We see his **worthiness** of

more than we can even begin to offer him. And it dawns on us how pitiful our behavior toward this God has been. When we combine the goodness of God, our evil and God's right to judge us, we cannot help but repent. How could we possibly judge someone else and miss the judgment due to ourselves.

Forbearance- This word means toleration, it means to hold back, to delay. Every man who is judging but not repenting is a man that God tolerates. God has his wrath in store but He is holding back. None of us would be alive if God did not have this quality. He would have destroyed the human race after Adam's sin. But God tolerates those, particularly those who judge others but refuse to repent themselves, for a while. The clock is ticking and God can wait. But a fearful judgment awaits for all those that God is merely tolerating, those who levy judgment against others without repenting themselves, those who judge but not with a goal of repentance.

Longsuffering- slowness in avenging wrongs. This word is very similar to the last word. If God avenged wrongs the moment that we did them there would be no human race. But lucky for us God is long suffering. All men should take one look at their lives and cry out to God in gratitude that we have not been struck dead already. We deserve so much worse than what we have. But God is slow to pay us back for all the wrong things we have done. Those who are judging others should get the point here. Those **who** judge are every bit as guilty as **those** they judge. We all are experiencing God's longsuffering when we are in our sin. If we have any spiritual sense at all we will throw ourselves at Christ's feet and gratefully accept his death in place of ours. He accepted the payment for all the wrongs that need avenging if we are in Christ.

⁵But 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,

These non believers have a heart problem that is behind their head problem.

Hardness- sklerotes sklay-rot'-ace

Thayer Definition:

- 1) hardness
- 2) obstinacy, stubbornness

This is the word arterial sclerosis comes from. Hardening of the arteries. The unregenerate heart resists the truth and gradually becomes more and more hardened to it, stubbornly refusing to give it the place it should have in their hearts and minds.

Impenitent- admitting no change of mind, unrepented,

The unregenerate heart will not bend. It will not change its mind. No amount of evidence can change its conclusion. Reason will have no effect on the mind if God is not at work in the heart. The heart is the problem. Perfectly smart people cannot see the obvious silliness of their thinking. I can't think of a better illustration than evolution. Geniuses are out there who cannot accept the idea of Creation. They cannot believe that a God we cannot see has created that which we can see. But they can readily believe that that which has never been observed to happen in nature, that for which there is no evidence, **must** have happened in nature. And then they refuse to label that a mystical religion. That is what an impenitent heart will produce.

treasuring up for yourself wrath- Every rejection of God's grace and mercy, especially when one proves their knowledge of their need for it, is storing up for every unbeliever the wrath of God. It is like adding tinder to fire. All that is lacking is a match. And the more grace he or she experiences, the more wrath he stores up. The more opportunities he has had to hear the truth of God's word and

rejected it, the more wrath is stored up. Until he has a great wealth of wrath in his treasury. Those who have been so proud of their self chosen path will face the utter terror of the wrath that they had unknowingly been accumulating.

in the day of wrath- We are not in the day of wrath. Right now we sit in the day of opportunity. Today is the day of salvation. Today is the day when grace is available. But that will not always be so. God is withholding his final wrath, while expressing some wrath currently by giving men over to sin. But the term of his delay is not indefinite. More surely than the sun coming up tomorrow is a future day when God will rain down His wrath on all the rebels of this world. God has not promised us tomorrow, but He has promised a day of wrath toward those all those who rebel against him.

and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,-

Up until this point all men **could** know about the impending judgment coming. But they chose not to. On the day of God's wrath there will be no opportunity for dissent. On that day comedians will not stand up and mock God in some routine. Atheists will not stand up and proclaim their doctrines. Humanists will not point to all the great things man will do for himself. No, on that day what is **right** will happen. Judgment that is proper will be dealt out. This is proper judgment done from the proper attitude, in contrast to those who judge others but won't judge themselves. Man has laid out all his silly plans and ideas year after year. The newspapers and history books are full of them. On this day God will take His turn. All accounts will be settled. And there will be no appeal to a higher court. The highest court has been heard from. There will be no preferential treatment. There will only be one important deciding factor. Did you have deeds that came from the changed life that comes when a person is called to Christ by grace, or did you live a life devoid of Christ's rule and power in your life?

⁶who "will render to each one according to his deeds":

Some will twist this verse and others like it into saying that we are saved by our works. Yet that clearly cannot be the case based on what the rest of Romans has to say.

Mankind is divided into two camps- those who obey God and those who refuse to submit to God. Both have works consistent to their position. And while a non believer may do some things that God commands, his reason for doing them is not because He loves God and wants to please Him. He is not willingly submitting to Christ's lordship over his life. Nor is his power for living is also not coming from the Holy Spirit. His technical obedience is more of a coincidence than anything else. So his works don't count as obedience.

A believer, on the other hand, is a God- obeyer. If you track down his reason for obedience it will make its way back to the gratitude he has to His Lord and his Faith in His Lord's promises. His faith is credited to him as righteousness. And his works are largely consistent with his faith.

John MacArthur says "The subjective criterion for salvation is faith alone, with nothing added. But the objective reality of that salvation is manifested in the subsequent godly works that the Holy Spirit leads and empowers believers to perform. For that reason good deeds are a perfectly valid basis for God's judgment.

A person's actions form an infallible index to his character. You will know them by their fruits Christ twice declared in the sermon on the mount."

We need not fear that our perfect record is what is required for salvation. If that were the case we would all be lost. Forgiven sin is truly forgiven. But we should work out our salvation in fear and trembling. We should make sure that there is a difference in our behavior that faith makes. If we are living in active rebellion, knowingly and willingly choosing to commit a sin or sins over and over again that

we know are against God, we should seriously reflect on our condition. Are we even believers at all?

But the flip side of this is that if we can see the evidence of the Spirit's work in our present behavior, and if we cling to what Christ has done for us as our justification, we can rest in great confidence in the fact that Christ has taken all the punishment for sin for every true believer.

⁷eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality;

Here we see what is behind the good deeds of a believer. A believer is seeking things above. He is seeking glory, honor and immortality. His heart is set on another place.

And he does this by patient continuance.

Patient Continuance- a patient, steadfast waiting for in the NT the characteristic of a man who is not swerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings

It is basically keeping on a difficult course while waiting for that which will make the course worthwhile. That is how a Christian lives.

Glory- The Westminster confession asks the question- What is the chief end of man? The answer is "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever". A believer lives for the glory of Christ. Our goal should be to do those things that glorify Him. We do not claim any glory for ourselves. We have nothing to boast about. The only thing we brought to our salvation was our sin. It is God who deserves the glory.

Honor- honor which belongs or is shown to one
2a) of the honor which one has by reason of rank and state of office which he holds

2b) deference, reverence

A believer honors his Lord. We have a Christ who is our Savior, our Master, our Lord, our Deliverer, our Propitiation and on and on. He has title after title of

which he has full right. Our Lord deserves honor in every category. We should be faithful slaves to honor his Lordship. We should submit fully to the deliverance from sin that He has provided as our deliverer. We should appreciate fully what He has provided as our propitiation. A believer seeks to honor his Lord. And his well doing can trace its way back to this motivation.

Immortality- 1) incorruption, perpetuity 2) purity, sincerity,

It would seem to me that incorruption may be the better word here. The seeking isn't just for eternal existence. It is for the state of existing eternally without corruption. Surely that includes being free of death and the dying process, but I think it has a great deal to do with being completely free from sin and its corrupting influences and effects.

A believer groans, we're told in Romans, because we long for an existence that we don't have. We want to be free from sin's presence, but we clearly are not free from it. We want to honor our Lord more, but the good that we would and should do we don't do. We want what we were created to be and we endure in the process while we wait for our deliverance at a future date. We want to fully glorify and honor Christ, but we do it so incompletely now.

This is in direct contrast to the world around us. They just want life to continue. They may want it to change to be more to their liking, but they certainly do not live to honor Christ. Their frustration is not caused by how they have left Christ down and dishonored him. Flesh is their king and they will serve him until they die. They long for no other home. Again, they may desire a better earthly home, but they have no mentality of welcoming the Kingdom of our Lord as the greatest day in the planet's history.

We are stopping in the middle of a passage but I think we already have significant points of application.

All of us here certainly know the truth. All of us are able to judge and probably do. But do we judge ourselves? When we see unkindness in others, do we see it in ourselves? When we are able to judge others for slandering us or gossiping about us, do we do the same. When we judge others sloth, will we judge our own? Will we quickly respond to the truth and submit to it, no matter what the source, or do we resort to changing the topic, or attacking the motives of those who tell us the truth? Is the next passage describing us? Are we self seeking? Can someone predict our actions because they know that we will chose the path that most selfishly benefits ourselves? What did our lives this week tell people? Were we self sacrificing for the cause of Christ, or did we look just like any other person. How were our minutes used?

Also, look at what you have come down on others for recently. Ask God and those around you how have I done the same thing? How am I like this? Are we brave enough to ask that question? Do we really want the answer?

I hope this week we will ask the question, does this passage in any way describe me? Have I been hard hearted and impenitent. In what way do I have the traits that are described in the passage? And as we find similarities, let's take them to the foot of the cross in repentance where we can find the grace and mercy that all of us so need.

In the same light, have I been living by patient continuance in doing good seeking for glory, honor, and immortality? Could my life really be described that way? Have I been living each day in the hope that Christ will return and living in such a way that He will be pleased when He does? Will He find faith in our lives when He returns. I hope so.