

Only Bad People go to the New Heaven and Earth

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Date: 04 October 2015

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[0 : 00] If you're a guest here, as we go through the book of Romans, verse by verse, every week, I want to try to help you to understand that everything that you read is connected to Romans 1, 16 and 17.

So we read it together at least once every Sunday. And so while we're standing, you don't have to stand, I mean, while we're standing, could you say this out loud with me? For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

For in the gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. As it is written, the righteous shall live by faith. Just bow your heads in prayer.

Father, we give you thanks and praise that you have done the right thing and you have moved with effective power in the person of your son to make human beings who trust and believe in Jesus, to make them right with him.

We thank you, Father, for your kindness, forbearance, and patience towards us. We ask, Father, that you would pour out your Holy Spirit upon us, to deliver us from all presumption, from all presumption that we somehow are special, that we get a pass, that you cut us slack, that we don't need Jesus and what he did for us on the cross.

[1 : 23] Father, we ask that you would deliver us from all presumption and replace that presumption with a deep humility before you and a deep hunger for what you have effectively and powerfully done for us in the person of your son.

Father, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us. We ask this in the name of Jesus, your son and our savior. Amen. Please be seated. So, imagine for a moment that Islam is right and we're wrong and Allah is God.

That would suck, eh? For a lot of us. And so, we discover, we die and we go before, you know, we die and we're expecting to see the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit and all that, but instead we see Allah.

And if I understand the teaching correctly, I mean, maybe we have a friend here who's a Muslim who's joined us, but we're all going to hell. And that would suck.

And so, you know, if that was the case, I think I could very easily say, oh, come on, Allah, give me a break, okay? First of all, like, I was pretty sure that Jesus was the Son of God and that there's the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit and that I put my faith and trust in him.

[2 : 47] And beyond that, like, I actually, you know, I lived, you know, by the standards of Canada, I lived a fairly moral life. And come on. And then the second thing I'd say to him, I said, and come on, Allah, you got to give me a break.

Like, how on earth could you expect me to learn seventh century Arabic so I could read the Koran and figure out how I'm supposed to live? Like, that's not a very fair way of judging.

I don't think Allah would be particularly impressed by that. And off to hell I would go. But inwardly, I would say, gosh, that's just not very fair of Allah that expect me to learn seventh century Arabic so I could properly read the Koran and understand his demands.

Now, here's the thing. That scenario is exactly how most people in Ottawa view Christianity. Like, when we pose that mental examination of what it would be like if we die and we discover that we're wrong and Allah is God and Islam has always been right, Muhammad was the prophet, and how that would suck and it doesn't seem very fair, that's exactly how our co-workers and our neighbors view the Christian faith and the Bible's claims.

So the question is, is God really unfair and unreasonable? Does he expect us to live up to his particular commands and understand his word and to judge it by us?

[4 : 10] And just as we would think it was unfair of Allah, are our neighbors, do they have a really good point that God is maybe being unfair? Well, our Bible text that Ken read actually talks directly to this question in a profound way, a very, very, very profound way.

So it would be a great help to me if you could get your Bibles out and turn to Romans chapter two. And once again, there's always Bibles at the front. Don't mind if people are sitting around, you notice, you can just get up and get a Bible at any point in time.

If you use your phones to follow the Bible, I just ask that you don't check your Facebook profile or updates or anything like that, just try to stay focused. But the Bible, in fact, addresses this.

How does it address it? And it's Romans chapter two, verses one to, well, I'll read verses one to five and then we'll circle back and I'll draw out to you what's going on in the text.

Therefore, you have no excuse. If you want to listen later on to the sermon last week, you have a sense of what went on just before this.

[5 : 15] And sort of from that, Paul is moving into something that follows sort of logically from it. Therefore, you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges.

For in passing judgment on another, you condemn yourself because you, the judge, practice the very same things. Just pause there for a second. What we're going to see here is that the Bible is not talking about hypocrisy.

It's not warning us against our hypocrisy. The Bible, we're going to see it in a moment, the Bible is making a far different point than mere hypocrisy. Verse two, we know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things.

Do you suppose, O man, you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? But because of your hard and impenitent heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. Just before I get into my first point, you know what?

[6 : 27] One of the things that just struck me this morning, not this morning, this week as I was working on this sermon, you'll notice here it's a very, very different way that we understand God's wrath is what the Bible says right here.

You are storing up wrath for yourself. It doesn't say God is storing up wrath. It says you are storing up wrath. Maybe we'll talk about that in a moment, but it's a very thought-provoking idea, isn't it?

It sort of throws how a lot of us think about these things on its head and throws a whole lot of what we think out the window. But here, Andrew, if you could put up the first point for me.

Here's the first point, and I'll explain what it is in the text. God impartially judges me by the judgments I pass on others. God impartially judges me by the judgments I pass on others.

So one of the first things to see here, remember the question that is before us is, you know, just as we would feel it would suck big time if it turns out that Allah is God and Muhammad was his prophet, and all of a sudden we're judged on a 7th century Arabic text which we can't even read.

[7 : 42] In fact, most Muslims can't read 7th century Arabic. I mean, and that sort of would be, seems really unfair. So is the God of the Bible, is the Christian faith doing the same type of thing to all of us?

Well, the first thing to notice is verse 4, how it describes God. The Bible here describes God, it says, Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

The true and living God who's created all things and sustains all things and sovereignly is over all things and will bring all things to their proper end is rich, rich in kindness, rich in forbearance, and rich in patience.

You see, you know, it sometimes really bothers some Christians this idea that God has no needs, that he has no environment, that God is unchanging. But, and we can take those truths in a way that will lead us into a type of cold, heartless, arid deism.

But it's meant, those doctrines are meant to protect this wonderful truth that God is rich. And in the original language, it's like an overabundant, unending richness.

[9 : 01] That because God has no environment, has no needs, and is therefore completely and utterly unchanging, we don't have to wake up tomorrow thinking that God is somehow now a different God.

That tomorrow, God wakes up and he ran out of coffee and he has a caffeine withdrawal headache, and so he's going to be unbelievably grumpy. We don't have to worry about that.

God is the kindest being that you will ever know. He is the most patient and most forbearing. And everything that he does, even his judgment, comes out of his kindness.

And that's the first, and we see his kindness in terms of verse 1. Therefore, look at that again, Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges, for in passing judgment on another, you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things.

And it's very, notice that phrase, passing judgment. Like in Canada, who legally passes judgment? The court. Right? The court. And in Paul's time, there could be the courts, but ultimately the emperor is the one who can override most of these things at the time that Paul is writing.

[10:16] And so, in a sense, what Paul is saying here is that in our average moral experience, we regularly act as if we are the emperor of the earth, of all of the known earth.

In fact, we act like we are Zeus or Venus or some god with a small g. And there are times when we look down our nose at others and pass judgment.

We pass judgment on how they dress, how they eat, how they walk, how they exercise, how they study, how they sleep, how they drive, as well as moral things.

Just the other day, I was driving along and I was behind a car. And obviously, the guy had a bit of a, I don't know, maybe his girlfriend or his kids or something put it on him, and then he couldn't get it off.

But the bumper sticker said, why is it that I'm the only person on the planet who knows how to drive? And, you know, the fact of the matter is, probably somebody had been sitting in the seat with him and hearing how he talked about other people's driving, and he was sitting like Zeus in judgment over all of us other drivers.

[11:24] Meanwhile, we're thinking, one moment, I can drive better than him. Right? Isn't that what happens? So, what this text is saying is completely and utterly shocking.

God says, I'm a kind God. I am forbearing and I'm very patient. And so what I'm going to do, George, is something unbelievably self-effacing.

I am going to set aside my own character, the fact I am the good, the true, and the beautiful. I am love itself. And I am not going to judge a single human being right now by the proper standards that I would be well within my rights to do.

You know what I'm going to just do, George? I'm going to take you. And so I die, and I appear now before God's judgment seat, and God says, George, you know, I'm so kind.

What I'm going to do is, you didn't realize this, but throughout your life, I've tape recorded every time you, like Zeus, have sat in judgment. And I'm going to play them on the screen.

[12:28] And so there's an audience watching, and every one of those times that I, like Zeus, have passed judgment on people. It's all recorded. And then God says to me, so George, I'm not going to pass judgment on you based on my standards.

You've acted like God. I'm going to let you judge yourself. No, no, no, no, no. I'm not going to let you give you a pass. We now have all of these judgments that you have made, and now we're going to roll a second video.

And the second video is what you've actually done in your life, not only what you've done and failed to do, but also what you've thought in your head. And every time you, by your action or your thought, violate one of your own judgments, I'm going to have an angel over here bang a big drum really hard.

And before you know it, as the screen starts to play, the sound of the drum would be constant and unending and get louder and louder and louder and louder.

And it would unmake me. With God not doing a single thing in terms of his judgments, just letting me, when I thought I was like Zeus, passing judgment on others, just letting me judge myself by those same standards, the drumming would be deafening and would in and of itself unmake me.

[14:00] In those old English cathedrals with lots of bells, according to Dorothy Sayers, if you're up there when they're all going off, it can actually kill you, according to Dorothy Sayers.

It must be true. That's the image here of chapter 2, verse 1. It's a profound image. That's, you see, why I said that God impartially judges me by the judgments I pass on others.

It's why, in verse 1, it says, therefore you have no excuse. In fact, if we just realize, if you think about it for a second, what it would be like for God to just show, I mean, first of all, wouldn't we just

be, I mean, we're already dead, but we would just be so mortified that others would actually get to hear the ways that we have been like Zeus and what we've judged them over. And then, when they actually as well see how we have violated our own judgments or not done our own judgments, that we would want to cry out, God, unless you do something to rescue me, I am undone.

Only you, only you can act to rescue me from such a thing. I can't rescue myself from the fate that I have imposed and brought upon myself that I have stored up for myself.

[15:25] Not knowing that your kindness was to give me time to call out to you and realize what I've been doing and how I've been living my life and call out to you to say, only God, only you, only you can act to rescue me from such a situation.

Now, some of us might even just wonder a little bit about this whole judgment thing. One of the things with God has been very kind to us as a congregation is that people have left our congregation to become missionaries.

In a sense, it's part of our wider reach. In fact, some of the people who have gone off for missionaries, I can't even tell you where they've gone because they're sort of closed societies. But, we have somebody preparing now to go off, hoping to go off, within the next little while to the mission field.

And we had Jeremy who was with us last week who for a season is in Sarnia but in the spring he'll be going to Zambia. And he was telling me that when he was in Holland for his 10 days of intensive preparation to go off to the mission field and Operation Mobilization brought people from all over the world together for 10 days of training in rural Holland.

And part of the training that they did was to understand the cultural context of hearing how people will hear different things in the Bible. And one of the things about how people hear things in the Bible is that they're all just used to a social culture where judgments are passed on them and consequences come to them by different type of grounds or criteria.

[17:00] So, for instance, like if one of us was driving after this service or just even walking, let's say we're driving, and all of a sudden a cop car comes behind us and the lights go on and they pull us over and if the cop came to me and it was a woman cop and I said, I'm sorry officer, what have I done?

And she said, I'm giving you a ticket because you're a man. I give tickets to men. I think they all deserve tickets. I would be shocked. Or if she said, well you have gray hair, I give tickets to people with gray hair.

Or for one of you, if you got a ticket and they said to you, well you're black or you're Asian, I give tickets to Asians. Well, if we were smart, we wouldn't get really mad at them.

We would take that ticket and we couldn't wait until we went to court. Right? For our day in court to get that cop. Because we, without realizing it, our culture has been profoundly influenced by the Bible in terms of how it understands judgment.

I want to bring out not only how our culture, even if we no longer understand that it comes from the Bible, but how our culture has been influenced by judgment and how it is that we are to hear this whole idea of judgment and how it is different from many people in the world hearing this.

[18:15] It's in verses 6 to 11. If you would follow along with me, verses 6 to 11. He, that's God, will render to each one, each person, according to his or her works.

We're going to explain this in a moment. To those who, by patience and well-doing, seek for glory and honor and immortality, God will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.

There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek. But glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek.

For God shows no partiality. And just at a literary point of view, this long section in the original language is what's called a chiasm.

And this is a grammar geek moment. I hope I don't put you to sleep with it. But in this case, unlike most texts where the key thing is in the middle and this thing, it's the frame which is important.

[19:22] Verse 6 and verse 11. He will render to each one according to his works for God shows no partiality. In fact, Andrew, if you could put up the second point, here's how I put it.

God impartially judges me by what I do and why I do it. And I always try to put my points, if I can remember to do it, I always try to put it with I, not to be self-centered but so that if you write it down to remember it, then you're writing it down as I.

So the point isn't saying, oh, George is like that. It's like, this is for you to take home, right? So that you write down in light of verses 6 to 11, and God impartially judges me by what I do and why I do it. And so we see here that in many parts of the world, in many parts of the world, and I think Canada is losing this biblical heritage of understanding of justice.

You can get pulled over by what caste, you will be treated different by what caste you're in or what tribe you're part of or what social class that you are part of or just how you look and that's how judgment is meted out to you.

[20 : 39] That in many parts of the world, it does, you know, if you get pulled over by a cop and you say, by the way, did you know that my cousin is the governor? They'd say, oh, I'm really, really sorry.

Really, really sorry. Really sorry. Didn't mean to do that. It depends, in many parts of the world, in your circle of relationships, who your protector or mentor or boss or company is, it depends on your caste, on your tribe, on the color of your skin and that's how you're judged.

And what the Bible is saying here is that if you are from that background, in the back of your mind, you think that you should be treated a little bit differently because of, well, because I'm university educated, because I'm Canadian or whatever.

A couple of years ago, my wife and I were coming home and we were coming down Sussex and all of a sudden all of the traffic stopped. And the traffic all stopped because a certain very prominent Canadian, known for his sort of left of center views, his daughter was married.

and so the important poobahs at the wedding in the cathedral to walk across the street, they weren't like other people who had to wait for the light to change. They had police there to stop all the traffic until they got across.

[22 : 06] My Irish blood was boiling. Us Irish people have a long history of resenting the English. Sorry, I had to get that out.

I will confess it afterwards. It's one of those things I'm still in therapy over and seeking healing over. It's just that in this Irish blood and it just boils at that. But you see, the green lights don't apply to him in that particular case and his family because important Canadian with important Canadian guests. Coach of the Senators was one of the guys at the time was walking across the street. And so the Bible here is saying something which is profoundly revolutionary because you see the fact of the matter is that being treated impartially is not a natural fact.

In fact, by nature, by nature we are not equal. By nature, some are old and some are young. Some are rich and some are poor. Some are strong and some are weak. Some are well-connected and some have no connection.

Some have lots of skills. Some have no skills. And so by nature, it's very obvious that certain people in certain groups in my group and not your group should have some type of special edge.

[23 : 17] That there should be some presumption or bias towards us. But the Bible here says that is not what God is like. It is so easy for us to project onto God our natural inclinations and proclivities and the way that our culture works and think that that is what God is like and then we don't like it without realizing that we're not actually looking at God.

We're looking at ourselves. But the God who does exist, verse 6, He will render to each one according to His works. And God shows no partiality.

Doesn't matter if you're prominent Canadian. Doesn't matter if you're poor Canadian. Doesn't matter what color you are, what race you are, what sexual orientation you have. God is completely and utterly impartial. And He's rich in kindness and forbearance and patience and there is no one that you will ever meet that is more kind than Him.

Now some of you might be saying, George, aren't you, doesn't this text contradict yourself? That was, whoa, that was pretty good, George. But look, aren't you going to try to say that it's all up to Jesus? But here, doesn't it seem to say in verse 7, to those who by practice, by patience and well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, He will give eternal life.

George, doesn't that sort of contradict what, like Romans 1, 16 to 17? Gotcha. No, it doesn't contradict it at all. It's helping us to understand what the righteousness of God means and what salvation means.

[24 : 47] And I'll use it to give a bit of an illustration, just around the illustration of glory, which usually has with it a bit of an image of brightness or light.

And the problem is that human beings, because we like to act like Zeus, and we're not even aware of the fact that we like to act like Zeus and stand in judgment high above other people, pointing our fingers, and, you know, we should just be so glad that in Canada all we can do is point our fingers. A very well-known pacifist songwriter, I think it was in the 80s or the 90s, wrote a famous song, If I Had a Rocket Launcher. If I Had a Rocket Launcher, some bleepity-bleepity-bleep would die. And all we can do is point our fingers. But we have this deep-seated, inbuilt sense that somehow we are a God with a small g.

We don't wake up every morning saying, isn't it remarkable that I once again awake in a world where there is a creator who sustains all things who has made me. That's not how we wake up usually and how we think.

[25 : 56] And so we inherently think that we are like a light source and not like a mirror. And so the glory refers to us getting better batteries.

We're shining our lens so that we will shine more brightly. But the Bible is realistic without being cynical and always knows that as a created being, I am never a flashlight.

I am only a mirror. And so what that means, you see, is if we're in a world, if we were to go into a room, I don't know if this room would manage it, but it might come close. No, it wouldn't because of light. If we were able to have a complete power outage and we were to be in this building and every single door was completely sealed so that no light could get in, we wouldn't, we tend to think of ourselves as flashlights that we would shine.

But we're not like that. We're like mirrors. And so whatever glory pertains or comes to us or from us is only if we are like a mirror reflecting the glory and the light of God.

So you see, we read verse 7 and we say, oh yeah, well that's just all about me becoming brighter. That's about me becoming more, I don't know how I can become immortal.

[27 : 11] But what the text is saying here, it's actually, all the way through the Bible, whenever it talks about to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life.

But it's all, it's referring to when we call out to God and ask God to do what only he can do.

When we, in a sense, finally give up our posture of being like this and we say, only God, only you, only you can rescue me from this.

That at that point in time we're no longer seeking our own ambition and our own exaltation, but we are seeking God to act and then like a mirror, a mirror with the back which does not reflect and when we look down and when we look down, we're closing ourselves off from the light.

All we do is create shadows, not brightness. But all of a sudden when we turn to him alone who can give eternal life, then the light comes and shines on us who are a mirror and it is reflected out.

[28 : 35] And the honor we get is not honor because of anything we've done or accomplished but an honor and a recognition and a welcome that comes from God to us. In fact, in verse 8, you'll notice how it goes to those who by patience and well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality.

It's talking about a change of our direction to call out to God to do what only he can do. In verse 8, it says, but, and that's a good word, but, in the original language, it's a far, there's no word, almost to put it in proper English to really get the emphasis there, you'd have to put the but, all three letters capitalized and bold and underlined.

And that's what it does in the original language. But, for those who are self-seeking, and here's another grammar geek moment, this is a word that up until the time of the New Testament was only used by Aristotle.

And it can be translated, I don't know how some of your versions translate it. It's a man or a woman who's given completely and utterly over to self-ambition at the expense of others.

And some of you might say, that's a hard way to describe us, but didn't we all just agree for a moment that every one of us have a moral experience of walking around like Zeus? And the fact of the matter is, is that many of us, we don't die to self in serving, but we serve to assert ourselves, to be able to boast in ourselves, even if it's just to be able to to be able to to congratulate ourselves, to feel better about ourselves, that that's often why we do even things which are apparently generous and selfish, that often it leads to internal boasting and internal self-exaltation.

[30 : 18] And so the Bible here is pointing at two fundamentally different ways to live. God will judge them impartially. God will judge them impartially.

And he goes to the heart. You see, verses 7, remember my point up there is that God impartially judges me by what I do and why I do it. The Bible regularly helps me to see my heart, my inner self in the context of the reality of the living God.

Never with cynicism, always with realism and always with the hope that we will see this and say, God, only you, only you can help me out of this.

Only you can do what I cannot do. You see, it's at the level of the heart that it goes to. Which way? Zeus or only God?

Zeus and self-seeking or only God? Only God. Only you can do it. God impartially judges me by what I do and why I do it.

[31 : 32] In the gospel text this morning that we just read a couple of minutes ago, Jesus, if you go back and look at it, there's a whole series of questions that Jesus' enemies ask him. And he deals with a question, deals with a question, deals with a question, deals with a question, and then he says, now it's my turn to ask a question.

Okay? And in fact, that's sort of a little bit what Paul is doing. That's at the beginning of the text, O man, O man, O man. And this week in going deeper, I have you, if you want to look, you go to 2 Samuel 12, I think it is, in the story of David being confronted by the prophet Nathaniel.

O man, thou, O man, art the one. That's the whole context to it. So now it's sort of valid for us to ask a question of our culture. People who say, well, you know, this is what, here's the question.

I mean, like George, isn't the Bible, now that we sort of see that God actually is far more kind and fair than we could possibly imagine in terms of how he's going to deal with us and judge with us by using our own Zeus-like moments to judge us.

But here's the question. Why is it that we have any moral sense at all? Like, if evolution is correct and if we are a result of natural selection, time and chance, and before there was any biological life, it's just ultimately a result of molecules happening to come together in such a way that planets are formed in such a way and chemical compounds are formed and somehow or another life just spontaneously erupted out of all of that and then there's natural selection and chance and then we come like this.

[33 : 01] Well, why is it that moral life exists at all? Like, what are the most successful creatures on the planet according to evolution? Cockroaches. Alligators or dinosaurs.

Crocodiles or dinosaurs. Lizards or dinosaurs. Fortunately, I have never met an alligator face-to-face.

There was a really, I don't read the comics very often, but there was a really funny, I think it was in Bizarro, there was a really funny comic this week. It's at veterinary office and there's two people who come in and on the table is a huge boa constrictor with a big lumpy part in the middle and one person says to the other person, the doctor's still examining your pet and obviously the doctor's the big, big bump in the middle of the boa constrictor who has a very happy smile on its boa constrictor face.

But if you think about it for a second, alligators are completely and utterly amoral. Crocodiles, amoral. Lizards, amoral. Cockroaches, amoral. There's no trace of moral thinking, moral reasoning, moral claims.

They never have Zeus-like moments, they just eat. And after they eat, they rest until they can eat again. They're completely and utterly amoral. Like, why is it that if we're just, like, why, you know, all of a sudden, why is it, I get to ask the question now, like, why is it that there's any moral stuff at all?

[34 : 30] Why is it that there's no human culture or race? I mean, granted, there's different moralities around, but why is it that there's no moral, no race that has no, that they look like human beings, but they're really lizards.

They're really alligators. And they're completely and utterly amoral. Why is that if your account for how everything exists is true? The Bible says that your account for how things exist is not true.

The Bible gives an account for why it is that even when we have different moralities, the fact is that they are morality. Look at verses, sort of in closing, verses 12 and following.

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. For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law will be justified.

Just pause there. This is sort of a little bit of a rhetorical trap that Paul is doing here because later on he's going to say that nobody's actually able to be justified by what they've done.

[35 : 36] His point, he's setting up something that we're going to look at next week, which just because you hear moral laws doesn't mean you are moral. Just because you've spent time, you know, you're spending time in an airplane hangar doesn't make you an airplane.

And spending time in a church listening to the Bible doesn't necessarily make you experience any of these things that are being experienced. He's setting up what he's going to talk about more next week. But verse 14, for when Gentiles or pagans who do not have the law, that's referring to the first five books of the Old Testament, the First Testament, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves even though they do not have the law.

Here's the thing, verse 13, they show that the work of the law is written on their hearts. Let's just think of that again. They show that the work of the law, the Ten Commandments, God's basic instructions are written on their hearts while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on that day when according to my gospel God judges the secrets of men by Messiah Jesus.

Andrew, if you could put up the third point. So the first point is that God impartially judges me by the judgments I pass on others. The second is that God impartially judges me by what I do and why I do it.

And the third one is that my conscience shows that the true God speaks and that I am not God. My conscience shows that the true God speaks and he exists.

[37 : 17] He exists and he speaks and that I am not God. Well, how do you... You see, on one hand, this is all part of the kindness of God.

That, you know, last week I talked about this image of God gave them up and there's an image of common grace that God restrains our Zeus-like moments, our Zeus-like character.

He restrains that. That's why society can... That's why places like Ottawa can still be a pleasant place to live and why, you know, all sorts of people, they can love their children and love dogs and care for their animals and be good bosses.

And there's a type of common grace that God always does to restrain evil. And by the same common grace that God made us human beings in his image and as he makes us in his image, in a sense, he writes the moral laws upon our hearts.

And when we, in our ancestors, Adam and Eve, rebelled against God and said that we did not want to be under God as creatures, but we wanted to be like Zeus and be able to pass judgment, that what that did is that God did not remove his image from us, but God's image within us, it became twisted, it became bent, it became out of shape, but it was not removed.

[38 : 36] And so that moral impulse is still there and remnants of what is truly true and rightly right is seen in every moral system, no moral system is so completely and utterly absent of any sense of God's law that it would look not like a moral system at all as if we were talking to an alligator or a crocodile and not another human being.

It's a mark of God's kindness that he has left that within us, that trace within us, but that trace is not sufficient. Conscience shows, in a sense, as opposed to those who believe that everything came as a result of time and chance and cannot account for why we are not lizards and alligators and crocodiles because that's vastly more successful for adapting to our environment.

In fact, it's a common joke that after the nuclear or biological hazard, whatever it is that's going to ruin the world, the only things left on the earth will be cockroaches. They're far better adapting to situations than human beings are.

And so that's why I say that my conscience shows that the true God speaks, he speaks within, in the writing of the moral, what is good and true and beautiful and love, right in terms of the center who we are, even though it's now twisted and bent.

But at the same time, our conscience shows that we aren't Zeus. We aren't Zeus. Because, you know, the fact of the matter is that sometimes I make my pronouncements and judgments as if I'm the best driver in the world, and sometimes I make my pronouncements and judgments as if I am the most selfless, kind person in the world.

[40 : 13] And other times I make my judgments as if I'm the smartest person in the world. And other times I make my judgments as if I'm the most humble person in the world. And everybody should be as humble as I am. I know that's an unbelievably proud thing to say, but I'm sure I'm not the only one in the room who's like this.

What are we? I don't have one idol in the throne of my heart, so I have 20. And they disagree. And they accuse each other.

And we have, sometimes we'll have a sleepless night that we weren't assertive enough. And other times we have sleepless nights because we weren't humble enough. And that's not what God's like. My very conscience and moral experience shows that there is a God that does exist who speaks and that I am not God.

Only God. Only God. Only God. God. Andrew, could you put up the final point? Jesus is the just judge who in mercy dies to justify all who humbly call upon him.

Jesus is the just judge who in mercy dies to justify all who humbly call upon him. The title of my sermon this week is, see, one of the things that people mistake about Christians is they think that Christians think that they're better than themselves.

[41 : 33] And one of the reasons people think that is because a lot of Christians do think that they're better than other people. And that just means not that they're Christians but that we're being bad Christians. Because the fact of the matter is is that Christians don't believe that good people go to heaven.

Christians believe, if you're listening to Romans 2, that moralism doesn't work. Christians believe that only bad people go to the new heaven and the new earth.

Only people who cry out and say, only God, only you can deal with this. And this gets us to the final thing of the kindness of God.

Remember I gave you at the beginning this early, this analogy that God just, he brings us all together before, after death and before whatever's going to happen to us and he just says, okay George, roll the George as Zeus moments on the screen.

And then, okay, angels, roll the George how he lived his life and we'll just measure it against George as Zeus and the drum goes, boom, every time George doesn't live up to his Zeus moments and it's going, before you know it, it's going boom, boom, boom, boom.

[42 : 49] But it just can't be one angel doing it, it has to be lots of angels doing it. Sometimes, it's just, and it's deafening and it's unmaking. And God who is rich in kindness which has the fairest possible way for me to be judged, the scriptures say that he's even kinder than that, that he sets aside his seat on the judgment throne.

Jesus sets aside and leaves his seat on the judgment throne and he goes to the cross and he says in a sense to George, and to you, this will unmake you.

You will not survive this. I love you. Let me take your place and let that judgment that you have pronounced on yourself in your Zeus-like moments, your arrogance and presumption, let that fall on me in your step.

the judge leaves the judgment seat that's properly his to set aside his glory and go upon a cross to take the judgment that I deserve in himself in my place.

you can look it up afterwards, but Romans 3 verse 26, which we're going to come to, of course, more in a few weeks, but it speaks directly to this section.

[44 : 30] It says, it was to show his righteousness at the present time so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Jesus is the just judge who in mercy dies to justify all who humbly call upon him.

Only God, only God can act with effective power in a way which is right and just to make ordinary people like you and me right with himself.

And he has done it in the person of his son in the death upon the cross. This I proclaim to you.

Andrew, could you put Romans 1, 16, and 17 up again? Could you all stand, please?

Could you read this with me? Read it with me. For I am not ashamed of the gospel. For it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

[45 : 54] For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. As it is written, the righteous shall live by faith. God makes us right.

And as the gospel grips us, it starts to free us. As the gospel grips us, as it confronts us of our Zeus-like moments, that's a tongue twister, our Zeus-like moments, it frees us up, not to stand in moral judgment on the rest of the world as if we are Zeus, but to humbly learn to have our consciences healed and renewed, and to see the moral world and the moral universe not as Zeus, but as yet another human being, another ordinary person like those around us, who do not live up to the moral law, but desire to know who God is through what Jesus has done for us on the cross,

his kindness and forbearance and patience, that he is the good, the true, the beautiful, not with arrogance, not with presumption, not like we are Zeus, but humbly under what Jesus has done for us on the cross.

As the gospel grips us, it means that we can actually start realizing that God, knowing the depths of our pride and arrogance and our Zeus-like moments, it frees us up to actually look at ourselves for the first time and not look at ourselves either with depression or with boasting, but to start to look at ourselves as who we really are and who God has showered his love and his mercy upon us.

And most of all, it helps us to understand that as we go around the city of Ottawa and around the world, and while we have an obligation to tell others that there is a God who loves them, who has died upon the cross to save them, our posture is not that we are better, but that I am one beggar telling another beggar who doesn't realize they're a beggar, but I am one beggar telling another beggar where to find free bread, the bread of eternal life.

Friends, there's no better time than today to get off of Olympus, to get off of thinking you're Zeus. And I'm not using any formulaic prayers. All you have to say to God is God, Romans 1, 16 to 17, we're going to say it one more time and then we're going to pray, God, that only you can do it.

[48 : 18] I need that. I want that to be the identity and the path of my life. I want that to grip me. I want that to grip me. Say it with me one more time.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith. As it is written, the righteous shall live by faith. Father, I ask that thank you so much for your kindness and your mercy to us.

Thank you for your forbearance and your patience. Father, deliver us from all presumption. You know how easy, Father, it is for us to slide into presumption. Father, you know how easy it is to trust in Jesus but to still want to have those Zeus moments in our lives and to have idols in our lives and to boast in ourselves or be depressed that we can't boast about ourselves.

Father, you know what it's like to be us because your son came and walked amongst us and suffered the trials and temptations that we do only without sin. Father, make us disciples of Jesus, gripped by the gospel who live for your glory.

[49 : 28] May Romans 1, 16 to 17, Father, that may that be our identity, may that be what the ground of our life is, may that shape our life as we learn and as it shapes our life, may we live our lives not for our glory but for yours.

And this we ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. We're trazer to you the Bible and ■Collarde