

February 21, 2021 - David Baumgartner

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Preacher: David Baumgartner

[0:00] We welcome you to the media ministry of Bethel Community Church, knowing Jesus, making Jesus known. We are in a verse-by-verse study of Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome.

So if you please turn with me to chapter 2, we'll be looking at the first 16 verses. You realize that when Paul begins this letter, I would say it's very warm and welcoming.

Would you agree with that? Yeah, some very good thoughts there. He says, I thank God for all of you. All of you, he's plural, he's talking to the church. He says, I'm always praying for you.

I long to see you so that we may encourage one another. What great thoughts those are. And then we saw that Paul gives a stunning description of the moral depravity of the pagan world.

What a description it was. Not only that, we saw just how displeased God is with all of that. And as this letter was being read, no doubt many of the listeners there were nodding their heads in approval.

[1:16] Go get them, Paul. Tell it like it is. But then beginning in chapter 2, verse 1, something happens. Paul turns the spotlight on them.

I'm talking about the believers in Rome. If you look in the back of your handout there, look with me. Verse 1 of chapter 2. He says, Now, consider this.

Paul has never visited this church, as far as we know. He only knows a handful of people there. How is Paul able to say these things without damaging his relationship with this church?

Well, you may be surprised to learn that in this section, Paul wasn't speaking to them directly. Paul is a master communicator.

And he's using a literary technique called a diatribe. You might want to look that up. It's very interesting. A diatribe is where he's actually speaking to an imaginary person.

[2:38] This person has a name. He's called man. And he says to him, oh, man. He says that. Now, how do we know this?

Well, all of the U's in this section, I'm talking about from verses 1 to 5, are singular. And so, it's this imaginary person who's receiving these rebukes.

Now, we might want to ask, well, why is Paul doing this? Well, it's a polite, you could say it's an indirect way of getting all of those listening to ask themselves, is Paul speaking to me?

Yeah, I think he might be. Yeah, I think he is. He's speaking to me. In reality, Paul is speaking to any and all to whom this applies.

And all of those listening just might want to ask themselves this question. Am I guilty of judging others? Or even more so, am I guilty?

[3:51] Do I judge others for things that I myself do? Here's the key, friends. The believers in Rome, what they really need to do, what they really need to be concerned about is how will God judge them?

God will judge all people. You can take that to the bank. And as Paul takes them along this Roman road, there's going to be some nuggets of gold here for us as well.

Paul wants to teach them about God's judgment. And a good place to start is with this simple truth about God's judgment. Boy, this morning, how it fits in with already what's been shared when Teddy said he reminded us God's angry every day.

Yeah, out of Psalms. God will judge us in four ways. He judges rightly. He judges according to our deeds.

He judges. His judgment is impartial. And fourthly, his judgment will be through Jesus Christ. Before we go into the word here, let's go ahead and look to the Lord.

[5:02] Heavenly Father, we are so grateful that we can come here today and to study your word. And to be reminded, Lord, of who you are, how you are, and what you have done for us.

Lord, we thank you for being able to do this. May we leave here as a people who are changed because we've been reminded of these truths. Truths about you.

Truths that we can walk in. We thank you for this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. If you want to follow with me on your handout, if you didn't have your Bibles, the text is on the back page.

But if you would look with me, this first principle is this. God judges rightly. I'm talking here truthfully he judges. He says in verse 2, we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things.

Now, of course, Paul's talking about what those things mentioned back in chapter 1, verses 18 to 32. You might want to ask, who's the we? We know that judgment of God rightly falls.

[6:14] Well, by that, Paul is referring to any thinking person. Paul does this frequently. He does it 11 times in his letters. Five times here in Romans.

He says, we know. We know. We know this. In fact, if you'll notice back in chapter 1, verse 32, even the evildoers know that those who practice such things are worthy of death.

In other words, any reasonable thinking person knows that justice is a good thing. Amen. I mean, let me ask you, how do you feel when you hear about a criminal who gets off because of a technicality?

Or maybe when you are worse, a crooked judge or a politician, when you learn they take a bribe. Here's a verse out of Proverbs. Righteousness exalts a nation.

But sin is a disgrace to any people. Boy, is that a true thing. The reason we long for righteousness and justice is because God is righteous and justice.

[7:25] And he made us in his image. In Psalm 33, it says that the word of the Lord is upright. And all his work is done in faithfulness. He loves righteousness and justice.

The earth is full of the loving kindness of the Lord. The main point here, friends, is God's judgments are based on truth.

He rightly judges. They're not arbitrary. His judgment is not capricious. His judgments are fair. They're determined on the basis of fact, not fiction.

Now, if you look in your text here, verse 3, it seems that the man is somehow, thinks that he'll somehow escape God's judgment.

And so Paul asks these rhetorical questions. Verse 3, do you suppose this, oh man, when you pass judgment upon those who practice such things and do them yourself, that you will escape God's judgment?

[8:25] I want to ask you, why would anybody think they'll escape God's judgment? I think there's several reasons here. Look with me, verse 4.

Do you think lightly of the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience? In other words, does someone look down upon?

Does anyone fail to appreciate God's kindness? Yeah, the man enjoys all the good things that God provides.

Last week, Jeffrey spoke about common grace. That's something like air and water. Things that God gives all people, regardless of who they are, where they live.

But to the man, these things are nothing special. No, they're taken for granted. So he thinks he'll escape for that reason. Secondly, he misinterprets when God delays his judgment.

[9:27] And this is emphasized here by those words we see, taking lightly God's forbearance and patience. God is holding back his judgment.

That's true. I remember when I was a very young lad, six or seven. I know I was under 18 at the time. We used to visit my mother's family, and she lived on a farm out in Arnold.

And at this time, I misbehaved really badly. I think I threw rocks at an antique car and something. You know, I loved rocks when I was that age. And so I got a scolding later, you know, pretty much immediately.

And then, of course, it's a long drive back home to the city. So we get home. And actually, so much time had passed by, I thought I was off the hook.

But then, of course, you know, I thought Dad forgot. And then, of course, when we got home, I learned that I was mistaken. So I misinterpreted the delay in judgment.

[10:37] You consider that ever since the flood, God has been delaying his judgment on mankind. And he continues to do so for now.

And I think in many ways, that's good news, isn't it? Isn't that a blessing for you and I and for humanity? Out of God's kindness, his forbearance, his patience, God is holding back his judgment. Why? To give people more time to repent. He says that, verse 4, not knowing that the kindness of God leads to repentance.

See, this grace period right now, this extra time, it's for everyone to make things right with God. I'm reminded of what Peter said in his second epistle.

He said in chapter 3, The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for anyone to perish, but for all to come to repentance.

[11:46] And yet, I want to ask you this. How many times have you tried to share with someone about God's goodness, and someone has no interest at all?

None at all. Later, I don't need that. Well, here's what's happening, friends. Those who fail to make things right, they're piling up wrath.

They're piling up judgment. Look with me, verse 5. Because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart, you, oh man, the singular man, you're storing up wrath for yourself.

Notice here what the root of the problem is. It's stubbornness and hard-heartedness. These are the things that prevent people from seeing God's kindness.

And so, more and more guilt is being added every day. Wrath is being stored up as if in a huge reservoir.

[12:48] Every minute, every second of every day, that weight of sin just grows and grows. It's getting heavier and heavier. Down in Dayspring, you'll see a stone next to their chapel door.

The weight of sin reminding us, getting heavier and heavier. And it cannot be paid off except through one way. His name is Jesus.

It's the only way. You will hear oftentimes, when a child dies, people will commonly say, boy, what a tragedy that is.

And you know, it is. It is a tragedy. But you know what a bigger tragedy is? It's when you have an older man or an old woman who dies without Christ.

That's a tragedy. Because they've accumulated a lifetime full of debt. And when does this debt become due?

[13:50] Well, verse 5, he says, When God judges, he will judge rightly.

Here's a second principle. Verse 6, God will judge each person according to his works. Now, this general principle is taught throughout Scripture.

Here's just one verse, Matthew 16, 27. For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and then will recompense every man according to his deeds.

God will judge every man, every woman, and something will be rendered based on that judgment. What?

I think Paul has two groups of people in mind here. First, let's look at the believer. Verse 7, To those who by perseverance in doing good seek, that is strive for, that is aim at, glory and honor and immortality, the Lord will render eternal life.

[15:10] Now, some of you are saying right now, that sounds kind of like salvation by works. We ought to consider, what does eternal life mean here? In the New Testament, eternal life most often does refer to something that's freely given, upon faith.

It's a gift, not based on works. And here's the key. Whenever you see a scripture like that, in that case, notice that eternal life is something that is received immediately.

And that's indicated by the present tense of the verb in that text. But there are occasions, like here, where eternal life is earned.

In other words, it's awarded based on works. And in this case, it's referring to the believer's rewards. And the thing you'll know is that it's acquired in the future, as indicated by the future tense of the verb.

Notice verse six, he will render. Paul here is talking about the believer's treasure in heaven, glory, honor, immortality, which actually the word there means not subject to decay.

[16:33] These are blessings, friends, that we desire in the next life. Peter says this in his first epistle. He says that the proof of your faith being more precious than gold, which is perishable, even though tested by fire may be found again, future tense to result in praise, glory, and honor.

When at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we as believers notice here, we're encouraged to persevere, persevere, do good, stick to doing good, continue to do good works, things of worth, things of merit, things of significance.

You know why? Because we will be judged. We will be judged. And this takes place at the judgment seat of Christ.

If you look in your handout, Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, we all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or whether bad.

Well, that's one group. How about another group? What about the, those who do not believe? Well, he talks about them in verse eight. Look with me, but those who are selfish or selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.

[18:09] There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil. When does this judgment take place? It takes place verse five on the day of wrath.

This is also known as the great white throne judgment. Look with me on your handout there.

Revelation verse 20. I want you to notice this. Verse 11.

John is speaking here. I saw a great white throne and him who sat upon it from whose presence, earth and heaven fled away. And there was no place found for them.

So this takes place after the millennium. And notice verse 12. And I saw the dead, the great and the small standing before the throne.

Look here, the great and small. That includes all ranks of society. Doctors, lawyers, teachers, kings, politicians, dog catchers, trash men, beggars, church elders, and deacons who you will all nominate.

[19:17] People from all ages are included here. And he says in verse 12 going on and books were opened. And then he says, as if in a parentheses and another book was opened, which is the book of life.

We'll talk about that in a minute here. And the dead were judged from these things, which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead, which were in them, the dead, the death and we're in it.

And death and Hades gave up the dead, which were in them. And they were judged every one of them, according to their deeds. Every P every person, all people will be judged according to their works.

Believers will stand before the judgment seat of Christ, where we will be judged according to our works. And the purpose is to determine our eternal rewards.

But nonbelievers will stand before the great white throne and be judged according to their works. And the purpose is to determine the degree or the extent of their eternal punishment.

[20:29] Yeah. Yeah. Did you know that the Bible teaches that there will be varying degrees of eternal punishment in eternity?

There's a couple of verses that I could have given here, but here's one Luke 20. Look what Jesus says. This is Jesus's words.

These aren't mine. The main point here is that all people will be judged according to their works.

And then notice here, Paul adds at the end of verse nine of the Jew first and also the Greek.

This here brings up this third principle. God's judgment will be impartial. He says in verse 11, There's no partiality with God.

In verses 19 from 9 to 15, Paul is going to clear up any false notion that people may have about having special status before God.

[21:52] There is none. Here's a point in fact. In terms of the order of history, the Jews were exposed to the gospel before the Gentiles were.

But just as Christians and non-Christians will be judged by God, so too Jews and Gentiles and non-Jews, Gentiles, will be judged by God.

How do we know? He says, verse 11, There's no partiality with God. Again, Paul clarifies any misconceptions about anyone who thinks that they're exempt from judgment.

Maybe because of their heritage. Maybe because your parents were missionaries. Yeah, my parents, they were churchgoers.

So I think I'm okay. No, you're not okay. There's no partiality with God. He says in verse 12, He's talking about the Gentiles here.

[22:54] He's talking about the Gentiles here. Will also perish without the law. And all who have sinned under the law, he's talking about the Jews there, will be judged by the law. For not the years of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law will be justified.

Why does Paul compare the Jews to the Gentiles here? Well, I think it's possible that these comments may have been intended especially for the Jews.

And that's because them above all considered themselves exempt from judgment. You read one of the Gospels, you'll see that. They claimed Abraham as their father.

Yeah, we're okay. We're of the right heritage because we got Abraham. Another reason is that the Jews tended to look down on Gentiles because they didn't have the law of Moses.

Yet, we see here that there are some Gentiles who by nature do things that are actually in the law. He says this, verse 14, look with me.

[23:59] For when the Gentiles who do not have the law instinctively do the things of the law, these not having the law are a law to themselves. How is this possible?

Because God has equipped them with a sense of right and wrong. And that includes us. Verse 15, he says, they show the work of the law written on their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternatively accusing or defending them.

Now, this conscience here, that's the faculty that each one of us has that evaluates our thoughts and actions. And it either excuses or it accuses us.

And what we learn is that every culture ever in the world knows the difference between right and wrong. They have a conscience. You don't need a Bible to tell you that murder and stealing is wrong, do you?

No. Those who have never seen a Bible still know right from wrong. And they will be judged by the standard according to their own conscience.

[25:11] Every person will be judged according to his or her works. And here's the fourth principle. God will judge the secrets of all men through Christ Jesus.

Verse 16. This should come as no surprise that God will judge even the secrets of our hearts. No, he's God.

He can look right into our hearts. In Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, he says, Therefore, do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motive of men's hearts.

And then each man's praise will come to him from God. I want you to notice here, though, the main thing out of verse 16. Notice through whom judgment will come.

Look with me here. Judgment will come through Jesus Christ. In Paul's second letter to Timothy, he says, I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, speaking of Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom.

[26:31] God will judge the secrets of men's hearts through Jesus Christ. So there you have it. Four truths about God's judgment.

He'll judge rightly. He will judge according to our deeds. He will judge impartially. He judges through Jesus Christ. The musicians could make their way up here.

I tell you what. Who likes to talk about judgment? Nobody likes to talk about judgment.

Nobody likes to talk about God's wrath. You know, it's unpopular. If you don't believe me, bring up God's wrath and judgment to your neighbor.

Bring it up to a coworker. I'll tell you what, friends. The biggest deception today, I think it's Satan's most powerful lie, is to get people to believe that they are not accountable to God.

[27:39] Do you agree with me? Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. It's like a virus throughout the world. I'm not accountable to God.

And you can give 10,000 reasons why. But not to the believer. Not to any of us. And that's because the believer understands to whom Paul is speaking.

You see, the believer says, I'm the man. I'm that guy to whom Paul is speaking.

And the believer also knows that judgment has been pronounced. I am guilty. Guilty as charged.

But the believer also knows that the wrath that he deserves or she deserves has already been poured out.

And, friends, the best news of all, it was poured out on Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. That book of life that we read about earlier in Revelation 20, that's actually called the Lamb's book of life.

[28:57] And it's called that for a reason. It's the Lamb's book of life. Jesus is the Lamb of God who took upon himself the wrath of God so that we wouldn't have to.

So, really, the real question is where does each person stand before or with Jesus Christ? Has his sacrifice been received and applied to you?

It's simply received by faith. We believe. We believe. That's it. And if so, you will undergo a judgment.

But that judgment is to determine your eternal treasure. But for those who will not believe, it will be a miserable state, separated from everything good for all eternity.

You may hear somebody say this phrase. Well, all roads lead to God, right? What's the difference?

All roads lead to God. Muhammad, Buddha, Jesus.

[30:03] We can throw him in there. Well, you might want to say, okay. But ask this. Here's another kind of, here's a question here. If all roads lead to God, what kind of person will he be when you get there?

Will he be a judge or will he be your friend? Will Jesus be there as your advocate? The verse in Hebrews 9, I'll end with this.

In so much that it is appointed for men to die once, after this comes the judgment. That's the bad news. But for the believer, it's good news for us.

That Jesus Christ paid it all. How did he do it? By the blood of Jesus. Amen. Please stand with me as we sing this song. Whereas for the witnesses.

How is this? Since the two witnesses. This was not the Sahajaw magic. By the way, I have the requested man, I believe. By the way because I believe he stays the thing. However, the answer will be. What kind of person will suit most broadly? Look at him. ■■■é Lisa Kopf sick tonight!

[31:15] crops have usualsigh of labouring. Causing points. uition on down. As a matter that it is both family and scensonnet and as a man. What kind of person will ban his son of sustenance. Today you know! When did you lead the patient, amaze with■?

Let him admit to myself. Let him know! Let him know! He was out also, he was just there. How did you believe? He can say that you know!