

All Fall Short 2

We've No Excuses

Romans 2:1-16

Memory Verses: Romans 2:16

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

When I was a child I remember a lot of what I learned was simply the rules of how to live life. Do this... don't do this. There was wrong and there was right. If mom tells you to do something... you do it. But it wasn't just enough to know the rules... you had to obey the rules. If mom tells you not to do something... you don't do that thing or else there will be consequences.

I remember this one time when I was very young, mom dressed us up in collared shirts and ties and told us we were going to a wedding. She said she needed to get ready now, and that in the meantime we were, under no circumstances to go and get dirty or make a mess. So what did me and my brother do? We got on our bikes, headed down the massive hill beside our apartment, and drove right through a giant mud puddle at the bottom of the hill. I'm not sure if you are aware of this... but when you drive your bike through a mud puddle at a pretty good pace, the muddy water roostertails up the tail of your bike and all over your backside. We walked our bikes back up the hill just in time to see mom come out the front door in her dress ready to go to the wedding. She gasped so loud that I thought maybe she was having a heart attack and then her face turned dark red and it was at that moment that it started to register that something was wrong. She said, what have you done to your outfit? And I tried start making all kinds of excuses... well, you see there was a hill, and we were on our bikes... and there was mud... and I don't really know what happened. You know what mom... maybe you shouldn't have let us out the house. And then she said that famous phrase from all mothers... "there is no excuse for your behavior." And she was right... I didn't have an excuse because I knew the rules and I simply didn't obey them and I got grounded.

Last week, **Romans 1** was easy to agree with. Those evil people who have ignored the truth of God's existence and have turned to idolatry and sexual immorality are the worst. They've rejected God, embraced rebellion, celebrated their sin, and deserve wrath. I mean, some of us last week were probably thinking... that's right, that's exacty what's wrong with this world, you tell them pagans off Shevi. Some of us were probably thinking... this message doesn't have anything to do with me... I'm not like those sinners. Exactly... though they knew of God they chose to reject him and deserve what they get. They are without excuse. In

fact that is exactly what **Romans 1:18-21** says.

And so good religious people like ourselves can now stand over those evil sinful pagans in judgement right? Wrong. You see, we love sermons about their sin... but we resist sermons about our self-righteousness. And this is exactly why Paul follows the message of Romans 1 with Romans 2. Yes, all mankind is without an excuse because all mankind is fully aware that God is evident. But, even more so, those who know the rules and choose to disobey them... they are also without an excuse. Look with me at **Romans 2:1-16**.

This passage is aimed squarely at people who believe in moral standards, who value right and wrong, who think obedience counts for something. This passage isn't for athiests. Its for moral, religious, church people like us. And Paul says, there is a danger here. That you might put your faith in your religious morality and remain unrepentant in your sin. That you might wear your religion as a disguise for your corrupt heart. That you might judge others to avoid judging yourselves. Get this... when we hide from God behind religion we are just as guilty as those who hide from God behind ignorance. The main point this morning is simply.... **Knowing right doesn't make us right. It makes us accountable!** Today I want to quickly give you three reasons why our morality leaves us with no excuses.

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

Look with me at verses **2:1**. Notice the "therefore" which directly connects us back to Paul's argument in Romans 1. He's basically saying, "if you agreed with my assessment of sin in chapter 1... congratulations, you've just indicted yourself." Paul says, "everyone of you who judges condemns yourself."

Everytime we talk about judging or judgment, the conversation gets very tricky. You may say, well I haven't judged anyone. What does that mean? Does that mean that you haven't pointed your finger in someone's face and told them that they are evil and immoral? Sure, you've probably not done that recently or maybe even ever. But that's not what Paul is saying. To judge, doesn't mean that you have made a clear statement about someone's morality... to their face. **To judge simply means to make a judgement... to make a conscious decision concerning morality.**

Someone's specific morality, or morality in general. When Paul says, "you've judged," all he is saying is simply that... you've made a judgement on morality. You've said... people who do bad things are most likely in the wrong. People who have rejected God are most ungodly and deserve God's wrath. That is a judgment statement. You've judged that immorality is wrong. And you'd be right in that judgment. But when we do that... when we make that judgment... which we should... then we are judging ourselves. We are saying... sin is wrong and deserves wrath. So if I sin.. then I am also wrong and I also deserve wrath. This is what Paul means when he says, we

are condemning ourselves. In fact a better way to say that would be... "if we acknowledge that sin is wrong and deserves wrath, then we bring ourselves under condemnation if we also sin."

The first reason our morality leaves us with no excuses is simple...

We have no excuse because when we make a judgment on sin we condemn ourselves. Look at **verses 2-3**. Paul is saying that knowing the rules does not exempt us from the rules. As soon as we acknowledge the rules we are accountable to keep them. If we judge the rules true... whether for an individual or for all of humanity... then the rules apply to us. **Have any of you ever been pulled over for speeding or going through a stop sign by a police officer?** I have, its a scary thing isn't it. The officer pulls out a flashlight, comes up all quiet and slow like, puts that light in your eyes and then asks, "do you know why I pulled you over?" Now, does knowing the answer to that question keep him from giving you a ticket? No way! If he says, "do you know why I pulled you over," and I respond, "yes, I know the speed limit is 55 but I was going 95 and ran through a stop sign that I know I should've stopped at, and then passed a stopped school bus," do you think he's just going to say, "well son, since you know the rules and know why I pulled you over... you are okay to go, no problem." Heck no! That's not how it works. Knowing the rules doesn't mean we are okay to break them.

The bottom line... we have no excuses. Simply knowing that God is real and has rules doesn't mean we can go on living in sin. Simply knowing God's mercy and kindness doesn't mean we can go on living in sin. Simply doing some good things from time to time doesn't mean we can go on living in sin. No, **if works are the standard, then we stand condemned with the guilty**. There's only one solution... we must repent, we have no excuse. **Knowing right doesn't make us right. It makes us accountable.**

Secondly, Look with me at verses **2:6-11**. **We have no excuse because God doesn't show partiality**. Just in case we aren't understanding the rules of morality exactly, Paul reiterates them. If you do good, obey God, and refrain from sin... you will have eternal life. If you do evil and disobey God... you will experience the wrath of God. The rules are simple. No sin equals eternal life with God. Sin equals condemnation. But then Paul says something pretty interesting that we haven't heard yet. The wrath of God will be poured out on the Jew first and then the non-jew. Okay, racist much? Was Paul an anti-semiter... because in our day and time I'm not sure this would fly.

How can he say that the wrath of God would be for the Jew first and then the Gentile? Well it's simple.. Just as in **Romans 1:16** where he says that the Gospel is the power of salvation first for the Jew then the Gentile... the wrath of God will be first for the Jew then the Gentile. Why?

Because the Jews were the first to hear the Gospel and were the first to reject the Gospel.

And this is key here. Because Paul says, God doesn't show partiality in who he pours his wrath out on. Paul is saying this to the Jews. "You were the chosen people of God, a nation chosen to be his people. You were of the promised lineage of Abraham and Jacob, of Moses and Joshua, of David and Solomon. You were given the covenant, you were given the prophets, you were given the law and the tabernacle and the priesthood... and yet... not even that pedigree will keep you from the consequences of sin. Get this. If God's chosen people aren't given a pass for their sin... you sure as heck aren't going to get a pass. You can't use your lineage as an excuse either. You can't say... well my mom was a Christian, my Grandma took me to church, my Grandpa was a preacher. You can't say, well my family has been a part of the baptist church for centuries. That's not going to cut it. You can be the holy spawn of Mother Teresa and Billy Graham, born in the manger of Jesus stored at the Vatican, surrounded by Brooklyn Tabernacle, singing a Gaither Vocal band song, while eating a chick fil a sandwich. It ain't gonna matter. If you are a sinner... you are under the condemnation of the wrath of God. **It doesn't matter who you are, where you are from, how much money you have, or how popular you are. You are accountable for your sin. Knowing right doesn't make us right. It makes us accountable.**

Lastly lets look again at **verses 12-15**. We have no excuse for our sin because we have rightly judged sin to be worthy of wrath. We have no excuse for our sin because God shows no partiality. And third, **We have no excuse because God knows the secrets of our hearts**. We know the rules because we know the law. Simply knowing the law doesn't mean we are free from God's judgment. Doing the law is what frees us from God's wrath. Paul has reiterated this at least 4 times in this passage. We know the rules so we are condemned by the rules. Got it!

But then he again says something very interesting that we must contemplate. He goes back to Romans 1 and talks about those who know God simply by his divine nature in creation. He says this, if those people, who only know God by nature, who do not have the law, still obey the law, they show that the law isn't just written on tablets of stone or parchments of paper... but the law is actually written on the hearts of all mankind. This is huge. **Not only do we know God by his divine nature, and by his written word, but by the fact that his law is written on our hearts**. This echoes **Ecclesiasties 3:11** where Solomon claimed... there is something eternal written on all men's hearts. Meaning, no one has an excuse to disobey God... he knows our hearts, and he has seen our hearts, and he knows we know what is right and wrong and eternal. It's written on our souls. And we've all chosen wrong. Again... **Romans 3:23**, we have all sinned and

fallen short of the glory of God. There is no excuse. We know in hearts what is right, but... **Knowing right doesn't make us right. It makes us accountable.**

Application

So what do we do with this unfortunate news today. We have no excuse for our sinfulness. We all sin... we know the truth, we know what's right, we are moral people who know good and evil and yet we have all sinned and fallen short. Just because we know the law doesn't mean we are above it. Just because we may be a good person from a good family doesn't mean we aren't accountable. Just because we haven't been theologically trained doesn't mean that we don't know God and good and evil in our hearts. We do... so we are without excuse. And if we are without excuse then we are under condemnation and wrath and destined for the destruction of hell right? Wrong. **Just because we have no excuse doesn't mean we have no escape.** There is a way.

Conclusion

Look with me at our final verse again, **verse 16**. On the day of judgement, according to the Gospel, God will judge the secrets of our hearts... how? Not by our works, but by Christ Jesus. I hope you get this this morning. Even though you don't have an excuse for your sin... you have a way to escape your sin and that way is Jesus Christ. Instead of looking for an excuse... simply acknowledge that Jesus is the only way for salvation, place your faith in him as your Lord, repent of your sin, and let him change your life! Then and only then will you no longer be under the condemnation and wrath of God. **Knowing right doesn't make us right. It makes us accountable.** But get this... knowing Jesus makes us righteous.