

**Righteousness Of God Needed:
Condemnation Of The Moralist
(Part 2)**

Story: Jury Duty

(Romans 2:1-16)

Intro: As we noted last week, in this second major section of the letter, 1:18–3:21, Paul is presenting the reason why humanity needs God’s righteousness. Mankind needs God’s righteousness because the entire human race stands condemned by God, and suffers His wrath. Until man knows he is a guilty, lost, and condemned sinner, he cannot appreciate or appropriate the gracious salvation God has provided through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Paul you will recall is leveling God’s indictment against four different classes of people: First, the condemnation of the Gentiles (1:18-32); Second, the condemnation of the Moralist (2:1-16); Third, the condemnation of the Jews (2:17–3:8); Forth, the condemnation of All Men (3:9-20). **And what is the charge? Romans 3:23**—“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Paul is showing that every human being *without Christ* is a guilty sinner before God (3:23).

II. Righteousness Needed Because Of Sin And Condemnation (1:18–3:20)

- A. God’s condemnation of the Gentiles (1:18-32)
- B. God’s condemnation of the Moralist (2:1-16)

In our lesson last Sunday morning Paul condemned the pagan or Gentile world for rejecting the knowledge of God in favor of idolatry and sexual perversion. In the section before us this morning (2:1-16), Paul will condemn those who view themselves as morally upright. Most commentators would suggest that Paul is addressing the self-righteous Jews. They would readily agree with everything Paul had to say concerning God’s condemnation of the Gentiles. But when it came to themselves, they would argue that as God’s chosen people they were free from judgment and condemnation. The Jew, as a son of Abraham, considered himself righteous by the Law. If Judaism could save the Jews, then the Gospel of Christ was not needed. Paul shows the Jews that they too stood condemned before God.

Before addressing these self-righteous Jews openly as he does in verse 17, Paul will present four principles by which God judges all men, Jews and Gentiles (2:1-16). These four principles are found in verses 2, 6, 11, and 16. God’s judgment

will be according to truth (vv. 1-5); according to works (vv. 6-10); according to impartiality (vv. 11-15); and according to Paul's Gospel (v. 16).

First, God's judgment is according to truth (vv. 1-5)

Paul indicts Jews who thought they were free from God's wrath because they had not practiced the sins Paul had just condemned the Gentile world of practicing.

Rom. 2:1 Therefore you are without excuse, every man of you who passes judgment, for in that you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.

The "you," repeated 5 times in this verse, most likely refers to Jews who passed judgment on their pagan neighbors, they are without excuse. In the act of condemning others they automatically condemned themselves, because as Paul says, they were guilty of practicing the same things. As Warren Wiersbe says, "*When you point your finger at someone, you have three pointing back at you.*"

In a certain sense all of us are guilty of criticizing and judging others for the same things we ourselves are guilty of practicing. Jesus warned against hypocritical judgment in His Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7). Jesus warned that evil thoughts and desires are just as bad as committing the sin. While evaluation of a person's character is often informed by their conduct, Paul warns against placing ourselves in God's place as judges. Whereas man's judgment is usually based on outward appearances, God's judgment is according to truth. That is, God doesn't judge according to outward appearances but according to reality. He judges according to the way things really are. **Look at verse 2**

2 And we know that the judgment of God [is according to truth, KJV], and rightly falls upon those who *practice* such things.

God knows the thoughts and motives of each our lives. Each of us will personally answer to God. Most of us think God is not going to judge our sins. While we are forgiven in Christ, if we continue to *practice sin*, and worse, condemn and pass judgment on others who sin in like fashion, we will not escape the judgment of God. READ on, v. 3

3 And do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment upon 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 forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

God doesn't delay His judgment because we're so righteous. He delays His judgment because He is so loving and kind. He wants to give us time to recognize our sin and repent. He wants us to turn from our former wicked ways, and to love and to serve Him and His people. However, if we refuse to repent and turn from our sin, the judgment of God will come. You can count on it. **verse 5**

5 But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,

While all unrepentant sinners experience the ongoing wrath of God against their sin, there is coming a day when the stored-up wrath of God is going to be released. God's righteous judgment is contrasted with the Jew's self-righteousness. This future day of God's wrath is described in the Book of Revelation, primarily in chapters 4–20. It will be a time of Divine judgment such as the world has never seen before. It will culminate at the Great White Throne Judgment when every self-righteous person, who has rejected God's gracious gift of His Son, will face His wrath and judgment (Rev. 20:11-15).

The 2nd principle governing God's judgment is *it is according to our works* (v. 6)

Second, God's judgment is according to our works (vv. 6-10)

v. 6—God WILL RENDER TO EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS WORKS.

Again, God is going to impartially examine every one of us according to our works and judge us on the basis of what we did. Paul goes on to examine different works, **good and bad**. His first example is a contrast between those who work for God's glory, and those who selfishly seek their own unrighteous desires, vv. 7-8

v. 7—to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life;

Those who persevere in living for Christ's glory will be rewarded with immortality and eternal life. Do you routinely seek to live your life to bring glory and honor to God? Do you pray daily for opportunities to serve others? Do you pray for and watch for opportunities to witness—to share the good news about Jesus with the lost? **Do you routinely give a portion of your weekly income back to God?** This

is what it means to persevere in doing good for God's glory and honor. These actions are in keeping with our new life in Christ. True believers will escape the judgment of God because their works are in keeping with their new life in Christ.

The contrast in verse 8 is ugly.

8 but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation [awaits them].

Paul paints a picture of the carnal man, who is selfishly ambitious. They don't live their daily life in accordance with God's truth, but they pursue an unrighteous life-style. **A selfish ambitious person is one who is concerned first and foremost with their own needs.** They take the biggest steak at the barbeque. They push their way to the front of the line (**coffee bars in Europe**). If possible, they will always take the most prominent seat at any event. They don't think twice about putting others down so they can get ahead. They are only concerned with their own needs.

Self-seeking should be a thing of the past for us as believers. Paul condemns this type of behavior, and warns that the selfishly ambitious person will face the wrath of God. God will judge impartially. He will judge us all on the basis of our works.

A word of clarification may be needed here. Paul is not saying that we can earn our salvation by doing good deeds. This would contradict the teaching of this entire letter, to say nothing of the rest of the New Testament. The theme of the Book of Romans, according to Romans 1, verses 16 and 17 is *salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone*. **Doing good works is not the means of salvation, but the fruit of salvation. As Ryrie suggest, "Good works are the evidence of a changed life."**

Paul is not talking here about how to get saved. He is talking about God's judgment that is going to come upon all who *practice* unrighteousness. His point in this section is that God is going to judge all men fairly and impartially on the basis of their works. Truly saved people live their lives for the glory of God and the good of others. They will inherit immortality and eternal life. The selfish and ambitious person lives their life for their own greed and glory. They will inherit God's wrath and condemnation.

God plays no favorites, civilized or savage, religious or non-religious, saved and unsaved, all men will be impartially judged on the basis of their works.

Paul warns his Jewish brethren in **9-11**, that judgment is going to begin with them. **9** There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, **of the Jew first** and also of the Greek, **10** but glory and honor and peace to every man who does good, **to the Jew first** and also to the Greek.

The point of verses 9 and 10 is that God's judgment is not based on whether one is a Jew or a Greek, whether he is outwardly moral or immoral. God's judgment is based on what a person actually does, whether he is truly moral or immoral. God will deal with the Jew first because his privilege was greater. He received special revelation as well as natural revelation.

A third basis for God's judgment is based on impartiality (vv. 11-15)

11 For there is no partiality with God. **12** 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;

The word "for" that begins verses 11 and 12 further develops or explains Paul's thought in verses 9-10; that "God is no respecter of person." This actually introduces **the third basis for God's judgment—it is impartial**. His judgment is not based on whether one is a Jew or a Greek. It is based on what a person does with God's revelation. This statement would have shocked Paul's Jewish readers. The Jews viewed themselves as deserving of God's special favor and blessings. As children of Abraham, they thought they possessed the righteousness of God. "Not so," says Paul. "All who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law."

Verse 12 provides the answer to people who are always accusing God of not being fair. You've run into them haven't you. Their favorite question is "But what about those who have never heard the truth about God? "Surely, they won't perish will they?" Paul says, "All who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law." Likewise, all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law. In other words, God's judgment will be impartial.

As we learned back in chapter 1, all men possess intuitive knowledge of God, but they willfully suppress the truth and reject Him. As a consequence, God has **given them over** to practice idolatry and degrading immorality. Gentiles who don't possess the Law of Moses will be judged and perish for rejecting God's inward revelation to their conscience, and His outward revelation in creation (1:19; 2:15). Likewise, the Jews, who possessed the Law of Moses, and yet sinned, will be judged for their failure to repent and receive God. **Notice in verse 13**

13 for not the hearers of the Law are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified.

It is not those who hear or possess the Law that are just or acceptable to God, but those who hear and do the Law, these will be justified before God. Keep in mind the Law was never intended to save anyone. The Law was added to show the Jews they were sinners, and as sinners it was impossible to keep the Law. They needed to receive God's gracious provision for sin by faith.

“Justified” is a legal term that needs to be explained here. The biblical meaning of “justify” means *to pronounce, accept, and treat as just*. Justification may be defined as the act of God whereby He declares righteous any person who believes in His Son Jesus Christ. **The root idea in justification is the declaration by God**, the righteous Judge, that the man who believes in Jesus Christ, sinful though he may be, is now viewed as righteous—because the righteousness of God's Son has been **imputed**/placed to his account. When you accept Christ into your heart as Savior, God declares that you are righteous—in right standing with Him—**just as if you never sinned**.

Once again, justification is a declarative act. It is not something wrought in man, but something **God declares of the man** who is rightly related to Him through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. *Believers don't become righteous, but are declared righteous.*

14 For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, **15** in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them.

Prior to the call of Moses and giving of the Law, Old Testament saints like Noah and Melchizedek, Job and Abraham, did instinctively the things of the Law, thereby showing the principle of Law was written in their hearts. They possessed an innate sense of morality. They knew God and what He required, and followed the mandates of their conscience. They lived to love and serve God. The Jews, who possessed the Law and the covenants of God had no excuse. They stood condemned for rejecting God's righteousness, and trying to establish their own works-based righteousness.

v. 16 introduces the forth basis for God's judgment, according to Paul's gospel.

16 on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.

Paul concludes that all men, Jew and Gentile, will be judged according to the gospel he preached. That is, all men will be judged based on what they did with Jesus Christ. Those who have received Christ by faith have passed out of judgment. Those who have rejected Christ, will face certain judgment.

In summary, to convict the self-righteous Jews of their guilt before God, Paul introduces four principles by which God will judge all people.

First, God will judge according to truth, in terms of reality not appearance (v. 2)

Second, God will judge everyone according to their works (v. 6)

Those who lived for Christ's honor and glory will be rewarded with eternal life. But those who are selfishly ambitious, and live unrighteous and disobedient lives, wrath is their inevitable reward.

Third, God will judge impartially (v. 11). Not the hearers of the Law will be justified but the doers of the Law will be **justified—declared right with God!**

Forth, God's judgment will be based on men's response to the gospel (v. 16)

Those who receive Christ by faith are declared just as if they have never sinned.

Those who reject Christ will face the eternal wrath and judgment of God!

Story: Numerous missionaries have recounted that when they have read the opening chapter of Romans to natives of numerous heathen lands they have refused to believe that it was from the missionary's sacred book; suspecting that the missionary had written it himself as a description of what he had seen since he came among them. The heathen recognize they are sinners, Jews do not.

Paul's point in this section is that all men will be judged on the basis of what they have done with Christ. Those who receive Christ as their Savior will be delivered from sin and death, and inherit eternal life. Those who refuse to receive Jesus Christ as Savior will die in their sin, and someday experience God's wrath, being consigned to an eternal hell. *Be certain that you know Christ as your Savior today.*

Applications

1. Do you regularly judge others, while routinely committing the same sins?
2. Do you live for the glory of God, or do you live a selfish life of unrighteous and sin?
3. Do you want to escape the wrath of God? Accept Paul's Gospel, and receive Jesus Christ as your personal Savior this morning.
4. Avoid judging anyone for the rest of the day. Give it a try

Songs:

What A Savior_T Laura Story 3:54

Ancient Words_Michael W Smith 4:30

Jesus Paid It All_Aaron Keyes 3:19

Closing: Come to Jesus_Chris Rice 3:44