

Of God and Judgment

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[0 : 00] Good morning, everyone.

Welcome here this morning as well. Did you hear about so-and-so this week?

Can you believe what he or she did? It's unbelievable. Would you? I'd never like that. I don't know how they can do that. When was the last time you heard words like that or hear somebody talk like that?

What's wrong with a conversation like that? First of all, there's gossip involved, right? We're not to do that.

But then there's another element. We're going to talk about self-righteousness. Our text this morning here in Romans, it deals with that topic, with self-righteousness, the self-righteous people.

[1 : 07] So, this morning we're continuing and going through the book of Romans. We're in chapter 2 here.

The first 16 verses of the chapter. We'll be taking a look at man's self-righteousness and how does man get there.

And then as well, looking at the qualities and character of God as a judge. Or he will judge.

And then finishing off with a look at how does the law, how does that relate to judgment.

I've titled today's message of judgment and God. So, first of all, let's take a look at self-righteous man.

[2 : 04] How does he get there? So, what does it mean to be self-righteous? Definition of self-righteous is to be convinced of one's own righteousness.

Especially in the contrast with the actions or beliefs of others. So, the attitude then is that this self-righteous person, he doesn't think of it that way.

But just in his, he's always right. He's always knows a better way of doing something. That his way is the best way, the only way. And there's no other way that could work.

And nobody else's ideas matter. They don't matter. They don't work. They know it all, right? Their way is the only way.

So, I'll open it up here. Anybody have any other words that could be used to describe a self-righteous person?

[3 : 08] Any thoughts? Yep, that's definitely an element of it, yes. Other ideas?

Absolutely. I might not think that I'm better, but I would be somebody else who's like, what else person knocks out?

Like, just simply think less of somebody? Yep, just, yeah. You may not think of yourself as being everything, right? But then the next guy, he's not as good as you, so really you are, right?

Without thinking of it. So, and not having time for anybody else's ideas or thoughts or anything.

You're self-centered, right? Your world revolves around yourself and no one else. You're very self-centered. Any of you ever heard the phrase, that person has got a bit of a holier-than-thou attitude?

[4 : 24] I think that's another good way of describing a self-centered person. So, let's reread verses 1 to 3 of our text here.

Therefore, you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge. For in whatever you judge another, you condemn yourself, for practice the same things.

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

So, the text here, it starts off, Paul is saying, he's writing to the people in Rome.

And he's saying, you're inexcusable. And if we think back a bit to the previous message that Pastor Wayne shared here on Romans 1, there was talk there of being inexcusable, right?

[5 : 29] It takes us back to chapter 1, verse 20. It says, For since the creation of the world, his invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.

It was talking about just in nature around us, there is evidence of a God. And so, there is no excuse for not glorifying God for who he is.

And even earlier on in verse 18, just bringing into context into the passage this morning, verse 18 talks about the wrath of God being revealed against these ungodly and unrighteous men, people that refuse to glorify God.

And so, it speaks of the wrath and judgment of God. And it is not a wrath as we know it where he lashes out, but further on in chapter 1, it talks about God's wrath being brought about, that he gives them up to their desires.

He gives them up to uncleanness in verse 24 of chapter 1.

[6 : 54] And then from there on, he gives them up to their vile passions. And he gives them over to a debased mind. So, in these descriptions here in verse 24 and on in chapter 1, the different things that are listed there, that these people slide into, what they do, it just paints a clear picture of a self-righteous person.

It's all about self. There's no room for God there. So then, going into chapter 2 here now, it talks about this exact group of people, this ungodly, unrighteous group of people.

And they are everywhere in this world today. Paul reaffirms, he says, you're inexcusable. He's saying, you know that God exists.

You can see it everywhere out in nature. You've got absolutely no excuse to say that we didn't know there was a God. And he goes on, you realize that not glorifying God, that in whatever you're judging other people of, you're condemning yourself.

You practice the same things. You're doing the very same thing. You're as guilty as they are. You're no better. And we know from our description of self-righteousness that maybe without even fit, they think they are better than the next person.

[8 : 33] There's some great examples of this type of character, of being self-righteous, and as well as of condemning ourselves.

There's some good examples here in Scripture. Let's turn to 2 Samuel chapter 12. 2 Samuel chapter 12.

Remember King David? He's a pretty common guy. Most people know of him, right? And the account of his sin with Bathsheba.

You know that after he sinned with Bathsheba, he fell into this trap of condemning himself? He did this.

Let's read these verses. It's verses 1 through 5, chapter 12, 2 Samuel. 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.

[9 : 48] The rich man had exceedingly many flocks and herds, but the poor man had nothing, except one little ewe lamb which he had bought, and 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. And the 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. 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.

So Nathan, the prophet, comes to David after David has committed the sin with Bathsheba, and to open King David's eyes, he tells him a story.

He tells him the story of this rich man, the poor man. The rich man receives a visitor, and he doesn't, I'm not taking an animal out of my own herd to feed this man.

[10 : 58] I'll take the neighbor's sheep, which is, we can see that it grew up in his household. It ate from his food and drank from his own cup, and it lay with him. It was a pet.

And so he takes the poor man's sheep and slaughters it to feed this traveler, this visitor that he receives. In verse 5, David's anger was greatly aroused.

And so he passes judgment against this rich man. He says, Surely the man shall die. So in doing so, what does King David do?

He condemns himself. If we read on further in the count, we see that Nathan points the finger squarely back at David.

He says, You are the man. You're this rich man. There's the parallels there. That rich man that is being told of in the story, that's King David.

[11 : 57] And the poor man was Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba. And so David, taking Bathsheba away from Uriah, he makes the connection there with the rich man taking the poor man's sheep.

So, man after God's own heart, he condemned himself here. But the good thing is, King David realized his error and he repented.

He made things right. So in another example, in Luke, Luke chapter 18.

Let's take a look at that one as well. Luke chapter 18, verses 9 through 14.

Luke 18, Jesus speaking a parable. Luke 18, verse 9.

[13 : 11] Also, he spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others. A self-righteous crowd. Verse 10.

Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.

I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

This Pharisee here is a perfect example of a self-righteous man. Even in his prayers, he prays to God and he brags himself up.

[14 : 19] He's better than anyone else. So, going back to our text in Romans again, Romans chapter 2.

So, we see then that man that refuses to glorify God, he's given over to his own lusts, to his own desires, and they sink him into this self-righteous, self-exalting hole.

He slides further and further down. So, the question then is to the person that is trapped in this hole, this self-righteousness, the question is this, according to verse 3 of our text.

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? you really think that you're going to get away with this?

Let's, from here, take a look at the characteristics of God as a judge. Let's see, let's answer this question. So, in verse 2, God will judge according to truth.

[15 : 46] We will know that he will, he will judge truthfully. And in Psalm, chapter 9, verse 8, it speaks of God judging the world in righteousness. We know that God is just, and he will judge justly.

then, is God prompt and harsh in delivering judgment? We think of earthly judges, someone does wrong and he goes to court.

The evidence is laid out against this person and, depending on his deed, the judge will crack down on him, right? And judgment is delivered then and there.

does this, is this the way that God judges? Does he, does he do it right then and there when we've done wrong?

And is he, is he harsh in his judgment? Let's, read verse 4 of our text. Or do you despise the riches of his goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God is?

[17 : 00] So what is Paul talking about? He speaks of riches of God's goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering. What does he mean by that?

First off, we, a word that stands out is the riches of his goodness. So when we think of riches, what do we think of? Any ideas?

What do we think of when we hear riches? Wealth. That's exactly what I had here, yes.

And what comes to mind, riches, we, we, automatically, we're thinking of wealth, right? And so, speaking of God having, being rich, riches of his goodness, it's the wealth of his goodness, his forbearance, and his longsuffering.

So, there's lots of it. There's a wealth of it. We so often hear in our conversations with other people, a lot of people saying, God is good, right?

[18 : 11] We hear it so often. But, when we're talking of judgment and so on, as we are in our text here today, what is, what does good mean in this sense?

In having, having a wealth of goodness. In the character of God, his goodness here, it speaks of his moral excellence. So, we as humans, we have morals ourselves, our sense of, our own sense of right and wrong.

In God, he's perfect. He, as well as being all-knowing and all-seeing. So, his morals are definitely excellent, right?

God is pure, his morals are perfect. And so, furthermore, his goodness, moral excellence there, it tells of him being infinitely just and merciful.

What excellent character traits of God. So, then let's look at forbearance.

[19 : 30] So, it's talking about having a wealth of forbearance as well. So, what does forbearance mean? Does anyone know? Definition of forbearance means of punishment.

So, we know that God is merciful and in having a wealth of forbearance, he's willing to be patient, patient with mankind and is willing to delay just punishment.

Day of judgment is coming. It must come. But in the meantime, God is willing to withhold his wrath against sinners instead of judging right then and there when sin is committed.

he would rather give opportunity for that sinner to repent and to be restored to himself. So, let's tie in long-suffering here as well.

wealth of long-suffering. So, long-suffering it means to be patient or to bear with. And so, to be rich in long-suffering it reveals another trait of God where he exercises self-restraint in response to man sinning against him.

[21 : 08] So, having this goodness, him being good and being merciful, having forbearance, he's willing to delay just punishment, he exercises self-restraint because when we sin, when man sins, it provokes God.

God cannot stand sin and yet he doesn't retaliate or punish us hastily. If he did so, that would characterize God as acting in anger, not mercifully, right?

Rather, God dips into his wealth of goodness, he extends the mercy and his wealth of forbearance, he withholds punishment and he's long-suffering, he shows patience, he gives us time.

God so we can see that all three of these character traits of God as a judge, they tie together, they tie together and they give us a view of a God who has perfect morals, he is merciful, he's willing to delay judgment, to delay punishment, and he's patient with sinful man.

Yet the day of judgment will come, God won't delay forever, that day is coming, and on that day each one will be judged righteously of God according to his deeds.

[22 : 44] We see that in verse 6 of our text, he will render to each one according to his deeds. So we're being judged for deeds, that brings about the question then, are we saved by our works?

Is that what saves us? That answer is found in Ephesians, let's turn there. Ephesians chapter 2.

Ephesians 2 verses 8 and 9. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves.

It is a gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. So it is a gift. Salvation is a gift.

It's not earned. Our works would then, it would be, salvation would be a wage for us if it was through our works, right?

[23 : 52] And if we could earn it, if we could earn our salvation, as it says here in Ephesians, it would give us opportunity to boast, to brag about the good that we've done and how it's earned us this salvation, right?

And that would make us the exalt self. We would elevate ourselves and we would turn into this self-righteous man, right? So let's go back to our text.

So in going on there in verses 5 through 11, it lays out our options then. There's only two options. When that judgment comes, there's only two paths.

On the one hand, if we harden our hearts, we refuse God, but we rather we seek self, we exalt, it says that we treasure up or we store up wrath for ourselves in the day of wrath.

There will be tribulation and anguish. that is eternal separation from God. If we choose self, if we choose to be this self-righteous person, we are storing up wrath and when that wrath is poured out, there is eternal separation from God from that day on.

[25 : 37] And yet on the other hand, if we are patient in doing good and we seek glory, honor and immortality, our reward is eternal life.

A future together with God. Verse 11 there, it closes off with a wonderful promise. For there is no partiality with God.

God. So when it comes time when God, we are judged of God, we know no favoritism, no partiality. He will be just and he will be righteous.

An interesting note, backing up to verses 9 and 10, Paul writes these words, he says, of the Jew first and also of the Greek.

So why does he say this? Why are the Jews first? What is meant by that? Well, we know that God chose the Jews to be his people.

[26 : 51] Back in the Old Testament, God chose the Israelite nation to be his people. He gave them a privileged status.

They were very near and dear to his heart. And so when Jesus came to the earth in the New Testament, when he came in, John 1.11 states that he came to his own, that is to the Jews, to his people.

He was born a Jew. He came to his own and his own did not receive him. We know that the Jews, they rejected Christ.

They did not accept him as their Lord and Savior. And so this rejection, it opened up for the Gentiles, for the rest of the world. And yet, the Jews' privileged status before God of being his chosen people, that will carry through into judgment as well.

We hear people talk of, certain people, they believe that God is done with the Jews. He's given them their chance. They rejected him. He's finished with them.

[28 : 11] But this clearly lays out that when the day of judgment comes, the Jews first and then also to the Greek or to the Gentile. God is not done with the Jews.

So we know then from the Old Testament that the Jews, they were given a law.

So how does this law factor in then talking about judgment, the day of judgment coming in when God will just? How is that connection then made?

So verses 12 through 16 of our text lays this out, how it fits in. So is everyone, every person on this earth, will they all be judged according to this law that was given to Israel in Exodus?

Is everyone going to be judged according to that law? Or is it only the Jews that received it there?

[29 : 22] As we know, the law was given to the Jews. God spoke the law to Moses as well as giving him the Ten Commandments on the tablets of stone that Moses carried down the mountain.

And he came and he told the Israelite nation, he laid out these laws for them. These are the laws you are to live by. They were not given to the Gentiles these laws.

So would it then be fair for Gentiles to be judged according to this law? It wasn't. So if they don't know this law, is it fair for the Gentiles to be judged according to this law?

How can they obey a law that they don't know, right? That's a question. Let's read verse 12. For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law.

So it's saying that if you've sinned outside of the law, you'll perish outside of the law.

[30 : 41] If there's no law, you're not going to be judged by the law. And yet, if you sin in the law, you will be judged by the law.

Well, that brings about another question, right? So what does it mean, sinned without law? We know from Scripture as well that if there's no law, there's no transgression, right?

If there isn't a law for something to be wrong, how then is it wrong? How can you be judged for committing this, right? How is it then a sin? That is clarified in verses 14 and 15.

For when Gentiles who do not have the law by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, in between themselves, their thoughts, accusing or else excusing them.

So, as I said earlier, man is born with a set of morals as well. There's that inner sense of right and wrong.

[31 : 56] So, and when Gentiles who did not receive the law that the Israelites received, when these Gentiles, they follow these morals that are in their hearts, they're written in their hearts, and they follow these inward, this inward sense of right and wrong, it becomes a law to themselves.

So, on another side of this then is the conscience, as it speaks of in verse 15. The conscience, it bears witness.

There's an inner sense of conviction that bears witness. If we've got these morals, this sense of right and wrong, and we do something to be wrong, our mind, it convicts us, right?

We are reminded of it over and over. It is our conscience telling us that was wrong. It bears witness of that natural law that is written in our hearts.

We can all remember a time we've done something wrong. Our conscience reminded us of our guilt. So then our judgment for that deed that we've done wrong, it depends on what followed.

[33 : 35] Did we hide it or did we confess it? If we confessed it, we know from Scripture it is forgotten, right?

It is erased. It will be remembered no more. And yet if we hide it, it will be brought to light. Verse 16 of our text says, in the day when God will judge the secrets of men.

So there is no secrets with God. We may hide it within ourselves, but on that day of judgment, it will be brought to light.

So as we close here, we see that man, the man that refuses to glorify God, rather glorifies himself, he's given over to self-righteousness.

He has no excuse to be in that state. If he only takes the time to look to nature, he can see there is a God.

[34 : 47] He has no excuse to deny it. There is no excuse. And our text here today, it brought out that one man judging another, if he goes and judges another, he condemns himself.

He's guilty of the same. He does the same. And we have that example of King David. The rich man, and that story was aimed directly back at him.

So we know that God will judge in truth. No one is going to escape his judgment. Everyone will become before God.

But we also know that God is rich in goodness. He is rich in forbearance. And he is rich in long-suffering. As we looked at that, we see that he is a just and fair judge, that he is patient.

He is willing to give us a chance, to give us time, not wanting anyone to perish. My prayer this morning is that each one of us would echo the words of Joshua.

[36 : 16] As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. Let's close in prayer. Dear Lord God, we come before you again this morning.

Lord, we thank you for your goodness, your forbearance, as well as your long-suffering. And we thank you that there is a wealth of it, that that well of goodness and forbearance and long-suffering has not dried up, but that it continues to flow.

Lord, may we yet not test your patience. For we know that the day of judgment will come, and it is going to come unexpectedly.

So may we be ready for that day. May we prepare ourselves well in advance. May we do it, be prepared today. May we do not know if tomorrow is even coming.

Lord, I pray that we would not glorify self, but that we would glorify you, O God. You are our creator, and you will be our judge. I just pray that you would be with us this day, this week, and in the days to come.

[37 : 38] May you work in our hearts, continually preparing us for that day when you do come. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

Song leaders.