Judge You, Condemn Me
Romans 1:28-2:6, October 18, 2026

I. Opening Prayer
- Ask Holy Spirit to help your group hear what He would teach and encourage you with today

II. Weekly Sermon Discussion (20-40 minutes)
- Read the scriptures, and discuss what stood out to you.
- Don't rush. It's not intended that you get through everything. Spend time in what speaks best to your group today.
- Example insights and questions are provided to help generate discussion if needed.
- Focus your conversation on the topic and how it applies. Be careful of straying off the topic. The health of your group is dependent on you; help your group stay on the topic.

A Depraved Mind
Read: Romans 1:28-32, 2:1

Anticipating our natural tendency to self-righteously judge those caught in shameful sin, particularly sexual immorality, Paul intentionally casts a massive net. He springs what theologians call a "rhetorical trap." By shifting from specific sins to a list of universal sin, Paul levels the playing field. He forces all of us to admit that we too have been given over to the fracturing consequences of sin. No one stands apart from a desperate need for the gospel!

- **Unrighteousness & Wickedness:** Acting in direct opposition to God's character and law.
- **Greed:** An insatiable, ungodly desire to accumulate more and more things.
- **Evil:** The internal moral degeneracy from which all outward sins flow.
- **Envy:** Jealousy; wanting what others have and resenting them for having it
- **Murder:** Elevating self over others through hate, groundless anger, and taking life.
- **Strife:** Contentions, quarrels, fighting, and a spirit of constant arguing.
- **Deceit:** Hypocrisy, dual-mindedness, and acting like someone you are not.
- **Malice:** A mean, spiteful disposition that believes the worst of people.
- **Gossips:** Whisperers who destructively talk about people behind their backs.
- **Slanderers:** Openly speaking evil of others to destroy their reputation.
- **Haters of God:** A stubborn unwillingness to submit to His will, path, or commands.
- **Insolent:** The attitude of a bully who treats other human beings as beneath him.
- **Arrogant:** Inflated self-importance that sees no practical need for God.
- **Boastful:** Bragging and exaggerating about oneself to impress others.
- **Inventors of Evil:** Restless sinners who invent new, creative ways to sin.
- **Disobedient to Parents:** Rejection of foundational authority, reflecting rebellion against God.
- **Without Understanding:** A refusal to use one's God-given mind for common sense.
- **Untrustworthy:** Disloyal, unfaithful, and unwilling to keep one's word.

- **Unloving:** A lack of natural human affection, especially toward family members.
- **Unmerciful:** Callous, cold, and unfeeling toward the suffering of others.

For the **unbeliever**, this list is a mirror of judicial, temporal wrath meant to shatter pride and drive them to the gospel. For the **believer** who struggles with these behaviors, the resulting relational and emotional pain serves as a Father's discipline: a severe grace designed to turn us away from what is worthless, and back into active fellowship with the One who is rich in grace.

- Why is it so easy for us to nod along with the first half of Romans 1, only to get caught by the second half?
- Look closely at the sins listed. Which of these are normalized or even praised by our culture today? Which ones do we tend to treat as "minor, respectable sins" compared to the high-profile sins mentioned earlier in the chapter?
- The goal of experiencing these consequences is to turn us away from what is worthless and drive us back to God. How does a regular, humble evaluation of this list protect a believer from becoming "insolent or arrogant" toward unbelievers?
- These sins are actual evidence of God's present, temporal wrath (He "gives them over" to a debased mind). How does viewing this list (such as an unmerciful heart or gossiping) as a form of divine judgment change the way we look at our own daily struggles with sin?

Judge you, Condemn me

Read: Romans 2:1-3, 3:9-10, 23, James 2:10

These verses expose the hypocrisy of a moral double standard, defining judgment not as healthy discernment, but as the arrogant act of condemning others while excusing ourselves**.** While the blatant sinners of Chapter 1 refuse to recognize God, the religious moralists of Chapter 2 refuse to recognize their own sin, using a "they vs. us" mentality to find security in their own self-righteousness. This self-righteousness is actually a form of idolatry, where we look down on others to feel better about ourselves, forgetting that all sins stem from the same root of independence from God. By holding others to a high standard while letting ourselves off the hook, we create a trap of self-condemnation, forgetting that before a holy God, there is none righteous, not even one**,** and we are all equally dependent on His patient call to repent.

- How can judging others become an idol of self-righteousness? Why does the human heart get a twisted sense of joy or satisfaction out of saying, "You are lost, and I'm glad"?
- How does the rebellion of the person who "won't recognize God" (Chapter 1) compare to the danger of the moralist who "won't recognize their sin" (Chapter 2)? Why is the latter often harder to spot in the church?
- How can being a "goody-two-shoes" or relying heavily on rule-keeping actually be an act of idolatry that rejects God? Why is the "idolatry of morality" just as sinful and dangerous as any other sin?

- How does the truth that failing at even one point of the law makes us guilty of all of it, completely eliminate any grounds for a Christian to feel superior to those struggling with particularly harmful or shameful sins?

Kindness leads to repentance

Read: Romans 2:4-6, Titus 3:2-7,

We tend to mistake God's patience, mercy, and kindness toward us as an excuse to continue in our sin. God's kindness is intentionally designed to lead us to repentance by convicting us of our need for Him after experiencing the consequences of our sin. To resist this kindness through a stubborn, unyielding will is to cling to our idolatry. This passage reminds us that because we are all equally broken, we must respond to the power of the cross with personal repentance and extend that same radical kindness to everyone around us.

- Why do you think God uses kindness and patience, rather than immediate punishment, to change our hearts? How have you personally experienced this?
- Repentance means a radical change of mind where we begin to despise our own sin. How does this differ from merely feeling guilty or being afraid of getting caught?
- How does remembering our own salvation prevent us from looking down on people struggling with flagrant sin? Who are you looking down at?
- If the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, how should this change the way we interact with people we naturally find it difficult to love? Who do you need to change your interactions or judgments with?

III. Share & Prayer (20-40 minutes)

Time to 'take off the mask'! Jesus doesn't want us to be hypocrites who wear masks.

- A personal life update, your current spiritual condition. Use emotional language to be real!
- Challenges or victories that you are experiencing
- What's really going on in your life? How are you doing? How can your group pray for you?
- Are there applications from the Discussion that you need prayer support?
- How can your Group support you this week?

When sharing prayer requests, include your personal prayer needs. Example – rather than simply sharing "Please pray for my friend's cancer journey", be sure to include your own needs: "Please pray as I'm struggling with my friend's cancer journey; I need comfort and guidance on how to encourage her in this season".

Have someone, or everyone, close your time out in prayer for one another.