November 8, 2026

Series: “Romans: The Gospel according to Paul”

Sermon: “Judgment Day”

Scripture: Romans 2:5-16



Introduction

A. In Romans 1:18-32 Paul wrote about how the wrath of God is being revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.

B. In Romans 2:1-4 Paul wrote about how the self-righteous moral people will also face the wrath of God.

C. We learned three things last week. (1) When we judge sin in others, we condemn ourselves because we do the same things. (2) Because we violate God’s perfect standard of truth, we will not escape God’s judgment. (3) Don’t mistake God’s kindness and patience to you as His approval of you.

D. “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him” (John 3:36).

E. The Scriptures teach us that God’s wrath is abiding on unbelievers now, and there is a future judgment day coming when God’s full wrath will be poured out on all unbelievers.

F. In our verses today Paul shows us what it will be like to stand before God on judgment day.

G. Big Idea: God’s final judgment on unrepentant sinners will be impartial and inescapable, leaving them without excuse.

I. God’s Judgment Is Impartial (2:5-11)

A. Because of their stubborn and unrepentant hearts, the moralists are storing up wrath for themselves in the day of wrath. (2:5)

B. The longer they live taking lightly the riches of God's kindness, forbearance, and patience, the more wrath they deserve.

C. This coming day of wrath will be a "revelation of the righteous judgment of God."

D. 2:6. "Who will repay each according to his works." Everyone will be judged by their own works. Paul was alluding to Proverbs 24:12 or Psalm 62:12 because the wording is remarkably similar.

E. The Bible teaches this truth in both the Old and New Testaments. (Matthew 16:27; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:12-13)

F. Wait a minute. Isn't salvation by faith alone? Yes. Has Paul lost his marbles? Does he begin by saying that salvation is by faith alone, and then destroy his own gospel by saying that is by good works after all?

G. "No, Paul is not contradicting himself. What he is affirming is that, although justification is indeed by faith, judgment will be according to works. The reason for this is not hard to find. It is that the day of judgment will be a public occasion. Its purpose will be less to determine God's judgment than to announce it and vindicate it" (John Stott).

H. On judgment day a public verdict will be given and a public sentence passed. The public evidence will not be our words but our works. It will not be the claims we make with our lips but the product of how we lived our lives.

I. "The presence or absence of saving faith in our hearts will be disclosed by the presence or absence of good works of love in our lives" (John Stott).

J. "Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead by itself" (James 2:17).

K. Ephesians 2:8-10.

L. If the gospel you believed isn't transforming you, then the gospel you believed didn't save you.

M. We're saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone.

N. In verses 7-10 Paul unpacks verse 6. The basis of God's righteous judgment will be what we have done. And we see that there are only two kinds of people in the world and there are only two destinies.

O. In verses 7-8 we see contrasting desires. In verse 7 we see people who persevere in doing good and who seek "glory and honor and immortality, eternal life."

P. In verse 8 we see people who are "selfishly ambitious" or contentious or factious. They oppose God and rebel against God. They do not obey the truth.

Q. The two destinies are seen in verses 9-10. "Affliction and turmoil" await those who practice evil and "glory and honor and peace" for those who do good works.

R. Twice Paul uses the phrase "the Jew first and also the Greek." You see "there is no partiality with God." No one will be able to say that God was partial in His judgment.

S. On judgment day everyone outside of Christ will receive exactly what they deserve.

II. God's Judgment Is Inescapable (2:12-16)

A. 2:12. "There will be no escape from God's all-seeing knowledge. He will judge all men by Christ, whether they possess the law of God as revealed in His Word or written on the heart" (J. V. Fesko).

B. 2:13. Paul anticipates an objection from the Gentiles. Don't the Jews have an advantage? How can God hold Gentiles responsible for what they never knew or heard?

C. Paul responds that it's not the hearers of the Law but rather it's the doers of the Law who will be justified. This is the first time in the book that the verb justified is used.

D. The purpose of the Mosaic Law wasn't to reveal a pathway to salvation but to reveal to us our sinful condition so we would look to Christ. The Law was given to expose our utter lack of righteousness.

E. Many Jews in Jesus' day had a wrong understanding of the Law. The "rich young ruler" (Luke 18:18-27), when questioned by Jesus, said he had kept commandments 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 from his youth. When challenged by Jesus on the tenth commandment, his supreme love for his wealth

was exposed.

F. The Jews with the Law were still unrighteous. Only one person ever kept the Law perfectly and we desperately need His "active obedience."

G. The point here about judgment day is it will not be people who simply sat under the teaching of God's Word that will be declared righteous in the sight of God. Only the people who hear the teaching of God's Word and repent of their sin and trust in Christ will be declared righteous on that day.

H. 2:14-15a. Many people have never heard the written Law of God or the gospel of Christ. How can God be righteous by judging them for their sin?

I. Paul says they "are a law to themselves." What?

J. "This expression should not be understood in the sense of popular current use when we say that a man is a law to himself. It means almost the opposite, that they themselves, by reason of what is implanted in their nature, confront themselves with the law of God. They themselves reveal the law of God to themselves—their persons is the medium of revelation" (John Murray).

K. The work of the Law is written in everyone's heart. How do we know that? Because some Gentiles sometimes do some of what the Law requires.

L. "This is an observable, verifiable fact, which anthropologists have everywhere discovered. Not all human beings are crooks, villains, thieves, adulterers and murderers. On the contrary, some honour their parents, recognize the sanctity of human life, are loyal to their partners, practice honesty, speak the truth and display contentment, just as the last six of the Ten Commandments require" (John Stott).

M. How can this be? Because God created them as self-conscious moral persons, and they show by their behavior that the requirements of the Law are written in their hearts.

N. God has written the "work of the Law" in every human heart through His act of creation. We all have some knowledge of it.

O. When He writes His Law on our hearts in the new creation (regeneration), He gives us a love for it and the power to obey it.

P. 2:15. Conscience is the instinctive sense of right and wrong that produces guilt when violated. In addition to an innate awareness of God's Law, we have a warning system that activates when we choose to ignore or disobey God's Law.

Q. 2:16. There is coming a day when God will judge people's secrets. The secrets of your heart will be revealed publicly.

R. Notice how the Law and the gospel work together. The Holy Spirit, by means of the Law, convicts us of sin, righteousness, and judgment. The good news is THE good news because of the severity of the bad news.

S. Jesus Christ will be our judge on that day.

Conclusion

A. How can you settle your case outside of court?

B. Luke 18:26-27

C. You are without any excuse, but you do not have to be without a Savior.

D. Romans 8:1

E. The Gospel Definition