

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to Romans 2

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through this very deep theological letter that the Apostle Paul wrote to believers in Rome (and us) about the fundamentals of Christianity.

What is the gospel of grace and why do we need it?

How are we justified by faith and not by works?

What happens to those who reject the gospel of grace?

Those who say – I don't need Jesus, I can make it on my own. I'm a good person. I'm an important person, I am a beautiful person. God's not going to judge me.

Paul provides us those answers in this very powerful letter.

And I gave the illustration last week that Paul wants to reveal to us this precious gem, the gospel of grace to us – but before he shows us the gospel of grace – he has to lay out the black velvet sheet that he will display it against.

And the black velvet sheet is the depravity of man apart from Christ

The black velvet sheet is God's wrath upon those who reject His solution – by allowing them to pursue their desires.

The black velvet sheet is the judgement and the condemnation of those who reject the gospel of grace.

Let's pray...

Read Text

In our study last week – we ended with verse 11,

[Rom 2:11 NKJV] 11 For there is no partiality with God.

And we have to take note – that in context, this is in reference to His perfect judgment.

When God judges, He doesn't look at the person—

He is not going to care about what church they went to

He judges on the basis of their deeds (whether they obeyed Him or not).

[Rom 2:6 NKJV] 6 who "will render to each one according to his deeds":

And Paul provides a contrast between those who will receive eternal life in His presence and those who will receive His indignation and wrath in verse 7-9

The issue is not whether a person is rich or poor,

whether they are Jew or Gentile,

whether they are religious or non-religious,

man or woman, educated or uneducated, famous or unknown—

God will judge them with total impartiality on the basis of whether they lived their life in obedience to His Word or not—

indicating whether the individual did or did not have saving faith in their hearts.

In other words, God doesn't judge superficially and with partiality—He always judges fairly and righteously!

[Rev 20:12 NKJV] 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is [the Book] of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.

I had you make a note of the phrase small and great –

This is not in reference to their physical stature – this is in reference to their supposed importance upon the earth in life.

The poor, the insignificant, the unimportant will stand next to kings, presidents, CEO's

These are the individuals who refused the gospel of grace, who refused to bow the knee to Jesus as their King.

These are those who rejected the love of the truth (the gospel), which would have saved them from this terrifying Day.

And now they stand before the One who loved them and gave Himself for them— Whom they rejected as their loving Savior on earth—and now they stand before Him and He becomes their Righteous Judge!

God shows no partiality

He doesn't favor certain people over others

Now, the reason that Paul makes this statement is that he anticipates the question,

“Are you saying then, that God judges everyone the same?”

Raise your hands if you think that God judges everyone the same???

Paul says – that is not the case.

Impartiality does not mean the same.

Impartiality means fairly

[Rom 2:12-24 NKJV] 12 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

In other words, there is no partiality with God and He is absolutely fair when He judges.

If a person had the law of God (His written law given to Israel thru Moses) they will be judged by God's written law—and if they didn't have the written law of God—they will be judged without the law.

And of course, by saying this Paul is making a distinction between the Jews and the Gentiles— the Jews having the written law of God and the Gentiles who did not.

It's important that we understand that the basic idea of the verse is that—in the final eternal judgment of God—He will show equity and impartiality by dealing with people according to the light they possessed.

Those who had the Bible will be judged by it and those who didn't have the Bible will be judged without it.

Now, here is a simple illustration that might help.

Two people standing on the ledge of the Grand Canyon

One of them completely understand the law of gravity (Jew)

The other person -has no idea of what the law of gravity is (Gentile)

They both jump

Which one will die by transgressing the law of gravity? Both will.

That is what Paul is saying here – Jew and Gentile apart from Christ will face God's judgment.

The reason that Paul is pointing this out is because the Jew – just like the self righteous, they thought they were exempt from judgment.

That God's judgment was reserved only for the Gentile.

They felt because God had entrusted them with (the law) – that they should have the higher honor – not the greater condemnation.

But here's the problem -

13 (for not the hearers of the law [are] just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified;

The word hearer that Paul uses in the Greek –

Is not the normal word for hearer.

Paul uses a word that was used of students who constantly hear something taught.

And that is exactly what the Jews did in the synagogues every week—

and what so many church goers do in churches each week—

they hear the Word of God over and over and over again but the problem is that they don't obey it.

Turn to James 1

[Jas 1:21-25 NKJV] 21 Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. 22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; 24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. 25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues [in it], and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

If a person comes to church every week to hear the Word of God being taught—it will only bless their life as long as they obey what it says.

Jesus taught exactly the same thing that James wrote in His epistle

[Mat 7:24-27 NKJV] 24 "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: 25 "and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. 26 "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: 27 "and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

It's our obedience to what Jesus says that bolts you and me to the foundation, to Jesus.

Church - Don't be deceived by getting a "good feeling" by going to Bible Study.

The real, solid benefits are not going to come until we put what we've learned into practice.

The Jews thought they were justified simply because they were showing up every Saturday as the law was read – they thought they were exempt from judgment.

Paul says the opposite was true – the more they heard – the greater condemnation came upon them because they didn't respond to what they heard.

To the reader of this letter who thinks that the Jews have an unfair advantage because they have God's written Word – Paul says – it is not the hearers who are justified but the doers.

14 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, 15 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])

This is Paul way of showing that both Jew and Gentiles both have access to a moral standard.

To the Jew – they have the moral standard written on tablets made out of stone

For the Gentile, it is written inside of their heart

Every single person who has ever been born, is born with a conscious

They understand that what they are doing is either right or wrong

Whenever a person – believer or nonbeliever violates one of God's laws they feel guilt

The alarm goes off (conscious)

Don't do it!!!!

There is three ways of handling guilt.

- Get rid of God
- Get right with God – that is what happens when we become a believer – we put our faith in trust in Jesus whose blood washes away the guilt of sin
- Turn our conscious off – which means, we either ignore our conscious or we try to justify or blame everyone else for our sin. Which only leads to greater rebellion against God.

So for those who say – God can't judge me because I didn't know –

Our conscious bears witness / our conscious keeps records of what we did when the alarm was going off.

And those individuals will be judged based on how they responded to their conscious.

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

So not only are those apart from Christ going to be judged on their deeds, on how they responded to the law – (all outwards actions)

they will also be judged based on their motives.

The secrets of men –

[Ecc 12:14 NKJV] 14 For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, Whether good or evil.

For the individual who chose to reject the gospel of grace –

Those how had deeds –

Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’

Jesus response - I never knew you; depart from Me

Motives

Even for the believer – we are all going to appear before the judgment seat of Christ

And everything that we did – is going to be exposed.

Whether or not – we did it with the right motives.

It is all going to be tested by fire –

Any other motive other than the glory of God and the love for those made in His image are going to be consumed (wood, hay, straw)

This is why we must walk humbly today – to make our hearts Christ's home

We must allow Him to clean out every dirty hiding place in our lives – and we all have nooks and crannies that need cleaning.

And He will clean them – if we allow Him to

17 Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God,

People who trust in religion are just as lost as those who have no religion at all.

The self righteous individual who thinks that God will accept him or her apart from Christ

The lawless over sinner

The individual who thinks that God will show him or her partiality because of who they are

And the religious individual whose placed his or her trust in religion

The one thing that they all have in common – they are equally lost.

They all need Jesus

Paul addresses the Jew who has a false assurance because they were Jews –

To them, salvation was hereditary.

But church, we are not saved because we grew up in a Christian home

Salvation in Christ must be acquired by personal repentance and a real relationship with Jesus Christ

And so the scriptures make it very clear to us that we cannot replace relationship with religion.

You see, for the Jew – they felt that if they had a copy of the law or if they were hearers of the law – that saved them.

Jesus points this out in John 5

[Jhn 5:39 NKJV] 39 "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.

The religious Jew that Paul is addressing here solely relied on their possession of the law for salvation.

Now think about his –

When you ask someone – are you a Christian?

And their response is –

Well, I grew up in a Christian home

I attend a Christian church

I have a bible

Does the mere possession of a bible put them in possession of eternal life?

Of course not.

What should the follow up question be?

Do you read it – and if they say yes -

Do you believe what you are reading?

And if they answer yes

Do you actually do what it says?

Simply having a bible, reading a bible, even believing the bible – but never actually embracing what it says or purposing in their heart to do what it says – leaves the person empty.

18 and know [His] will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law,

The Jews claimed that they knew God's will

They new God's will from the law

They prided themselves on being able to know right from wrong based on their instructions from the law.

But here is the test – did they embrace it???

Now – going back to the question –

Are you a Christian

The person that says – I know the difference between right and wrong – does that make them a Christian

I know God's will – does that make them a Christian

No – knowing is not a substitute for relationship

19 and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, 20 an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law.

It had been God's desire that the nation of Israel to be a "light to the Gentiles" (Is.42:6; 49:6; 60:3), but rather than being a light that leads people in the right way, they were just proud that they were "better" than "those pagan Gentiles".

The Jews prided themselves on the fact that no one had to teach them the truth of God—however, they needed to teach everyone else.

This is why Jesus rebukes them –

[Mat 23:24-25 NKJV] 24 "Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel! 25 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence.

Instead of them leading the blind – you had a case where the blind was leading the blind

21 You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? 22 You who say, "Do not commit adultery," do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?

So not only did they boast in having the law – and knowing the difference between right and wrong and knowing God's will

They also boasted in the fact they preached the law

But here is Paul argument

Possessing and preaching the Law does a person no good if they're not going to practice it.

They may have had the right doctrine – but they lacked the right practice

Paul charges the Jews for their hypocrisy—because they were guilty of committing the very sins they condemned the Gentles for committing.

They said one thing, but did another.

They were hypocrites.

They were prideful

Just like the other examples that Paul lists here in ch 2

You see how this applies to the believer?

It is one thing to proclaim that we are a Christian

To say that we have the light or possess the light

Jesus said – “I am the light of the World”

But the question again is – do we embrace the light

You see, we need to understand that Jesus is the light – not us

All a Christian can do is reflect the light

The only light we have is the light we get from Jesus

And the only light that is worth reflecting is the light that Jesus shines on us

But – here is the thing regarding reflectors –

Is that a reflector is only good if it is cleaned.

And a reflector is only good if it is turned toward the light it wishes to reflect.

Doers of His Word

We can say whatever we want but the truth is how we live is going to tell so much more.

Amen

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.



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Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

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