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Todd Fletcher [00:00:03] "Therefore, you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on one another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the same things. 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 yourselves, 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 impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. He will render to each one according to his works, to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality He 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." Thus reads the words the Lord, you may be seated.

Todd Fletcher [00:01:22] So if you've looked around our world and you've noticed that things just aren't quite right, it's because you have two eyes and you can see. Things are not quite right, especially in our country right now, but around the world. And what's interesting is one of the biggest things that's being challenged today is individualism. Now, you may be thinking, well, no we're very individualistic society that's not being challenged but let me tell you, it absolutely is being challenged right now by collectivism. Collectivism is the idea that we are judged not as individuals, not by our own character and our own integrity, but we are judged by the group that we are a part of, by the gender that you have, by the preference of sex that you have, by the color of your skin, by your wealth, by your tax bracket. We're all being partitioned off into various groups saying that we are judged and we rise and fall by the standard of this group. It's called collectivism. But let me first read what individualism, because that's exactly what Paul is talking about in Romans, what individualism is. Individualism is this the moral stance, political philosophy, ideology and social outlook that emphasizes the moral worth of the individual.

Todd Fletcher [00:02:38] Sounds a lot like the Declaration of Independence, doesn't it? That we are all created in the image of God, that we are endowed with certain unalienable rights, and because we all bear God's image, we are responsible individuals. We all stand before the Lord and give an account as an individual. We don't stand as a collective before the throne of God. We stand as those who will give an account for our good deeds and our evil deeds. You can't look to the person, to your right and to your left to defend you before the Lord. Now, let me read to you what collectivism is, and this is something that is being pushed on America and on the whole world right now is. It is a value that categorizes, that is characterized by the emphasis or cohesiveness among individuals and the prioritization of a group over self. And what we see here is it's a world view that aims for common goals and common values. But here's the issue is if you fall outside of the collective's goals and values, you are considered, the other. You have the ingroup that accepts what the world or the culture is promoting and you have the outgroup, and the idea of collectivism is to destroy those who do not fit in the group. Certain children's books do not fit the collective mentality right now, such as Dr. Seuss. And there are things in this world where we see the traditions that this country held just 10 years ago are now outside of the collective moral world view, the moral concept that is being pushed upon us and now you are considered the other.

Todd Fletcher [00:04:19] If you've realized that you have gone from being a part of the moral majority now you feel like you're in the moral minority, it's because you are, you're now outside of the moral majority, and this has pretty dramatic impact. Let me read to you a quote by Ayn Rand, and she saw this coming in our nation, and she says this, she says, "Collectivism means the subjugation of the individual to a group, whether to race, a class, or state. It does not matter collectivism holds that man must be chained to the collective action and collective thought for the sake of what is called the common good." This is what is happening right now. And for those who do not accept the common good or what the world is telling you is for the common good, you will be outcasts. And so we need to look to the Bible and the Bible answers all of these issues, you may think this is a modern issue, but it's not. Individualism and collectivism has been talked about since the beginning of time. People like the fact that there are part of a certain group and they believe that there's safety in that group and they'll be saved because they're part of that group. In this situation, we see that the moral Jew or the moralist thinks that because they're a Jew or because they're a good person, they're going to be saved from God's wrath, even if they sin, even if they make mistakes because of their very ethnicity or because of their group. But here's what's happening around us, is that people are starting to judge entire people groups based on the color of their skin or based on their socioeconomic standing, their tax brackets, certain genders.

Todd Fletcher [00:06:02] But the fact is, God doesn't judge along those lines, God judges the individual, God judges you. You're not standing there as a part of a collective that is being judged by God, it says that God judges every individual, verse 6 says, "He will render to each one according to his works." So your works will be on display before God and He will look directly at you, He will look directly in your eyes and He will judge you based upon your works. Does that terrify everyone in here? It should, this is a passage that should terrify you. And as I say always, of course, if you know the gospel, and you know the work of Jesus Christ upon the cross, you know that if you are in Jesus you will be saved by His works and not by your own. But we need to realize that no one can be saved by their own works. Because when we stand before the Lord and we give an account, if we stand there truly alone without the grace and mercy of God, we stand condemned. No matter what color you are, no matter what gender you are, no matter your income, you will stand condemned if you stand before God truly alone. I pray we don't stand alone on that day. That Jesus is our mediator on that day and that He's pointing to himself as fulfilling the righteous works of God. But we need to recognize that the moralist needs to repent of their moralism. The good boy, the good girl, that will send you right to hell. If you think that if I'm a good enough boy, if I'm going a good enough girl, we grow up this way, don't we, as children? Don't you want to be a good boy? Don't you want to be a good girl? That'll send you straight to hell.

Todd Fletcher [00:07:49] If you don't realize that, no one is good apart from Jesus Christ. Of course, salvation brings about good works that no one is saved by works, were saved unto good works. But the only persons works that matter are Jesus Christ, because He was the only sinless One. So today we're going to look at two sections here. There's two points, and that is verses 1 through 5 deals with the moralist, and the second one is the judge. And in fact, what's ironic here is oftentimes moralists are judges, are they not? They're judgmental, hypocritical. They look down their nose at others. They think that at least I'm not like those, that at least I'm not like this sinner. This Gentile who's living in their sin. Praise the Lord that He made me a Jew, that I'm not like these sinners around me. We see that in the Gospels, don't we? So if you are a moralist, I just want you to know that, I'm aiming right at you, that my target is on your back. That I want no one in this room to be good moralists. If you go to many churches today, all you'll hear is a moralistic preacher

preaching to moralistic people that think they're all very good. Many of the mainline denominations, they no longer talk about Jesus, they no longer talk about the grace that's only available by faith in Jesus Christ, they only talk about how to be good, upright, moral standing citizens. And that is a sermon that will condemn you straight to hell. And so that's what I'm after today.

Todd Fletcher [00:09:23] And we see that God is an impartial judge. And He will judge each individual, not by their group, their class or their race, but by their works, and that is it, God will judge you by your works. And so now we come to verses 1 through 5, so we see here a hypocritical judge look at verse one, "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." So here is an amazing switch that Paul does, he's following along, I'm going to read some quotes from The Wisdom of Solomon, which is an apocryphal book. It's a historical book, it's not inspired. It's not in your canon, it's not in the Bible. These are intertestamental books, but they're important books, they're wisdom books. And The Wisdom of Solomon presents an idea that if you're reading chapter 1, you're very on board with if you're if you're a good moralistic Jew. You're reading through verses 18 through 32 and you're saying, yeah, go after them Paul, go get those wicked Gentiles, they're terrible people, they all deserve hell. You know, they're just the scum of the earth, they deserve God's wrath. And they hear a list like versus 29 through 31 of chapter 1, look down in your Bibles, if you will.

Todd Fletcher [00:10:45] It says this of these, the them, the they, the other, the outsiders, "they are filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They're full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossip, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient parents, foolish, faithless, heartless and ruthless." And the moralist is sitting there saying, absolutely, those are the wicked people that deserve to go to hell. It sounds like the wisdom literature here, let me read this, this is from the wisdom of Solomon, chapter 11 versus 9 through 10, "when they themselves were put to the test, though chastisement was tempered with mercy, they understood the tortures of the godless who were sentenced in anger. But your people, you subjected to an ordeal disciplining them like a father. But those others you put to the torture, like stern King passing a sentence." Chapter 15 verse 2 of wisdom of Solomon, even if we sin, we are yours since we acknowledge your power. But because we know that we are counted yours, we shall not sin." This is all through the wisdom literature of the apocrypha, were the Jews believe because they are Jews, they are safe, whether they sin or not. Because of their heritage, because of their ethnicity, because of the covenants given to Abraham, that they are good and that those wicked others deserve what's coming to them, torture and destruction. But Paul breaks from the wisdom of Solomon right here in chapter 2 verse 1, and he turns the attack on the moralistic Jew. And this is more than just Jews, this is the moralist in general, this is a both and, first the Jew and then the Gentile. We see that in verses 9 and 10.

Todd Fletcher [00:12:39] So here's the attack, Paul turns the attention to the moralists and says, therefore, you have no excuse. For you grammar nerds in here up to this point has been using the third plural pronoun, they, them, those people, those people out there, and then he gets very personal in chapter 2 verse 1 and he uses a second singular pronoun "you, you." If you don't like pastors preaching or pointing at, you get get over it. Because pastors need to point at you, at you, at me. The finger needs to be pointed at us, it can't just be some theory that just stays in the pulpit and never enters into the pews, the fire needs to go from here into your seats. And we need to recognize that God is speaking to you, to us. That this has application, he says, "therefore you have no excuse," none.

You can't come to God and say that, well I was good enough and I did all the right things and I was a good little boy, I was a good little girl. I gave what I was supposed to give to the church, I attended as much as I was supposed to. I visited the widow, I visited the sick. I even gave up my life. But if you have not love you are nothing, if you don't love God, if you don't know God.

Todd Fletcher [00:14:01] If you're just a good little boy and a good little girl you've condemned yourself if you think you can stand before the Lord. And he says in verse 1, "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." Doesn't this sound like Jesus on the Sermon on the Mount? Judge not, lest you be judged. And if you are going to judge, make sure you take the the center beam out of your own eye before you take the speck of sawdust out of your neighbor's eye. There needs to be true repentance and self-evaluation before you judge anyone else. And this is where it gets very personal because we see this in Scripture. We're going to look at David in just a second in 2 Samuel, when he's, when he's confronted by a prophet and he's confronted with his own sin but he thinks it's someone else's sin and he says that person deserves to die. And the prophet turns around, says, you are that man. We are so quick to judge those outside of the church. We were talking about this in the first hour at 9:00 a.m. downstairs, and we asked the question, when does it become sinful to pray judgment on others? I'm sure in your heart of hearts this last year there has been a point where you have thought that person needs to just go to hell. And maybe you haven't thought that, but I have. And immediately I have to preach towards my own heart and my own soul and say that I deserve hell. Yeah, we pray against wickedness. We pray for God's justice, we pray for Christ to return and to establish righteousness on this planet, but when we pray for individuals, we always pray for their salvation, no matter how wicked they are.

Todd Fletcher [00:16:05] This is so important that if you were a Nazi Germany watching Hitler, Hitler ravage millions of Jews and others, that if you prayed that Hitler would go to hell, you would be in the wrong. You should have prayed for Hitler's salvation, that he would repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. All these various people, we always pray for their salvation, but you can pray god bring justice, God destroy wickedness. Ryan said downstairs that we pray for the actor, but we hate the act, I like that. We pray for the actor, but we hate the act, and so here we have the finger pointing, here we have the self-righteous judge who's looking at other people, judging them, forgetting that they themselves are guilty of the same things. If you've had anger in your heart towards another, you are a murderer according to our Lord. That if you've looked at a woman with lust, you are an adulterer according to the Lord. That if something happens in your heart, even if you haven't carried it out with your hands, you are guilty of that sin according to our Lord. And if you're feeling very depressed and discouraged right now when you're looking at your own moralism in your own good works, Amen. I want you to be depressed when you look at your own works, because when you go to the Lord, your best works are filthy, bloody rags before Him. Because they're tainted by sin, they're tainted by selfishness, they're tainted by pride.

Todd Fletcher [00:17:33] Let's look at David. David is such an interesting character because David is so much like us, isn't he? I'm so glad that God uses broken men and women in the Bible. Turn to 2 Samuel, if you will, and this is just got to be on the forefront of our thinking, in 2 Samuel chapter 12 we see a true man of God who is caught in his own sin and he has righteous indignation for sinners. But he himself doesn't even recognize that he's the sinner that's being confronted. Listen to this, this is such an important passage, "and the Lord sent Nathan to David," if you're not aware of the situation, David

has just stolen one of his friend's wives, had his friend killed on the front lines so that his sin wouldn't be found out and he got this woman pregnant, pretty bad situation, right? But he thought he might have gotten away with it, but God knows, God knows the fact that David is in sin and God sends His man Nathan, to confront the king and it says, "Yahweh the Lord sends Nathan to David, and he came to him and said to him, there were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had very many flocks and herds, but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb which he had bought. And he brought it up and grew it up, grew it up with him and with his children. It used to eat of his morsel and drink from his cup and lie in his arms and it was like a daughter to him." This is a very precious lamb, "now, there came a traveler to the rich man, he was unwilling to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the guests who had come to him but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the men who had come to him. And then David's anger was greatly kindled against that man. And he said to Nathan, as the Lord lives the man who has done this deserves to die. And he shall restore the lamb fourfold because he did this thing and because he had no pity," what a terrible man. And then Nathan says to David, "You are that man," you're the man.

Todd Fletcher [00:19:53] What I'm telling you this morning is that if you're judging people outside of the church praying for them to go to hell, you condemn yourself because you're guilty of the exact same thing. What should this create in us? It should create humility in us. It should give us grace for those who are in their sin. That we should have mercy on people who deserve judgment because we're guilty of the same exact things. If you go through versus 29 through 31, I know that every person in this room is guilty of these things because it's happened in your heart, hasn't it? We all struggle with sin, and if you say you don't struggle with sin, you're a liar and the truth is not in you. Well, that's a strong statement, where does that come from? 1 John chapter 1, that if you say, you know, I have no sin, you're a liar and the truth is not in you. So here these people, these moralists first need to recognize that they are the man, that they are the woman, that they are guilty of, the exact same thing they're pointing their fingers at. Because they themselves have three fingers pointing right back at them. Have you ever noticed that? I'm sure you've heard this before when you pointed someone, you have three pointing right back at you. And so let me remind you of what Jesus says, "judge not lest you be judged." And if you judge, judge yourself before you go judge someone else so that you do so in humility and with love for that person, rather than as a snobbish, moralistic person that believes that their good works deserve salvation.

Todd Fletcher [00:21:37] And as you walk around today and you ask someone, are you going to heaven, most people will say if they believe in heaven, we'll say, I think so. And you ask them why? And they say, because I'm not Hitler. Because I'm not the worst person that I can think of. I'm a good person, I do good things, I give my money to good causes. Do you know how much I just give to the Red Cross last time? I give a lot and I'm a good person. The problem is, is no one is good. That's what Romans 3 is going to get into, and that's the ultimate attack by Paul, because if you think you can be a good person and be saved, you just totally misunderstood the gospel because no one is good. So now we get to really the attack of Paul just goes on the attack. And if you're tired of being attacked by Paul, join the club, because Paul is on the attack. Verse 2, he says, "we know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things," in the original language in the Greek, it says, we know that God's judgment is according to the truth and rightly falls on those who practice such things. That God always judges according to the truth. And the question is, is what is the truth? The truth is that we've all fallen short of the glory of God. The truth is that all of our, all of our hearts have gone astray, that all of our hearts pursue selfish ambition, that all of us in our flesh struggle with God's law. We see

that in Romans 6. That Paul recognizes that we all struggle with this and Paul throws himself into the boat, that he knows he's a sinner that's in desperate need of God's grace. And here's the thing church, is that every sinner that walks into this church, every sinner that comes into our lives, you are called to give them grace and mercy. God's grace and mercy. That you tell them about the gospel of Jesus Christ and that they, too, can be saved. And that the only reason you're any different from them is because you've been saved and you've been purchased by the blood of the Lamb, and that is available to them if they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. That will create an amazing church, a humble church, a loving church, and he says that God judges rightly, He judges according to the truth, He never passes a wrong judgment, He knows exactly what's happening in your heart. And so when you stand before the Lord, if you think your good works will make it through that judgment, you have another thing coming, don't you? Because He not only knows what you've done, He knows what you've thought.

Todd Fletcher [00:24:17] That's why James says, don't even let a careless word fall off of your tongue, because you'll be judged for that word and Jesus points to the heart and says, don't even allow that thought to take root because you'll be judged for that thought. Can anyone get away from this? No. No one can stand before the holy judgment of God, and that's what John, that's what Paul is getting at here. And then versus 3 and 4, there's two questions for you to consider. First this, is "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?" This word suppose is really fascinating, it's the idea of calculate. Do you calculate that your works are good enough? Have you added up your whole life and figured that in God's scales that you'll come out clean, do you suppose that your calculations are correct, even though you who practice the same things, condemn those, in your judgment who have fallen short, that you will escape the judgment of God? Do you suppose? Have you calculated that you can escape God's judgment? And the only answer is or should be, I can't escape the judgment of God. God's judgment is according to the truth, and I have fallen short of the truth, James says, that if you've just broken one law, you're guilty of the entire law. If you've just broken one law the whole weight of the law rests upon your head. Remember the rich young ruler that came to Jesus, he says, oh I've done all these things, I've done everything that you would want. You know, I've kept the law and Jesus says, that's that's excellent, young man can you just do one more thing and sell everything and give it to the poor and then you can follow Me? Going at his very identity, his his pride of life, his focus, his his his love of money, a thing he wasn't able to give up. Jesus says can you just stop being greedy? Can you give up your identity to follow Me? And the young man is very sad and he walks away and the disciples are left asking, how can anyone be saved? And Jesus says, it's impossible with man for you to be saved, but with God, all things are possible. God can save anyone, but no man or woman can save themselves. That is the gospel, and you have to accept that before you'll ever receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

Todd Fletcher [00:26:45] That you can't save yourself, that you fall short of God's righteous commandments and he says this in verse 4, look at this, he says, here's the second question, "do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing the God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?" This word presume, has the idea of despise, do you despise the riches and the kindness and the forbearance and the patience of God? I know many Jews back in those times despise the fact that God continued to allow the Gentiles to prosper. They despised the fact that God was long suffering, that God wouldn't just bring fire down on the wicked. Do you remember James and John, the sons of Zebedee, as they go and they see the Samaritan Village and they reject Jesus and they say, do you want us to call down fire from heaven and destroy

Your enemies? And Jesus says, what's wrong with you? No, no, don't. Because James and John had forgotten that they themselves deserved that very fire that they wanted to bring down upon these people. And he says, why do you despise God's kindness? Why do you despise God's patience? Why do you despise God's long suffering, His forbearance?

Todd Fletcher [00:28:05] Have you ever considered that maybe God is allowing all of this to continue and He's allowing the clock of this time to keep running because He wants to save more people? God would be totally just to bring down fire from heaven right now and consume all the wicked, which will happen in Revelation 19. But praise God, He hasn't done it yet. Because your neighbor might be saved. Your child might be saved. Your family member, your friends, your coworker. God is long suffering, God is patient, and praise God for His patience. And so we pray that we would accept this and we wouldn't despise it, that we wouldn't despise God's riches, His kindness. We can't even imagine how patient He is, if you think you hate wickedness, you've got another thing coming when it comes to how much God hates wickedness. If you think you hate abortion, do you know how much more God hates abortion? Do you know how much more God hates homosexuality? We went through that in Romans 1. Do you know how much God hates anything that falls short of His perfect holy standards? He is consumed by hatred of sin, yet He's patient. That's what we need to pray for, is God's patience, God's kindness, God's long suffering. And so these questions should hit us, have you calculated that your good works will save you? They won't. And do you despise God's kindness and His grace, you shouldn't.

Todd Fletcher [00:29:54] Because verse 5, "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." There is a very bad judgment awaiting those who are sitting there judging others while they're not judging themselves. While they're not looking at their own life, they're not, they're not taking account of their own sins. They're not taking the speck of sawdust out of their own eyes. If you will turn to Revelation 20, we need to see this because this is where we will all be one day, whether or not you believe in God, whether or not you believe in the Bible, whether or not you believe that Jesus is the Messiah, you will experience this moment. Revelation 20 verses 11 through 15, this is the very thing that the world cannot stand, is knowing that this moment is coming. This is why in our news, we no longer call 'sin' sin and we no longer call 'evil' evil, we call it an addiction. We call it some type of psychological disorder rather than calling 'sin' sin, because if you say that sin is sin, then people have to acknowledge there's a law, and there's a Law Giver. Look at this, "then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. And from his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great in small, standing before the throne, and the books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had," what? "Done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades, gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had," what? "done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

Todd Fletcher [00:32:08] This is the most hated passage in your Bible because it's true and it will happen. The books will be opened and our works will be judged. And the only way you can be saved is if your name is found in the Lamb's Book of Life. And so why would you judge another? Why would you judge hypocritically, why would you not be humble when you're looking at sinners? Why would you not pray for their salvation? Why would you not come to to the Lord pleading every day, God please save them, have more

patience, have more mercy, have more love and kindness. God, please put your grace down on my enemies, God forgive them they do not know what they do. God love my enemies, God save them, don't let them go into hell. God save them. And it says, because of your heart and impenitent heart, you yourself are storing up wrath when you want to judge others and call down God's wrath on those who have hurt you, those who've spit upon you. And that's the problem. So our culture looks for moralism to save them, and there's a new moral orthodoxy that's being installed right now, and you have to be on board with the new moral orthodoxy to be saved. But the Bible says the same exact thing which is the only way you can be saved is by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His righteousness, that's all that matters. So what are you looking to for your salvation? We need to have such a better heart towards our enemies, don't we? That we pray for them and we love them, and when we see people that are going through sex changes, and they're just lifting their fist to God saying that they hate the way they were created, instead of thinking, well they're deserving what's coming, praying for them.

Todd Fletcher [00:34:02] I was just reading about one of the Hollywood stars her name is, I think Ellen Page, I'm not sure. And she just went through a sex change. And she said her whole life she's hated the fact that she was a girl. And she was so happy that she finally had had her breasts removed and that she had gone through a sexual transition and that she could finally be who she wanted to be. And I thought, I can't imagine being God who created her that way, and her hating her Creator so much that she would go to those, to that extent to change her biological makeup, right, her breasts and also her hormonal therapy that she went through. And my heart just broke for her, because she talked about how her whole life she had been struggling with depression and suicidal thoughts. And that's how we need to look at sinners, that's how we need to look at people we disagree with, is my heart just breaks for them and I so want them to come to know the Lord. God can forgive anyone of any sin. God can forgive them and we need to have that mindset.

Todd Fletcher [00:35:07] So now we come to the judge. What we see here is in verses 6 through 11 is our God on full display. "He will render to each one, according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life, but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. There will be a 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." We see here, it's called a chiasm. This is a normal kind of Jewish parallelism that's working towards the center. You have an "a" statement and an "a" statement, then a "b" statement and a "b" statement, and it's pointing to the two "c" statements in the middle. And so what you see here is 6 and 11 parallel each other, 7 and 10 parallel each other, and then 8 and 9 are the focus. And just to spare you see that verse 6 and verse 11 are all the fact about, the fact that God is an impartial judge, that God doesn't judge based on favoritism. That God doesn't look at ethnicity or race and judge based on His favoritism, that He is impartial and everyone stands before Him and gives an account.

Todd Fletcher [00:36:24] And then the next one is that He rewards those who do good, verses 7 and 10, to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor immortality, He will give eternal life. Verse 10, "but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek." So we see God is impartial, but He rewards those who do good. And then in the middle we see the main focus, which is verses 8 and 9, "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." And what this is

showing is God is impartial, He rewards those who do good and he judges those who do evil. That's what this entire section is pointing us to. Now, let's break it down even further, verse 6, "He will render to each one according to his works," this is a direct quotation from Proverbs 24:12. We see this is something that runs throughout God's Bible, that God's word is that He will judge everyone according to their works. Let me ask you a very important question, can anyone be saved? If that's the case, the answer is no. He will judge everyone according to their works, Romans, 3:23 says, "that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." All of us will be condemned if we stand by our works, but He will judge everyone according to their works without partiality. But we see that in verses 7 and 10 there are some people who will receive reward for their good works, how do we reconcile that? It sounds like everyone's going to be condemned. We'll see that in Romans three, that no one is good. No one no one is righteous, none pursue God, none seek God, all stand condemned. Our throats are open graves, we are destroyed by our tongues, we have the venom of asps under our lips. Say that five times fast. How can anyone be saved? The answer is no one can be saved by their own works, but in verses 7 and 10 people will be rewarded for good works. How could that be?

Todd Fletcher [00:38:43] The answer is, is there is a bema seat judgment where Christians stand before the Lord Jesus Christ and their works are judged and you either receive reward or you suffer loss. Doesn't mean you're, no one in that judgment is going to hell. They're all saved by the blood of Jesus Christ, but our works will be considered before the Lord and you'll receive rewards from God. We see this in the parable of the talents that there are some servants whom 10 times their money and then there are some who have five times their gifts, right? And God rewards them, and He says, you've been faithful with little now you'll be faithful with much. Rewards are a part of the judgment. But ultimately, if we stand apart from Jesus Christ, none of our works will merit salvation. And we see in verses 8 and 9, that for those who do not do good, those who disobey the truth and they obey unrighteousness those who are selfish, self seeking. Those who obey unrighteousness. There will be wrath and fury, tribulation and distress, distress for every human being who does evil to the Jew first and also to the Greek. You know, the Jews loved, "to the Jew first" but not right here, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. It doesn't matter what social class you're a part of, what ethnicity you're from you will be judged by your own words, no partiality.

Todd Fletcher [00:40:13] So, do we need, we need some encouragement now, don't we? And here it is, Charles Spurgeon, whenever you need encouragement, just turn to Charles Spurgeon, he's got an amazing beard that will lift up your worst days. That's why I have his picture in my office, if you've wondered, is that, like my grandpa in my office? No, that's Charles Spurgeon and it's only there because of his beard. But he says this, "it is not they who hold on to Christ that saves thee, it is Christ. It is not the joy in Christ that saves thee, it is Christ. It is not even thy faith in Christ, though that be an instrument, it is Christ's blood and merit that saves thee." Is you, you do not save yourself, it is Christ who saves you. Yes, you place your faith in Jesus, but that's not what saves you, it is Christ who saves you. That is your access to Christ's salvific work, but it is His blood and His merit that saves you. And here is the whole point is when we stand before the Lord and we give an account, if our works are all we have, we will all be condemned, rightly. But if we stand before the Lord and we give an account and we are covered in the righteous blood of Jesus Christ and we are saved by His works, then we become saved, then we are children of God. And here's the thing, we say, well, we're not saved by works. That's wrong, we actually are saved by works, we're saved by Christ's works. His righteousness is accredited to our account, our wickedness is imputed to His account, accredited to His account. We are saved by the works of Jesus Christ.

Todd Fletcher [00:42:04] So, when you stand before the Lord and you give an account and He looks at your works, He would say, guilty. But all of a sudden He sees blood all over your works and it's the blood of His Son, the spotless Lamb of God. And He looks at those works and says, not guilty. Because Jesus paid it all, because His works have saved you. And here it is, why would you judge anyone hypocritically by your own works, by your own righteousness, because if you do that, you are condemning yourself because your works will never save you. But if you're looking at a sinner and you're saying they desperately need the work of Jesus Christ in their lives, I need to tell them about the grace that's available in Jesus. If they would only believe in Jesus, then they will be saved. When you do that, all of a sudden you are now no longer condemning yourself, you're trying to save those around you with the blood of Jesus Christ. And like Charles Spurgeon said, it's all the blood and the merit of Jesus is the only thing that saves. So will you stand alone before the throne of God? That's the question. Everyone will stand alone before the throne of God. The question is, is do you have someone standing with you? Is Jesus your mediator? Is Jesus pointing to Himself, saying they deserve hell, they deserve sin, but I have purchased them with My blood, I've saved them. The moralists there will stand alone, the sin loving atheist, they will stand alone. the Jew, the moralistic Jew who rejects Christ, they will stand alone, the Gentile who rejects Christ will stand alone, but the Christian who stands by their faith in Jesus Christ, they will stand with Christ as their mediator. Jesus says, or John writes in 1 John, 3:5, "you know that He appeared in order to take away sins, and in Him there is no sin," that Jesus is sinless. And let's end here, Ephesians 2 verses, 13 through 18.

Todd Fletcher [00:44:25] If you have your Bibles, turn there Ephesians 2, verses 13 through 18, "but now in Christ Jesus you who were once far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of the commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but are fellow citizens with the Saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundations of the apostles and the prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone."

Todd Fletcher [00:45:42] Let's pray, Father God, I pray that we would not be hypocritical judges, that we would not be moralists pointing our fingers at these sinners around us. Lord, that we would be evangelists, that we would recognize our own sin and our own shortfalls, that we would see those people around us that are living in love with their sin, in total rebellion against their God, and that we would look at them with Your eyes. And that we would see how amazing Your patience and Your kindness and Your long suffering is and we would preach the gospel to them. And that we would not allow them to go to the grave without a fight. That we would constantly call them back to faith in Jesus Christ so that they might be saved. And Lord, I pray that we would repent if we are leaning on our own goodness and not the goodness of Christ. And I pray this in His name, Amen.