

Bibles???

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

Please turn your bibles with me to Romans 2

We are continuing our verse-by-verse study through amazing letter that the Apostle Paul wrote to the believers in Rome about what is the Gospel of grace.

What does it mean that we are saved by grace through faith?

What does it mean that the “just shall live by faith?”

That we are saved by His righteousness and not our own

That we are saved by His work on the cross and not our own

That the judgment of the believer’s sin, past, present and future has already been paid in full. Tetelestai - It is finished

This is exactly what Paul wants to reveal to the believers in Rome.

Now, imagine going to a jewelry store to buy a diamond ring for your loved one.

You walk in – you look through the case – and then you ask the jeweler if he or she can take the ring out of the case so you can examine it in detail.

The jeweler – what they usually do – is they take the ring and they place right in the middle of a black velvet cloth – positioned just right under the light – so the diamond sparkles like fire.

You see, the jeweler knows the diamond will appear all the more radiant because it's displayed against that black background.

This is what Apostle Paul is doing in his letter.

He has a glorious, gorgeous gem he wants to show the believers in Rome – the gospel of grace.

But before he does that – he has to lay out the black velvet cloth – which represents, man's spiritual condition.

That we suppress the truth

That we would much rather worship a god of our own making than embrace His complete revelation

Man's depravity as we choose to live a life apart from God and pursue evil.

And we saw over the last two weeks how God honors our choices in His wrath – He allows us to pursue those desires

In our text this morning – Paul knows that some of readers of his letter are going to be in full agreement with everything he has said so far –

He knows that they are nodding their heads in agreement at how bad others are –

But they think of themselves as good, upright, godly people –

We are not like - Those sexual immoral people – those homosexuals, those backbiters, those murderers

Everything that Paul listed at the end of ch 1

So what Paul is going to say in our text is that the individual who rejects the gospel of grace yet who considers himself/herself a moral person - they too fall short of what God requires.

Let's pray...

Read Text

In our text last Sunday – in chapter 1:29-31, we looked at 23 common sins that Paul provided for us regarding the depravity of man.

And so one of the things that we tend to do as we examine a list like this –

Is we either start to see which ones we are guilty of and which ones we may not have been guilty of committing (yet)

Or we start to create our own ranking system – in an effort to justify some of the ones we have committed.

At least I haven't committed such and such.....

And so we begin to look at sin in different levels.

These are really, really bad ones

These are really bad

These are eh-h

And so, our rankings of sin might look very different from one another.

By the way – if we are ranking sins – don't you think that at the top of our ranking we would have the sin that Jesus attacked more directly and more severely than any other sin?

Oddly enough, it is the sin most practiced and most justified.

Not murder

Not Sexual Immorality

It is the sin of self-righteousness.

[Rom 2:1-11 NKJV] 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.

Turn your bibles with me to 2 Sam 12

I am going to provide a biblical illustration to show what Paul is saying here.

[2Sa 12:1-7 NKJV] 1 Then the LORD sent Nathan to David. And he came to him, and said to him: "There were two men in one city, one rich and the other poor. 2 "The rich [man] had exceedingly many flocks and herds. 3 "But the poor [man] had nothing, except one little ewe lamb which he had bought and nourished; and it grew up together with him and with his children. It ate of his own food and drank from his own cup and lay in his bosom; and it was like a daughter to him. 4 "And a traveler came to the rich man, who refused to take from his own flock and from his own herd to prepare one for the wayfaring man who had come to him; but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him." 5 So David's anger was greatly aroused against the man, and he said to Nathan, "[As] the LORD lives, the man who has done this shall surely die! 6 "And he shall restore fourfold for the lamb, because he did this thing and because he had no pity." 7 Then Nathan said to David, "You [are] the man!"

We will stop right there.

After his affair with Bathsheba and murdering her husband Uriah – in order to cover up his sin – David thought he had gotten away with it.

And so Nathan comes to David with this report.

David upon hearing the report became so outraged that he jumps to his feet and he declares his judgment.

the man who has done this shall surely die!

But then Nathan responds with, “David, you are the man”

You see, in rushing to judgment on another, David was in fact judging himself.

That’s exactly what Paul is saying here.

When we judge others, we are in fact judging ourselves.

The same warning that Jesus gives us -

[Mat 7:1-2 NKJV] 1 "Judge not, that you be not judged. 2 "For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

In other words – Jesus warns everyone to avoid hypocritical judgment and unjust judgment

It includes the idea of making a rash and unfair and inappropriate judgment of a person without knowing or caring about the facts.

Just like David did – guilty, he deserves to die.

Now, some people may look at our text today in Romans or Matt 7 and come to the conclusion that we should never judge.

But that is not what the text is saying –

Judge doesn't mean never judge anything under any circumstances because we are required to judge good from evil

We are to use discernment

We are required to judge right from wrong

We are required to judge sin in the church

But this is what we are not required to do

We are not required to embrace hypocritical judgment and unjust judgments

And this is done when we apply a different standard to ourselves than we do to others.

It is the person who always sees that their sin always looks worse on the person than it does on them.

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

God's judgment isn't like ours, bent as it is toward self-justification.

God's judgment is perfect, unaffected by favoritism.

His judgment is based in utter truth.

We don't know a man's heart

We don't have all the facts – so we must be careful.

We are called to simply give out God's love and His grace to people, not judgment

3 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? 4 Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

In these two verse Paul asks two questions of the self righteous person

1. Do we really think we're going to wiggle our way out of judgment?
2. Do we think the delay of judgment means God approves our sin?

Paul's point is that people are without excuse for their sin.

That we judge others proves we all possess an innate sense of right & wrong that even we don't live up to.

But while we're so good at applying judgment to others, we somehow think we're exempt.

And to make matters worse – is that we mistake God's merciful delay in judgment as His approval.

You see, the self-righteous individual will say –

God has been good to me

God has been kind to me

God has been patient with me

God hasn't judged me – this proves that God loves me and accepts me apart from Christ and apart from the gospel of grace

And church, nothing can be further from the truth!

God doesn't thump us as soon as we sin

He waits, and the Holy Spirit begins to work on us to bring the conviction that moves us to repent.

For when we repent, confessing our sin for what it is and asking God to forgive, He does.

You see, just as God's judgment is perfect, so is His love & mercy.

That's what the cross is all about.

No one gets off free – someone has to pay for sin. Justice must be satisfied.

On the cross, Jesus took on Himself all the righteous judgment of God for our sin.

I had you make a note of the word **forbearance**.

Because the word that is used here means to hold back

It is a reference to God's judgment

It is a delay, it is a stay of execution

God's delay in pouring out on us the punishment His justice requires is for one reason – to give us time to repent so we can escape that punishment.

Look at it this way: Our sin must be punished – justice demands it.

Either we will suffer that punishment in the future on the Day of Judgment.

Or Jesus has already suffered fully for it at the cross.

It's one or the other – and while God has made it possible to avoid future judgment by providing the past judgment of the Cross, we decide which day will be ours.

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,

Again – keep it context,

Paul is addressing the nonbeliever

The one who sees himself or herself as self righteous

Paul is saying that because of their stubbornness, their unwillingness to repent and because they have rejected God grace and mercy –

These individuals are simply adding to the wrath that will be poured upon them on the Day of Judgment.

6 who "will render to each one according to his deeds": 7 eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; 8 but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness--indignation and wrath, 9 tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; 10 but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

When we read verses 6-10

It almost seems to appear as if Paul is saying that salvation comes as a result of good works.

Especially when Paul says in verse 6

will render to each one according to his deeds

But here is the important thing church

That is not what Paul is teaching here and that is something that Paul never taught.

Remember his point in all this – this is the dark background against which he wants to set the beauty of the Gospel.

He's proving that there IS NO HOPE FOR MEN & WOMEN APART FROM JESUS CHRIST.

Because God's judgment is perfect He will render to each one according to his/her deeds.

If they've done good, they'll be rewarded.

If they've done evil, they'll be punished.

Because God's judgment is perfect, this is the way it has to be.

Paul is just stating the obvious.

Now, when we are sharing Christ with someone and we ask them "How does a person get to heaven?"

it is not uncommon to hear a person reply, "By being good" or "by obeying the Ten Commandments".

Our tendency is to jump on them and correct them by telling them that you are only saved by faith in Christ.

The truth is – there is nothing incorrect about their response.

The thing that is incorrect is their assumption that they qualify.

Because in the very next chapter, Paul is going to remind us that NO ONE does good

He makes it perfectly clear -

Turn to the right to Rom 3 -

[Rom 3:10 NKJV] 10 As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one;

[Rom 3:23 NKJV] 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

That is why Paul writes in Ephesians

[Eph 2:8-9 NKJV] 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; [it is] the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Sin is so insidious it's infected every aspect of who & what we are.

While we may be good in comparison to one another, we're nowhere near good in relation to what's required by God's righteousness.

Even the best among us aren't without failure, error, & sin.

God's judgment is totally righteous; He rewards good & punishes evil.

The problem is, there's evil in all of us

So if we think that we can come to God on the basis of our works – it's not going to happen – because our righteousness is like filthy rags to God

We can't come by works, we have to come by faith

Listen, if eternal life could be gained by works, then Jesus never would have come.

He wouldn't have needed to.

The Father would have said, "There's no need to send My beloved Son to suffer the agonies of the Cross, because they can make it here on their own."

The cross is proof we can never earn heaven through our works.

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

To the Jew reading Paul's letter – this verse would have come as a complete shock to them.

You see, the Jews thought because God had given them His Law, they had a leg up on everyone else.

They thought just having the Law made them better & earned them eternal life.

They were exempt from God's judgment

By the way - The same mentality that the self-righteous had

Paul warns the Jews being religious & knowledgeable about what God requires isn't enough.

They are no better than those who hadn't received the Law because it's not about works.

I had you make a note of the word partiality

Because the Greek word that is used here we find it 4 times in the NT

It actually means receiving face

The idea is that showing partiality (or favoritism) means judging a person based on their appearance or on what they appear to offer.

This is why James tells us in

[Jas 2:1 NKJV] 1 My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, [the Lord] of glory, with partiality.

The same word is used here that is used in Rom 2

Christian love does not receive (or see) face.

Christians are not face-seers.

We do not treat people according to what they look like or what they might offer us in our flesh.

Christian love is not based on someone's worth or imagined worth.

So what Paul is saying here is that God doesn't put His face forward or against people on any other basis other than what He deems to be right and correct.

So for the individual who says – hey, but I am a good person

When I stand before Him, God is going to put all the good things I did on one side of the scale and all the bad things I did on the other side of the scale and if the good side is heavier than the bad side -

God will show partiality towards me

But that is not the way it works

There are no scales in heaven

God doesn't grade on a curve

Perfection is required

There are no exceptions to the rule

So the self-righteous will miss out on heaven.

[1Pe 1:17-19 NKJV] 17 And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay [here] in fear; 18 knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, [like] silver or gold, from your aimless conduct [received] by tradition

from your fathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

We need to understand that no matter what we do – we can't make it right with God on our own.

That's not even possible

Because it takes just one sin to make us disqualified

That is why God had to send His Son to die for us

He was without spot

He was without blemish

And the blood of Jesus Christ is now able to wash away your sins and my sins and our guilt and our shame – it is all by the blood of Jesus Christ

This is what makes the book of Romans so incredible –

It doesn't matter how religious we are

How good we are or even how messed up we are

All of us are in the same boat together

We need the forgiveness that God provides

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.

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.

[Rom 3:27-28 NKJV] 27 Where [is] boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. 28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.

It is by faith that you and I are justified before God – not by works

And it is by simply acknowledging that we are guilty – that we are wrong before God
and the only thing that make us right is the blood of Jesus

[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!

