

Romans: Unashamed; the righteous shall live by faith  
**Romans 2:1–11** - prt 7

**INTRO:**

- Last time we finished Romans 1
  - Intro
  - Thesis
  - Unrighteousness of the Gentiles
    - Suppress the truth and are without excuse
    - Follow the idols of their hearts
    - God's judgment is handing them over to worship and serve their idols.
- Today, we get into chapter 2 where Paul now unmasks the unrighteousness of the Jewish people.

**OPEN:**

- The prodigal son and the older son
  - Jesus' audience was a mix of irreligious and religious in the parables of Lk 15
  - The point of the parable is they're both lost. They're both alienated from the father, and they both need salvation.
- The younger brothers are committing egregious sins – sins that everybody knows are sins.
- But you older brothers, you people who are trying so hard to be good and you think God owes you a good life because you're so good, you are every bit as lost. You're every bit as in need of salvation
- When faced with our own sin we can say, "I'm nothing, Father have mercy" OR "I've been good, I'm not like my sinful brother, God you owe me"
- **Jesus and Paul are teaching the same thing – the unity of the Bible is glorious.**
- 1. **The religious are as guilty as the irreligious (Vs 1-5)**

*Vs 1 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.*

- Paul signals a shift in his argument at the beginning of chapter 2 by abandoning the third plural verbs he has used throughout 1:18-32.
- Paul has shown in 1:21–32 that Gentiles have suppressed the truth that God revealed to them in nature and they therefore have "no excuse" before God. He now begins to

show that Jews also suppress the truth God has given them and that they, too, are “without excuse.”

- History of Claudius and the Jews being extradited
- In AD 49 Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome. This is consistent with Luke’s account of Priscilla and Aquila being forced out of Italy because of Claudius’s edict (Acts 18:1–2) and arriving in Corinth to meet Paul.
- Eventually, the Jewish Christians returned to Rome when Claudius died in AD 54. In between this time the Roman church became a mainly Gentile church, so when the Jews returned, the church became fractured along ethnic lines. You can imagine the issues. The leadership was mainly Gentile.
  - The meetings were not in synagogues but house churches.
  - The Jewish believers would have found many cultural practices offensive.
  - Paul addresses these sorts of social and ethnic issues in Romans 9–11 and 14–15.
  - Therefore, there was probably a Gentile majority in the church, with significant changes in leadership and practice, necessitating a unity-building letter.
- What unifies the people in the church? What’s powerful enough to create a real *family* out of different people—people who shouldn’t have *any* reason, according to the world’s view, to be friends, much less *family*? It’s the *gospel*!
- The Jewish Christians seem to feel a sense of superiority over the Gentiles.
  - We have His blessings
  - We are His chosen
  - We have the law
  - We have the lineage of the Messiah.
  - The Gentiles are dogs, and we are God’s people
- He calls them “judge” - You will never find yourself guilty if you’re the judge.

**Luke 16:15 (ESV) 15** *And he said to them, “You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.*

- Paul calls them ‘judge.’ At times we can arrange a courtroom in our own head where we sit as judge and make a ruling of not guilty for ourselves.
- Self-justification = finding ways to be righteous outside of Christ;
- The main way we justify ourselves is like the older brother – call out sins and flaws in others so we can be superior – that’s what the Jews were doing.

- When someone corrects you, do you pick out their faults so that you don't have to receive what they said? "Out of order"
- One reason we may do this is:
  - If you live a good life, then you don't have to surrender to Jesus... HE owes you rather than you owing him. "I render the judgment of payment for my good deeds."
- Repenting from self-righteousness and religion is the hardest sin to turn from because we don't think we're doing anything wrong like the prodigals out there.
- But it's the one that seems to grieve Jesus the most – His kindness was poured out on everyone in the gospels BUT the religious.
- The sin of self-righteousness and self-justification underneath is: I'm good - I don't need God and I don't want God.

**Vs 2** *We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things.*

- God does not condemn them merely because they judged others but because they practiced the same sins they condemned in others.

**Vs 3-4** *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? 4 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?*

- You have no excuse and you have no escape.
- Just because you have the right heritage doesn't mean have grace.
  - Kindness – God's goodness
  - Forbearance - means that God withholds judgment from us
  - Patience – long fuse
- Kindness comes from Hesed – Paul was writing in GK but thinking in Hebrew
- Hesed, found some 250 times in the Old Testament, expresses an essential part of God's character. When God appeared to Moses to give the Law a second time, He described Himself as "abounding in" or "filled with" hesed, which is translated "love and faithfulness," "unfailing love," "faithful love," "steadfast love," and "loyal love," depending on the Bible version (Exodus 34:6–7). The core idea of this term

communicates loyalty or faithfulness within a relationship. Thus, hesed is closely related to God's covenant with His people, Israel. As it relates to the concept of love, hesed expresses God's faithfulness to His people.

**Vs 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.*

- The Greek word hard is **sklérotés** and it's the word from which we get the word sclerosis.
- If you have arteriosclerosis, you have hardening of the arteries. This is deadly, it'll destroy you.
- It's that very word that Paul uses in Romans two. He is saying, in spite of all the kindness of God, in spite of his forbearance, in spite of all his patience, you still have this hardening of your heart and you will not receive Him and God's going to judge you someday because of that.

**Matthew 23:27–28 (ESV) 27** *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. 28* *So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.*

- In our flesh, we make 'laws' as a judge in our own courtroom in order to make ourselves superior to others so that we can be righteous.

Categories we do this in today:

In personal life

- I was raised right
- I'm educated and know what's right
- Political rightness

In family life:

- I don't let my kids \_\_\_\_\_
- Breastfeeding, homeschooling, vaccines
- College vs no college

In church life:

- Reformed or right theology
- Fog machines and lights
- Suits no suits
- Communion weekly

Professional life

- My office/biz/store is clean – all the rest are dirty
- We do things by the book – they are shady
- Pastor vs. lay

**Matthew 7:1–3 (ESV)** **1** “Judge not, that you be not judged. **2** For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. **3** Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?

- We are either the prodigal or the older son – either
  - have mercy on me or God, or
  - you owe me... I don’t need your kindness when I work for myself.

## **2. God judges with no partiality; we all need His grace. (Vs 6-11)**

**Vs 11** For God shows no partiality.

**Vs 6-8** He will render to each one according to his works: **7** to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; **8** but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.

- *Self-seeking*: The only pre-New Testament occurrence of the word is in Aristotle, who uses it to decry politicians who seek office for private gain rather than the public good.

**Vs 9-10** There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, **10** but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek.

- Does this mean, “that we get saved by being good, and we get lost by being bad.” No.
- Paul is not talking here about the basis of salvation. He's talking about the basis of judgment.
- And we are not justified by our works, but by our works our faith is justified... Not that you have to do good things in order to be saved, but that you will demonstrate the reality of your salvation by the things you do.
- If you are living by faith, then there should be good works.

**James 2:14–22 (ESV)** **14** What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? **17** ... faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. **18** But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your

*works, and I will show you my faith by my works....***21** *Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar?* **22** *You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works;*

- There are promises given to those who practice faith is completed by works.
  - (vs 10) *glory and honor and peace*
- There are promises given to those who remain unrighteous because they will not put their faith in Christ and its proven by lack of works.
  - (vs8) *wrath and fury* (vs9) *tribulation and distress*
- The Prodigal's experience of tribulation and distress was the kindness of God showing him a better way. (come back in son)
- The father showed the older brother kindness by being near and giving him all that he had. (come back in son)

### **3. It's God's kindness that ultimately leads us home.**

**Vs 4** *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?*

- "Note then the kindness and the severity of God: severity toward those who have fallen, but God's kindness to you, provided you continue in his kindness." Romans 11:22
- *Hesed* is not merely an emotion or feeling but involves action on behalf of someone who is in need. *Hesed* describes a sense of love and loyalty that inspires merciful and compassionate behavior toward another person.
- Hosea married a prostitute, had three kids together and she ran away from him and went back into prostitution.

**Hosea 2:19 (ESV) 19** *And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love [HESED] and in mercy.*

**Hosea 3:1 (ESV) 1** *And the LORD said to me, "Go again, love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, even as the LORD loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins."*

- Hosea showed *hesed* to Gomer; we too have prostituted ourselves out to other Gods, but his *Hesed* leads us to repentance.
- Other men attempted to buy Gomer to use her, but Hosea bought her to heal her, to love her, and to take her home.

- As we, like Gomer, constantly run away from Him and serve other gods, He shows us hesed by coming to get us, heal us, love us and ultimately take us home.
- The Lord is the truer husband who showed us hesed. We have works that justify our faith; God has works that demonstrate His Hesed.
- The message of the gospel—God’s act of forgiveness and salvation in Jesus—is rooted in hesed. Hesed describes the disposition of God’s heart not only toward His people but to all humanity.
- Kindness of God is Jesus rescuing us by His work
- Severity of God is leaving us to our own devices on the slave trade block.
  - The worst thing that could ever happen to you is to be left on this slave block
- There's no excuse and there's no escape. Someday we will stand before Him in His kindness or His severity.

#### QUESTIONS FOR GROUPS:

1. Do you ever feel like you judge others for the same things you do? If so, what should you do about it?
2. How does the kindness of God (HESED) lead us to change/repentance? Give some examples in your own life.
3. Will you repent from being judgmental, sitting as your own judge, and let God’s kindness lead you? (Remember, He has already judged you righteous through Christ).