

Romans 2:1-6 The Biblical Principles of a Judgmental Attitude

Romans chapter 2. I will read the literal translation to you beginning at verse 1. Verses 1-6. The word [translated] *because* is literally, **On account of which** - meaning based on what he has shared in chapter 1 - **you are without excuse, O man, everyone who is judging: for in what you are judging the other, you are condemning yourself; for the one who is judging is practicing the same things.** (verse 2) **And we know that the judgment of God is according to truth upon the ones practicing such things.** (verse 3) **Now consider this** - the word *consider* means *to calculate*. **Now consider this, O man, who is judging the ones who are practicing such things, and who is doing them, that will you yourself escape the judgment of God?** (verse 4) **Or are you despising the wealth of His goodness, and His withholding** - His *forbearance* means *to withhold judgment* - **and His longsuffering; while being ignorant that it is the goodness of God that is leading you, notice, into repentance?** (verse 5) **And according to your hardness and your unrepentant heart, you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.** (verse 6) **who will pay back to each one according to his works.**

We have spent the last few weeks in chapter 1 as we began our study on The Doctrine of Condemnation. Not a topic that we are too pleased about hearing about but we need to understand it. In Romans chapter 1 verse 18 he began to teach about condemnation for the Gentiles. The word *condemnation* in itself is a judicial term, a legal term and it means *a sentence against somebody*. We have to understand what the sentence is against us and why. But he says, **The wrath of God is right now being revealed from heaven upon all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who are suppressing the truth while living in unrighteousness.** That right now God's judgment is being expressed when people reject and resist the response of His Spirit to reveal as Paul said in chapter 1, the invisible attributes of God through creation.

And remember, chapter 1 is specifically for the Gentiles. We were not born under the law. We were not raised under the law. Therefore we do not know what God's standard of holiness is. We do not understand completely what it means to be a sinner. So what God does is He ministers to our conscience through creation. So that, chapter 1 he says, so that all Gentiles when they come before Christ or come before God of the judgment throne they will be without excuse. Literally, *without defense*. There is no defense, because God's Spirit will illuminate every person coming into the world.

In John chapter 1 that is what he said. That Jesus Christ is the light who comes into the world and the light illuminates every person coming into the world. It might be something that is conscious, or subconscious, or something we are not even aware of, when God's Spirit reveals himself through creation to our spirit. We might not be able to process it but our spirit has a response. We are either drawn to the light or away from the light. And then Paul says that once a person rejects the truth of Christ, they exchange the truth for the lie, and they make up their own version of God. "Here is who I believe God is. I do not believe God is that way, I believe He is this way because that is the way I am."

Now, if you can understand this principle, it is a tremendous principle for us to understand as people, human beings. The last thing that I want to face is myself. Period. I will confront you about your sins and weaknesses but I will not confront myself. I will excuse myself. I will change who God is and make a God of my imagination and what I think; rather than have to face the truth that God is true and I am the sinner. That is part of my sin nature. And this principle that runs from chapter 1 all the way through chapter 2, it goes from being a Gentile to being a religious Jewish person.

So chapter 1 was dealing with the Gentile. That we are without excuse because of God's testimony to our conscience through creation. Period. That is not all there is to it, but that is the beginning.

But chapter 2 now speaks to the religious Jew, who basically looks at the Gentile and judges them that they are not living according to the law. That we are pagans. Jewish people do not consider themselves to be pagans. A pagan can be a religious person but they are still pagans because they are not Jewish and they are not involved in Judaism. Our religion is called *pagan religion* because it is not Judaism. It was not invented by God, so to speak.

But the same principle is true. I do not want to face the truth about God so I change Him. I change who He is but I change it in my own mind, and I worship and I believe in a God that I have made up from myself. „And my God just happens to be like me. Boy, what a coincidence. I mean you guys are all mooks because you guys are not even close to who God is. Amazing how God is mostly like me more than anybody else. How He does things the way I agree with and, you know, it is just amazing about that likeness. That same principle is true for the religious Jewish person.

Listen to this verse 1. **On account of which**, the word *because* is literally translated *on account of which* or *based on* this presentation of chapter 1, **you are without excuse**. The same word he used in chapter 1 that the Gentiles would be without excuse. There is no defense. A Gentile can say, "I have never been to church. I have never heard the gospel. I have never heard this." But God is going to say, "There was a point in time when My Spirit illuminated your spirit about the truth of the Creator through creation and you resisted and walked away and did not want anything to do with it."

But he says you, the religious Hebrew, **You also are without excuse, O man, who is judging**. A religious person is a person who judges, because religion has to do with laws and rules and regulations. So if I keep rules and regulations I am very sensitive to those people who are not keeping the laws and rules and regulations. But if I were Hebrew and Jewish and I knew the law, I would look at the pagan Gentile and I would be calculating and counting up how many times their pagan lifestyle violates the law of God, which I am keeping.

You are without excuse, O man, everyone who is judging. Here is the reason why. I would be shocked as a Jewish person if you were to tell me that right off the bat, "You are without excuse." Why? Well, he gives the reason. **For in what you are judging the other person, you are condemning yourself**. Oh, what a minute, when I judge someone else I am condemning myself. **For the one who is judging is practicing the same things**.

(verse 2) **And we know that the judgment of God is according to truth upon the ones who are practicing such things.** There is a great principle that we can learn from this. This carried over from chapter 1 and here is the basic principle. When I judge other people, I judge them according to my sin that they are committing. My sin, whether I am practicing it in the human, or in my heart, or in my mind, I am hard on people and I judge people who are committing my sins because I am not that hard on myself. It is very easy to preach about and against somebody else.

Now there are some sins that people commit that I do not have a problem with. And they can come to me and get grace and mercy and understanding and prayer and reconciliation. But then there are other people who commit my sins, I want to hit you with a 2 x 4 because you are a bad person. Evil. But that is only because you are committing my sins and religion judges other people according to the sins that we are practicing. And that is a shock to the Jewish person. What are you talking about? I do not commit those sins. There is sin number 1.

And Jesus when He came, He gave the proper interpretation of the law. Because remember, and will get this later on in the in the book of Romans, that the law was given to give human beings the knowledge of sin. We call them *The Ten Commandments*. The Jewish people call them *The Ten Words*. But those ten commandments represent the holiness of God. James in James chapter 2 says that if you violate one law of God you are guilty of the whole thing. Because you are not violating a list of rules you are violating a person. Because those commandments represent His holiness, you are violating His holiness.

Now the word sinner, **ἁμαρτία** (hamartia), you have probably heard the definition of it, it means *to miss the mark*. It is an archery term. When you shoot an arrow and miss the target or miss the bullseye. That is kind of a loose way of looking at it. But if you understand that the target that we are aiming for is God himself, if anybody is not as holy as God himself we have fallen short. That is like, "That's not fair!" I compare myself with other people and I figure in comparison I have a chance to get into heaven because you guys are rotten. So in comparison, you know, I mean I am not that bad of a person. Well, have you sinned?

You see I think sin is like doing bad things. In reality the word *sin* means I have fallen short of being God himself, in His holiness. Wow. In other words, I only have one that God compares me with and that is with Himself. Have you fallen short? Well, of course! You compare me to the holiness of God, of course I have. Now what are you going to do about it? Hope and pray that when I get there He will have mercy.

But you have to understand that we face a justice system, a judicial court room. Where the penalty must be paid for our sins - that we have fallen short. Some might think that they are not falling as short as others, but it is all the same to God.

If Evel Knievel is going to build a ramp and jump his motorcycle over the Grand Canyon. If he were to jump and miss the other side by four feet. His son follows behind him but his son's motorcycle dies on the ramp and as soon as he gets up in the air he goes straight down, does not even make it close to the other side. Both experience the same consequences. No matter how far

short you have missed it, you miss it. It is not a matter of being how good or how bad. God has gone out of his way to give us the knowledge of sin and sin is falling short of His holiness.

And when Jesus came He said, "Well, you have heard that it has been said by them of old time *thou shall not kill*," but an outstanding religious Jew can say, "I have never killed anybody." But Jesus said, "No, that is just not a social law. That is a law for your heart." Have you ever gotten angry at someone where you wanted to kill them? Or do them in? Do them harm? Jesus said it applies to your heart not to whether you have committed the crime or not. And He continued to talk about all of the laws. And He said not only is it for social, but it is also for your heart. And if you apply the law to your heart, you find out that you have fallen short of God's holiness and perfection. Well, that is not fair.

See, here is where the Jews missed it. They thought that if I perform the law socially and religiously, that is what religion is for, and it is. But they did not realize that God gave the law, first of all, so that the Hebrew or Jewish person could be convicted of their sin. And they can go out with the gospel to the Gentiles and say, "Let us show you how you are a sinner, like us." But they took it as a self-righteous standard: "Well, if we keep the law..."

In fact, in Philippians chapter 2 Paul says that he kept the law perfectly. He was blameless. Well, how do you do that? Well, to a Jew you see, if you broke the law you bring an animal sacrifice and that sin is done away with. So he says, you know, "I am blameless. Not only did I break the law but I gave the sacrifice required by the law, therefore I am blameless. Cannot do anything more than that." That is a religious exercise. Of course, the animal sacrifices pointed to Christ. And His law applies to our spirit, which is corrupt, ruined by sin. So religiously, in order to excuse myself I do not do it on purpose, but subconsciously in order for me to excuse myself I have to either blame it on God or I have to start picking out people who are committing my sins, because I will not do that to myself. I think more highly of myself than that. That is my pride.

But come to find out that the same principle is there, **the one who is judging is practicing the same things.** *Practicing the same things.* When I see your weakness and I see your sin, if it is not mine, I will have mercy on you. But if you are committing my sins, then you need the firing squad. But I do not realize that I am judging you according to my sin.

Interesting, we had a discussion one time with a woman. She was an older woman but her husband ran away with another woman quite a few years prior to the time that we were talking with her. And it was interesting that you could sit in a restaurant with her and she could pick out people in the restaurant and say, "Oh, they got something going on over there. Yeah, you can tell." You can? Because they are both eating oatmeal, or what? How do you know that? Oh, she can just tell. Whatever happened to her, whatever wrong hurt her, she then could see that in everybody. "Oh, he is one of those." He is? You want to go up to the table and say, "Are you one of those? Excuse me." Everything that we are and everything that we do we put off on to other people, when we see them doing who we are. Because we are not wrong.

But verse 2 tells us that the judgment of God is according to the truth. Basically I am condemning myself like Paul says. When I stand before God and say, "God, I was pretty good."

Well, I do not know, you went around judging other people according to your sins. I can tell what my sins are just by how I judge other people. And if I judge them, then I have condemned myself. And God is going to judge according to the truth for everybody.

So verse 3 he says, **Well calculate this, O man, who is judging the ones who are practicing such things, and you are doing them yourself, that will you yourself escape the judgment of God?** Well, I do not have to worry about that. I believe in Jesus. I do not have to worry about judgment. There is a judgment for believers. It is not about heaven or hell but everyone will stand before the judgment seat of Christ - those of His people as to how we represented Christ and the gospel of grace.

Verse 4, **Or are you despising the wealth of His goodness, and His withholding, and His longsuffering, while being ignorant that it is the goodness of God that is leading people into repentance?** The word *goodness* means *useful*. So in chapter 1 when God brought judgment upon the Gentiles because they rejected the testimony of God's Spirit and He gave them over to corruption as part of His judgment, that is God doing them a favor. We understand the concept that if we raise our children and we allow them the privilege of experiencing the consequences for their wrongdoing that we are preparing them for life. Here is what God says, if they say, "I do not care what God says." Oooh. You reap what you sow. You can think whatever you want, but God is still right and He judges according to the truth.

When God gives us over to judgment in this earthly life He is doing us a favor. I would rather find out about it here than when I face Him at the throne. And I would have said, "Well, you know, if You had just let me know through consequences for my sin that I was doing was wrong and I was sinning I would have appreciated it; rather than get here and find out I am lost for eternity." Even the judgment of God is useful. We are experiencing the consequences for our sin. And **His goodness is leading us into repentance**. So he is ministering to the religious Jew, or the religious person in general.

But he says in verse 5, **But it according to your hardness and your unrepentant heart that you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and the revelation of a righteous judgment of God.** You are hardening your heart. You are only harming yourself. The Jewish person - who we could say was probably the most religious person on the earth at the time of Moses, and even the time of Christ, yet their hearts were hardened and they rejected the Messiah. They rejected the Savior. They have rejected the goodness of God verse 6, **Who will pay back**, that is the word for *pay check*, **to each one according to his works**. It will be according to the truth and it will be according to our response to the truth of Christ.

The Jewish people are a people of works. In John chapter 6 they came to Jesus and said, "What must we do to work the works of God?" Jesus said, "Believe on Him whom He has sent." What? Believe? What are we supposed to do? Believe. They are looking for works. God is going to give a pay check to each one according to their works. Did you believe? Believe encompasses - just the word itself encompasses not only acknowledging that God is true and every man is a liar, God's word is true and every word of man is a liar, but it also includes surrender. And everyone will be judged as to how they responded; whether they are religious or

not religious, whether they are pagans or a person participating in a religious system that even God invented.

As we continue in this chapter we will find that Paul is going to say that in summary statement that God reaches the Gentile in his conscience through creation and He reaches the Jewish person's conscience through the law. But God does not reach the conscience of the Gentile person through the conscience of the Jewish person. It does not match. Even the Hebrews do not understand the law, they think it is something that you socially physically do, which helps. It is better than the person says, "You know, I have hated my neighbor all these years, and I have kept from killing them because I do not want to commit murder. But God's says I have already done it in my heart, so I will just go over and kill him. I have done it anyway, right?" Well, spiritually that is what your heart is like, but then you will experience the social consequences actually carrying it out. That is what those penalties are for, the laws are for.

So God reaches people's consciences in different ways. But the Hebrew or Jewish person has it wrong. To go around judging people, "They are violating God's law, which I am keeping perfectly." Well, first of all, no you are not. And second of all, you are only judging other people who are doing your sin, and therefore you are bringing condemnation upon yourself. It is like a built in system that God has in our conscience. When our conscience bothers us instead of being convicted and humbling us and coming to Christ, we will take it out on other people. Judge them. Be hard on them. It is kind of funny if you stop and think about it. It is like coming up to somebody and saying, "You are a rotten person because you are just like me. Oh, did I say that? You are doing all of my sins. You deserve to die. That means I do too."

Let's close with prayer.