

Let God Change Your Heart

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[0 : 00] I pray that we understand, or at least we take time to consider what an amazing love it really is that God loves us.

! Because the other reality is, at times, we can be pretty unlovable, can't we? Isn't that the truth? I mean, I'm not going to make you turn to somebody and say you're unlovable, because that's not a very nice thing.

But isn't that the reality? We're not always really lovable people. Sometimes we can be ugly, and I'm not talking physically. Sometimes we can have an ugly spirit, an ugly temperament, an ugly whatever.

All our failings, all our sin to God, that is ugliness. And He still loves us enough He wants to forgive us. That is an amazing thing, and that is an amazing love.

This morning, if you have your Bibles, turn to Romans. We are going to be in Romans again. I know last week we were in Romans, and I debated whether to stay in Romans, and I guess I really just feel that, you know, as I share God's Word, I want to make sure that we share the fullness of the gospel, that we share everything.

[1 : 09] So we're going to kind of walk through some of Romans, too, because there is so much in Romans that God has for us. You know, Paul was writing this letter that a church in Rome, he had not been to Rome.

So this was a church he didn't found. He hadn't been to Rome. He didn't know this church. But he wanted to make sure that they understood some things about the gospel, about Jesus Christ, about what it means to be a Christian.

So I think there is so much that is not just, and he talks a lot about Jews and Gentiles, and a lot of this is to the Jewish people, but it's also to us. So we're going to look at some of this in Romans, and we're going to be in Romans 2 this morning.

Romans 2, starting in the first verse, and I'm going to ask if you're willing and able if you would stand as we read God's Word this morning. Romans 2, beginning in the first verse, we're going to read through verse 11, and then jump down to verses 28 and 29.

So starting in Romans 2, verse 1. Romans 3, verse 1.

[2 : 40] Romans 3, verse 1.

Romans 3, verse 1.

And then jump down to verse 28. For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Lord God, we thank you once again for this morning that you have seen fit to give each one of us. And help us to remember, to be mindful of the fact that this day of life is a gift from you.

That every morning when we wake up and we become aware of our surroundings and we open our eyes, you have given us a gift. A day of life. And I pray, Lord, that we do not waste that gift that you have given us, that opportunity, but we would use it for you.

[4 : 30] That is our purpose. And now, Lord, this morning, this time that we are spending in your house, in your presence, this also is an opportunity. It's an opportunity to learn, to draw closer to you, to hear your word, to sing praises to you.

It's also, Lord, an opportunity to change. To become more and more the people that you want us to be. And, Lord, none of us are there yet. Every one of us that are in this place, we have rough edges, sharp corners.

We have things that need to be cut away and shaped and molded into what you want us to be. Help us to realize that. So, Lord, when we share your word, when you share your message with us, it is for every one of us.

So, thank you again for this opportunity, and I pray we take advantage of it. And we ask and pray these things. In the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and all God's family together, said. You can be seated this morning. Before we get into the verses we just read, there's one verse from Romans chapter 1 that is on my heart that needs to be drilled into us a little bit.

[5 : 44] How many of you, when you hear something, can quickly forget it? I know my wife is looking at me, making sure I raise my hand.

I can forget things so very quickly. Tammy will tell me, all right, you need to do this. Two minutes later, I'm like, what did she tell me to do? If I even remember, she told me to do anything.

I say, I need to go to the store for this. I get in the store, I'm standing there. I know I needed something. Sometimes I'll be in Menards, wandering around, and I have a guy come up or a girl come up, and they'll ask, is there anything I can help you with?

You know my response? I don't know. I'm wandering around, hoping something will trigger a memory for what I'm supposed to be getting, and it's a big store.

So we forget things. This is one verse that is just really on my heart that I hope is kind of drilled into us. We read it last week. It's Romans 1.16.

[6 : 43] And we're going to read this together this morning. You ready? For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

To who that believes? Everyone. And what is it talking about? The gospel of Christ is the power of God to salvation.

And Paul, as he wrote it, was saying, I am not ashamed of this. We as believers must be willing to say that same thing.

Don't you agree? I am not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ, because we live in a world that so desperately needs to hear it. And here's the thing. I hope we understand what the gospel of Christ is.

It's great to say I'm not ashamed of the gospel, but if you don't understand what the gospel is, does it make any difference? What is the gospel of Jesus Christ? It's the Bible.

[7 : 50] But what else? What does that mean? What Christ did for us? His ministry while He was here? What it means to follow Jesus?

What God is trying to tell us in the New Testament and really all the Bible? That's the gospel of Jesus Christ, isn't it? The truth of Jesus Christ that He shared. And we need to make sure that we share all of it with the world.

We sang a song, Amazing Love, and that's so very true. Is that part of the gospel of Jesus Christ? His love for us? Absolutely. Jesus shared His love. When He was asked, what is the most important commandment?

What did Jesus Christ say? He said there's two. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind and all that.

Love your God. What was the other one He shared? Love your neighbor as yourself. Both of those, what do they have in common? Love. Love. Loving God and loving each other.

[8 : 50] And that is part of the gospel of Christ, isn't it? Does it end there? For some people, does it end there? That it's all about His love and as long as we understand that, that's it.

Some people will tell you that that's it. It's not. The gospel of Christ is more than that. We've talked last, when we were sharing a lot about the family of God, how every person that walks through those doors should feel the love of Christ.

Do you agree with that? Should feel it coming through us. Should feel it from God, but from us. That is part of the gospel. But there is also more to it than that. Because the gospel of Christ, Jesus also talked about judgment, didn't He?

Isn't that true? Yeah, we don't. That's not as comfortable to talk about, though, is it? It's great to talk about love because it's wonderful to feel loved. But folks, the gospel of Christ that we are not ashamed of also says Jesus said that there will be a judgment.

We have been studying in the book of Matthew in our Thursday morning Bible study. And we were going through chapter 13 where there's lots of parables that Jesus Christ said. And Christ shared that His message was all about the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven.

[10 : 05] And in a couple of those parables, there is the parable of the wheat and the tares. That's something we can understand that Jesus said.

He said the wheat and the tares. In other words, the wheat, the crop you've got growing that you want, and what else is in that crop that you don't want?

Mark, Cody, any farmers out here, what don't you want in your field? Weeds. All of you that have a garden, do you want weeds? No. Anybody ask you, say, I'm growing some weeds out here.

You don't want that. And Jesus was sharing in that parable, the wheat and the tares, that it's all going to be gathered up together, and then what's going to happen? It's going to be sorted out. And there's going to be a separation, the good from the bad. The parable was saying that there is going to be a judgment, the evil from the righteous, those that know Him and those that don't.

[11:02] That's also part of the gospel message. I didn't hear any amen for that. It's part of the gospel message, right? In that same chapter, He told the parable of the net that was cast out and gathered in fish.

But guess what? Of all that was gathered, what were they going to do after they gathered it in? Separate what's good from the bad. And the point was there is going to be a separation of the righteous from the evil in the end.

What was Christ talking about there? He was talking about judgment. So when we say we're not ashamed of the gospel, we're talking about the love of Christ, but we're also talking about the fact that there is a judgment that's going to happen too.

Because of Christ's love, He's trying to get us out of that judgment or making sure that we're on that righteous side. So understand this gospel of Jesus, that there's far more to it than just love.

All right, now we're into Romans chapter 2. I could keep going. We're going to move to Romans chapter 2. So as we look at Romans chapter 2, and we're talking a little bit about judgment, that's exactly what this chapter starts with.

[12:18] Look at verse 1. Therefore, you are inexcusable. What does that mean to be inexcusable? You have no excuse.

None whatsoever. You are inexcusable, O man. Whosoever you are, this means anybody that does this, whosoever you are that, what?

That judges. Whosoever you are, for wherein you judge another, you condemn yourself, for you the judge do the same things. What's He saying there? We're all hypocrites.

You know, I don't usually share what I name my sermon, but when I work on my sermon, I write it down at the top of my paper. You know what the title for this one was?

Hypocrites, hypocrites, and more hypocrites. So you hit the nail on the head, Serenity. It's what it's talking about when it's talking about judging. That we need to be so careful that we do not judge.

[13:26] Why? Other places say, because we're going to be judged with the same judgment we judge others with. But what does this say? It says you condemn yourself.

Why? Because you do the same things. What does that mean? You know, I can judge somebody else that's done something wrong if I'm not doing that, right?

Is that what it means? As long as I'm not doing that, then I can judge that for them. Now, let's say Jim's driving down the road at 80 mile an hour. I'm going to pick on him because he used to be a state patrol officer.

Say he was driving down the road at 80 mile an hour. I can say, man, that Jim, you know what he did the other day? He was driving 80 mile an hour down the road. The speed limit was 55.

Isn't that horrible of him? Am I judging him? Okay, what if I was driving 55 that day? So then it's all right for me to judge him for that.

[14:27] Why not? I'm still guilty in some form or fashion. I might not be doing that, but is there something else I most likely did?

You know, we judge other people for sin. You know, Doug talked about, and praise God from the alcoholism that God released Doug from 34 years ago. Praise God for that.

And you know, I think in my life, I think I had half a can of alcohol in my entire life. And I can look at somebody that's involved in alcohol and is an alcoholic and say, how terrible of them because of that?

And I can judge them. Why can't I judge them for that? I'm not an alcoholic. Because I'm not without sin.

What it's talking about is it doesn't have to be the same sin because guess what? Sin is sin, isn't it? And we've already established we all fall short. And we're going to read that later in Romans. We all fall short of the glory of God.

[15 : 27] We all sin. That is why it is saying that we cannot be in a place to judge others because we are sinful too. I might not fall short in the same area that you do, but guess what?

I do fall short. I've got my own list. I've got my own areas. That's what it's saying. For you that judge, do the same thing.

We are in no position to judge. However, look at verse 2. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to what?

Truth against them that commits such things. What is the difference between our judgment and God's judgment? We judge the flesh.

God judges the spirit. Can I see anybody's heart? Can God? Folks, that's the difference between God's judgment and ours.

[16 : 42] Our God will judge. The Bible makes that so very clear. But here's the thing. God can judge because He is a God of truth. He sees the truth of the situation.

You know, we have courtrooms and we have judges. They're called judges. And their job is to determine the truth. Right? Determine the truth of the matter. Do they always get it right? No.

They hear this person's version of it. They hear this person's version of it. They hear other witnesses and they try to decide what most likely happened. But they're not infallible.

They make mistakes. They only base that on what they hear. God bases His judgment on what He knows and He knows everything. He knows our hearts. He knows exactly what is in your heart and what is in the heart of every other person in this sanctuary and what is in the heart of every other person in this state, in this country, in this world.

That is why God is a righteous judge. Travis, you said He's a righteous judge and you are exactly right. Look at the end of verse 5.

[17 : 55] But after your hardness and impenitent heart, treasure up for yourself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. Folks, God's judgment is righteous.

In the end, that judgment that God gives, it is a righteous judgment. And I know we don't like thinking about judgment at all because it is a separation. It does mean that some people will end up where?

Hell. And others will end up in heaven. But folks, that is part of the gospel of Jesus Christ. That is part of what He came to share with the world so that we didn't have to end up in hell, that there was an answer, there was a solution to that.

And folks, that is the choice that we have in all of God's Word is about choice, isn't it? We have a choice to make. And God's Word clearly spells out what that choice is.

Look at verse 7. To them who by patient continuance and well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life.

[19 : 06] That is one result of judgment, isn't it? If you know Jesus Christ, if your sins are forgiven, this is what you have when you are judged. Does it sound pretty good?

Glory, honor, immortality, eternal life? Verse 10 says the same thing. Glory, honor, and peace to every man that works good, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile.

If we make that decision for Jesus Christ, that is the result of the judgment. But what is the other side of that? The side we don't want to be in. Look at verses 8 and 9.

But to them that are contentious and do not obey the truth. In other words, do not obey what God's Word says. That's the truth, right? Those that do not obey the truth but obey unrighteousness, there's indignation and wrath to come.

Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that does evil. of the Jew first and also of the Gentile. How many of you say, boy, in my future, I hope there's tribulation and anguish.

[20 : 15] I want me some of that. Anybody ever say that? We want to avoid that, don't we? Don't we? Folks, that's why Jesus came.

Jesus came and He said, I also want to help you avoid that. That is why I'm going to the cross to die for your sins so you can avoid that judgment. That is the choice we have to make.

So why do some people make their own choice? They think they know better. Don't believe in God? And you think about it, how does that happen? Well, you know what? Hearts can get hard, can't they? Would you agree with that? Can our hearts get hard if we're not careful? Absolutely.

And that's what Paul goes on to share. Look in verse 3. And think you this, O man, that judges them which do such things and does the same that you shall escape the judgment of God, or despise you the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of

God leads you to repentance.

[21 : 35] Folks, that verse is important for us to understand. It says, or do you despise the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering?

That means, do you understand how patient God is with you? Do you understand that? Do you understand how longsuffering God is towards you?

Do we understand that? What does it mean to think about God's patience towards us? What does that mean?

How patient is God with you? I want you to think about that question for a minute. I'm not just going to move on. How patient is God with you?

He's slow to anger. You're right. How important is that for you? How often do you think about that?

[22 : 32] How often have you asked for forgiveness in your life? How often have you failed to do what God wants you to do? How often have you sinned in your life?

Folks, this is a verse we need to take very seriously. Because if we forget about God's goodness, if we forget how patient God is with us, I think we fit into that group that is despising the riches of His goodness when we fail to understand how patient and loving God is with us.

Because folks, we fall short a lot. And alright, maybe I shouldn't speak for you and I won't. I take that back. I'll just say this, I fall short a lot.

I think of my life. I've made a lot of mistakes. There's a lot of times I've fallen short of being the person God wants me to be. Either things I say that I shouldn't have said or things that I didn't say that I should have said.

Actions I have done that shouldn't have or actions I should have done but I didn't. All of those can be sin, can't they? times I've failed to reach out with the love that I should have.

[24 : 15] Times I've been angry with people that I shouldn't have. I fall short a lot. How about you? Are you different than me?

I hope you are. I hope you're better than me. But I'm guessing we're all in that category aren't we? That's where the long suffering and patience of God comes in.

And we cannot despise it. We need to recognize God's long suffering and patience. Because you know what? Look at what the end of this verse says. When we recognize and understand God's patience to us and understand His goodness to us, what does it lead to?

Well, read the rest of the verse. Not knowing that the goodness of God, the end of verse 4, leads you to what? Repentance.

We are led there when we understand how good God is. When we understand how little we deserve and how much God gives us anyway, that leads us to having that repentant heart that God wants us to have.

[25 : 26] God wants us to have a heart that is ready to repent. So what does it mean to repent? What does it mean? Ask for forgiveness?

I'll give you the definition. It's a change of heart that leads to a change of actions. That's what repentance is. It's a change of heart, realizing what we're doing is wrong and changing it so that it then changes our actions.

That's true repentance. repentance. Is there a false repentance? Yeah, we tell God we're sorry but then we don't change. Is that real repentance?

No, it has to be both. Telling God you're sorry and then striving to change that area. You know, if your child comes up and says they're sorry for hitting their brother or sister and then they turn around and hit him again, what does that tell you?

It's a no-brainer. It tells you they weren't really sorry to begin with because they just went and turned around and did it again. Is that ever us? Is it ever you? It's been me sometimes.

[26 : 36] But God wants us to have this heart of repentance. And that requires our heart being soft because look at what it says in verse 5 right after this.

But after your hardness and impenitent heart treasures up for yourself wrath against the day of wrath and judgment. Our heart can either be soft and ready to repent or it can be hard like a rock. Folks, I know our time is getting away but God wants your heart to be soft. a heart that's ready to ask for forgiveness and strive to change.

Do you need to change in your life? Are there areas that need to change? Absolutely. Whenever we walk through the doors of this church, we come in, God loves us, and I praise God for every person that walks through the doors of this church, and I wish everyone out in the world would walk through

the doors of a church, church, and that the church would welcome them.

But then as we come in and we are in the presence of God, my next prayer is that we do not stay the same people we were when we came through the door. That we leave different.

[27 : 53] That God works in our hearts. That we repent. That we change and leave more of the people God wants us to be than when we came in. If you come in every Sunday and you leave being exactly the same person that you were, what do you have to say about that?

Is that any good? If you come and leave the same person, I'm not going to judge.

I'm trying to think of how to say this without judging. If you come and leave as the same person Sunday after Sunday, something is wrong. Your heart is not soft.

You are not allowing to do the work in your life that God wants to do. God wants us to change. He wants everyone to come into the church, but then He wants us to change.

Not to come in and try to change God's word or justify what we're doing, but to simply say, I'm sorry, Lord, for where I fall short and then have a desire to change it so that we reflect this.

[29 : 02] Not that this reflects us, but we reflect this. Because this is the truth. Look at the last two verses we read, 28 and 29.

For He is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is the outward in the flesh, but He is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter.

God wants to circumcise. That's a cutting away. He wants to do that in our heart, to cut away all the bad stuff and leave the good. But you got to be willing to allow God to do that.

God is looking for soft hearts, hearts that are ready to repent and change, and be who God wants them to be. Let's pray.

Lord God, I just thank You so much for Your Word. I thank You for the challenge that it gives us, that we are to come into Your house, but we are not to leave the same because You want to work on each one of us.

[30 : 05] You are not done working on it. So Lord, I pray that You just reveal those areas in our life that need to be changed, those rough edges, those sins that we have that we want to hold on to.

Maybe it's a grudge, maybe it's a lie, maybe it's whatever that we try to keep secret and hidden from others. Whatever that area, Lord, reveal to us, help us to repent of it, and strive to change, to be the people You want us to be.

Lord, that's our prayer today. And we ask it in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. This morning, the altar's open. Whatever you need, whatever you want to talk to the Lord about, He's ready to talk to you, the altar's open.

Think about those areas in your life that need to change, repent of them, take them to the Lord, ask Him for forgiveness, and then desire to change. Change my heart, O God, may I be like You.

That's a big ask, isn't it? But that's God's desire that we be more and more like Him. And it takes a repentant, soft heart, and I pray that's what we have.

[31 : 13] Let's bow our heads as we close in prayer. Lord God, I thank You for this morning. I thank You for Your Word, for the truth of it. And Lord, I pray that we would not be ashamed of the gospel, that we would be ready to take it and share it with the world.

Share Your love, but also share that You desire that we change, to be more and more like You. And I pray, Lord, that happens in each one of our lives. That as we leave this place this morning, that we leave different than when we came in, that we leave closer to You with more of a desire to serve You, more of a desire to be the people You want us to be.

Help us to take Your message into the world around us, because it desperately needs to hear it.

And we ask and pray these things in the name of Jesus Christ and all God's family said, Amen.

God bless you and have a wonderful week. Hello. Hello. Hello. Hello. Thank you.