

SERMON NOTES

By Pastor John Paul Miller

In The Grip of God's Grace

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans

Romans 2:1-16 - "The Moral Man without Excuse"

Romans 2:1-16, *"Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel."*

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A father complained about the amount of time his family spent in front of the television. His children watched cartoons and neglected schoolwork. His wife preferred soap operas to housework, His solution! "As soon as the baseball season's over, I am going to pull the plug."

How wicked sin looks on other people.

In chapter 1 of Romans Paul painted a picture of the deplorable condition of the heathen.

Yet at the same time that Paul was talking about the heathen world, and their descent into idolatry and immorality, he knew there was a class of men (self-righteous – moralists) who would say “Amen” to his verdict of the guilty condemned heathen, and yet we’re doing the same things!

Paul now calls the moral man into the court room to show him that he too is lost, and guilty before God.

F.F. Bruce – We know that there was another side to the pagan world of the first century than that which Paul has portrayed in the preceding paragraphs. What about a man like Paul’s illustrious contemporary Seneca, the Stoic moralist, the tutor of Nero? Seneca might have listened to Paul’s indictment and said, ‘Yes, that is perfectly true of great masses of mankind, and I concur in the judgment which you pass on them – but there are others , of course, like myself, who deplore these tendencies as much as you do.’

Is the moral man a Gentile or Jew? – a Gentile

(vs. 1) “...O man, ...”

We all know people that reject any idea that they are sinners.

- I’m a good person
- I’m not that bad

Remember that, whenever we point a finger at someone we have four fingers also pointing back at us.

The key word in this section is the word ‘judgest’, ‘judgment’, or ‘judge’. It’s used nine times in this text.

In verse one; man is on the throne judging.

In verse sixteen; God is on the throne judging man.

Paul points out that there are four reasons why the moral person is under condemnation:

I. Moral people are condemned according to their own judgment (vs. 1)

Romans 2:1, “Therefore thou art inexcusable (apologia), O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.”

Paul is not saying it’s wrong to judge something as wrong.

What was wrong with their judgment?

It was hypocritical.

Why? (vs. 1) “...for thou that judgest doest the same things.”

Notice the following things:

1. The interesting contrast between Romans 1:32 and Romans 2:1:

Romans 1:32, *“Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.”*

Romans 2:1, *“Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.”*

2. Old Testament Illustration: David & Nathan – “... ,Thou art the man ...”

2 Samuel 12:1-14, *“And the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die: And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity. And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun. And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.”*

3. How can they be moral and do the same things?

- a) Sins of good standing – example: covetousness (1:29)
- b) They don't understand the nature and extent of sin.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said:

Matthew 5:21-22, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."

Matthew 5:27-28, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."

- c) The self-righteous are blind to their own faults, and judgmental of others.

Illustrations: John 8 – double standard

Matt 7:1-5 – first judge yourself

- d) Like the heathen in chapter 1:21, "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened."

Knowing God, they glorified Him not as God.

Un-Godly – Romans 1:30, "Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,"

The sin of omission

II. Moral people are condemned according to the truth (vs. 2-5)

Romans 2:2-5, "But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;"

Psalms 96:13, *"Before the LORD: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth."*

We can be sure (vs. 2) – God's judgment is according to literally, the "TRUTH" – not man's.

Why would men go on sinning (three words)

1. 'thinkest' (vs. 3)
2. 'despisest' (vs. 4)

God is good, he won't judge

2 Peter 3:9, *"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."*

Illustrations: - God's goodness leading to repentance – The Prodigal Son.

3. 'treasurest' (vs. 5)

Picture putting money in the bank.

Contrast with Mathew 6:20, *"But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:"*

The day? When? – The Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20)

Woodrow Kroll – After years of glossing over personal sin and guilt, the pride of moralists will not allow them to have a change of mind (Greek, *metanoia*), which is repentance (vs. 5). Thus their pride and sinful hearts stockpile the wrath of God so that in the day of wrath, the day of God's righteous judgment, the Lord God will deal as justly with moral people as He does with the immoral ones.

III. Moral people are condemned according to their works (vs. 6-10)

Romans 2:6-10, *"Who will render to every man according to his deeds: To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:"*

Is Paul teaching we can be saved by doing good?

(vs. 7) *"To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:"*

(vs.10) *"But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:"*

No!

Romans 3:20, *"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin."*

Romans 4:5, *"But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."*

What is Paul saying?

The same as the James – works show true saving faith.

A tree is known by it' s fruit.

The work of God: John 6:28-29, *"Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."*

IV. Moral people are condemned without respect of persons (vs. 11-16)

Romans 2:11-16, *"For there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel."*

1. (vs. 11) would shock the Jews – Jews in Hell!

People say:

- "my grandfather was a preacher."
- "I'm a member of a church."
- "I gave money to charity."

2. Study (vs. 12-15)

Romans 2:12-15, *"For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts,*

their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)"

God will judge according to light!

Illustration:

Matthew 12:41, *"The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here."*

Matthew 11:21, *"Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes."*

Key – No one has ever lived up to the light he or she has.

3. (vs. 16)

A. There is coming a day when God will judge

B. God's judgment will include the hidden areas of our lives

Hebrews 4:12, *"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."*

The word of God is alive!

C. God's judgment will take place through Jesus Christ

Illustration: Paul in Athens:

Acts 17:31, *"Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."*

D. God's judgment is part of the gospel – Lit: "as my gospel declares"

Illustration: The gospel only shines when seen against the dark background of sin.

Woodrow Kroll – Being moral is insufficient to be righteous. These are not synonymous concepts. Moral people may possess a heightened conscience and live in light of it, but God demands righteousness not just morality, Since no one innately possesses such righteousness, God deals with the moral and the immoral in the same way. Both fall short of God's glory (Rom. 3:23). While

moralists may be better citizens, they are not better candidates for heaven. The human need for righteousness permeates both blatant sinners and moralists.

A day of judgment is coming (Rev. 20)

It's a good idea to "settle out of court".

How?

John 3:16-21, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."

John 3:36, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."