

Romans 2:7-16 The Principles of Judgment by God

Chapter 2 verses 1 through 16. Beginning at verse 1, Paul says,

1) On account of which...

That is the literal translation. That is, *based upon the previous information.*

...you are without defense, O man, everyone who is judging: for in what you judge another, you actually condemn yourself; for you who are judging are practicing the same things.

2) But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth...

The things that we are going to be studying today are The Principles of Judgment. And every one of the principles of judgment is a prepositional phrase beginning with the preposition **κατά** (kata). Those of you in the Greek class you will recognize that word. They are all prepositional phrases with the preposition **κατά** (kata), which means *according to* and gives us the basis of his judgments. There are five of them in verses 1 through 16.

2) We know that the judgment of God is according to truth (there is one) upon those which practice such things.

3) And do you think (or do you consider this), O man, who is judging the ones which practice such things, and you are doing the same, that shall you escape the judgment of God?

Second question:

4) Or do you despise the wealth of His goodness and forbearance (that is, *withholding*) and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leads you into repentance?

Second principle, verse 5.

5) But according to your hardness and impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in *the* day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

6) who will render (or *pay back*) to each one (here is your third principle) according to his deeds or works:

7) To the ones who according to endurance...

That is the literal translation, that is our fourth principle.

...according to the patient endurance in doing well (or *in doing the good*) these are seeking for glory and honor and incorruptibility, to them they are given eternal life:

8) but to those that are self-ambitious, and not obeying the truth, but obeying unrighteousness, to them fury and wrath,

9) affliction and anguish, upon every soul of man who is doing the evil, of *the* Jew first, and also of *the* Gentile.

- 10) **But glory, honor, and peace, to every man (or every person) who is working the good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.**
- 11) **For there is no respect of persons with God.**
- 12) **For as many as sinned without the law will also be destroyed without the law: and as many as sinned in the law...**
That is, in the sphere of participating with the law.
...will be judged through the law;
- 13) **For not the hearers of the law are righteous (or justified) before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified.**
- 14) **For when the Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature the things of the law, these, having not law, they are a law unto themselves:**
- 15) **who are demonstrating the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts among one another accusing or also excusing;**
- 16) **in the day when God judges the secrets of men (here is your fifth principle) through Jesus Christ according to my gospel.**

All five principles have the prepositional phrase **κατά** (kata), *according to*. It is basis of God's judgment. Last week we saw in verse 1, The Principle of the Judgment by Man, and this is a principle we all must learn. When we judge, when we play the role of the judge, the Scriptures tell us that we judge everybody according to our sins. Whatever my weaknesses are, and whatever sins I commit, and have committed, when I see other people doing them, I judge them. And by doing so I bring condemnation against myself because the last thing that I want to do is evaluate and own up to my own sin. It is just by the sin nature. It comes naturally to judge others for our weaknesses and for our sins. **The one who is judging is practicing the same things** and therefore we bring condemnation upon ourselves. When we see people sin or have weakness that are not our sins and are not our weaknesses we have a tendency to have mercy on them. And we are hard on the people that commit our sins.

But then secondly for today in verses 2 through 16, The Principles of the Judgment by God. These are the principles by which He is going to be judging.

Verse 2, **We know that the judgment of God is according to truth.** First principle is God's judgment but will be with correct information. It will be based on facts. And as we progress through here the emphasis is going to be whether a person is Jewish or Gentile it does not make any difference, it will be according to the truth.

Verse 11 is our basic principle by which God functions and that is, with Him there is no respect of persons. He does not say, "Oh you are a Hebrew, you are Jewish so I judge you differently than I do a Gentile. You are My chosen people therefore I will let you into heaven. But a Gentile though he commits the same sins that you have, he will have to be punished." God will judge according to the truth. The facts. Correct information. It will not require me to give an explanation. It will not be according to how I deceive myself and think I am going to be okay. It will be according to the facts and according to the truth. Paul says this judging

according to truth will be upon those who are practicing such things. Their lifestyle is to practice sin.

And then the application. He says, **Now consider this.** And the word *consider* is an accounting term. **Calculate this in your thinking, O man, who is judging the ones who are practicing such things, and doing the things themselves. Consider this, will you escape the judgment of God?** In the Greek text the word *you* is emphasized. You. The one that is doing the judging. In your calculations and in your considerations do you think that you are going to escape the judgment of God?

Second question, verse 4, **Or do you despise the wealth of His goodness and His forbearance and His long-suffering?** Again the word *wealth* goes with all three of those things. **The wealth of His goodness,** and we will see that word in a moment. The word *goodness* means *useful*. It is a word that is ascribed to God because He uses everything for His purposes. And when He does it is called *His goodness*. **The wealth of His goodness and His forbearance,** that is, *holding back,* and **His long-suffering,** a form of patience, *slow with judgment*. He says, **Are you despising all of this while being ignorant that it is the goodness of God that is leading you into repentance?** And again the word *goodness* is the word *useful*. All of those lifestyles that we studied in chapter 1, the lifestyles of the Gentiles. When God allows His judgment to now come upon those who practice such lifestyles of sin God is doing them a favor. It is useful to bring them to repentance here and now before it is too late. **It is the goodness of God that is leading you into repentance.** He leads us there, leads us right into repentance if we respond.

But verse 5 gives us our second principle, and it is a lot different than some of the English texts. **But according to your hardness and impenitent heart.** *According to,* there is our preposition **κατά** (*kata*). **According to your hardness and impenitent heart.** The word *hardness* has to do with *callousness*.

It is interesting how the heart of man, the very center of his thinking and being, is described as having the possibility of becoming callous. If I go out with a shovel and I have not worked with hand tools in a long time, your hands are sensitive and tender and you get blisters on your hands. But if you keep working at it little by little, little by little, you build up calluses, which makes your hands not as sensitive as they would be. And that is this word. It is just telling us that people's hearts, different parts of Scripture tell us that a person's conscience is seared with a hot iron. Here it says, *according to your hardness,* your callousness. You have been hearing it over and over again, and the more you say no, and the more you reject, you are building up insensitivity to the truth of the gospel.

But according to your hardness and your impenitent heart (a heart that refuses to repent) **you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.** In other words, you might think things are okay now but you are treasuring up.

When we studied the book of Revelation we saw that when the winepress is full that He will come and stamp out the grapes. People think things are okay now but they are just building

up, treasuring up, wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteousness of God. When Jesus comes or when they face Him first time, they will have to answer.

So the first principle we saw was correct information. God is going to judge according to the facts, nothing else. Secondly, He is going to judge those who have a hardness about them and an impenitent heart. Thirdly, in verse 6 we talked about the righteousness of God.

Verse 6 says, **Who will repay (or render) to every man according to his works.** There is that preposition again. It will be based on his works. Not human works. If you understand this Greek word to express activity it makes more sense. Everyone will be judged on the basis of the activity of their life. Was it Christ in you? Did you surrender your life to Christ and the activity of your life was Christ? Or did you reject Him and your activity was that of yourself and of the world? So the conduct. We have had the correct information. Secondly, the condition of the heart. And thirdly, the conduct of one's life is the fruit of whether a person is saved and belongs to Christ or not.

Then verse 7 and we have our fourth principle. **And according to their endurance of a good work,** literal translation. **And according to their endurance of a good work,** it is singular. The word *work* is *singular*. And the word *good* is **ἀγαθός** (agathos), meaning *spiritual good*. The word *endurance* is **ὑπομένω** (hupomenō), *remaining under*. So according to their consistency and remaining under the good work. That is the good work of Christ, singular, on the cross - they are remaining under.

They are seeking glory and honor and incorruptibility, to them they will receive eternal life. God is rendering to every person according to their works. The fourth principle is consistency. Jesus said in Matthew chapter 24 that the one who endures to the end will be saved. That does not mean that that is a requirement. That is a characteristic of people in the Bible who are saved. They endure to the end because they have the Holy Spirit and they remain under the good work of Christ **seeking the glory and the honor and incorruptibility to those they will receive eternal life.**

The application in verses 8 to 11. **But to the ones who are out of self-ambition** (as a motive), **and who are disobeying the truth, while obeying unrighteousness, to these people they will receive fury and anger, verse 9, affliction and anguish, upon every soul of man who is working out the evil.** Again *working out* is a participle showing lifestyle. And *the evil*, not **πονηρός** (ponēros) but **κακός** (kakos) with a definite article. It shows that they are working out the harm to others, badness as it is literally translated. But notice what he puts in at the end here: **to every man who is working out the evil, both of the Jew first, and of the Greek.** He is presenting the facts to us. One fact that has already been established for us, is that God's promises and God's blessings are for the Jew first and then to the Gentile. God's punishment is also in the same order, to the Jew first then to the Gentile.

Verse 10, **But glory and honor and peace to every one working the good.** The good is **ἀγαθός** (agathos). It has God's Spirit working out God's good on a continuous lifestyle basis. To these people glory and honor and peace will be given to them. But then he says at the end of

verse 10, **both to the Jew first, and to the Gentile.** Same order for the promises and same order for the punishment: Jew first, Gentile second.

And the reason why he says this is in verse 11, **For there is no respect of persons with God.** The word *respect of persons* in the Greek means to *recognize someone by the face*. In other words, with God it is not a matter of Him treating everybody equal because He does not see anybody that He recognizes, and once He see somebody that recognizes He is going to favor them. Nope. It is going to be according to the truth, the facts. It is going to be according to the conduct of a person's life. It is going to be according to the condition of a person's heart. And both to the Jew and to the Gentile both, for there is no respect of persons with God. It does not matter if a person is Jewish or Gentile, everyone is going to be judged the same. No favoritism. No privileges at the judgment.

Verses 12 to 15, the explanation as to why he says - and the basis for which he says that all will be judged equally. (verse 12) **For as many as sinned without law** (that would be the Gentile) **also will be destroyed without the law: and as many as sinned in the law** (in the sphere of participating with the law) **will be judged through the law.** We saw at the end of chapter 1 that the Gentiles will have been enlightened in their conscience concerning creation. That God exists. That there is a God. And for Gentiles they are going to have the opportunity to respond spiritually in their spirit to the light and to that illumination or they are going to reject it. That person will not be judged by the law. They have not been raised under the law. They will be judged by the illumination given to them. Once they respond in one way or another they have established a law in themselves, as the text is going to tell us. So those who are without the law, sinned outside of the law, they are going to be destroyed outside of the law. And those who sin while being involved with the law, will be judged through the law.

Verses 13 and 14 very, very interesting and very important. **For not the hearers of the law are justified before God, but the doers of the law will be justified.** Now the word *justified* in English and the word *righteousness* both come from the same word. Righteousness and justified. *Justified* is the legal term for being lined up with something, being right with someone or something, which is what *righteousness* means, to be right. So what he is saying here is that a person's righteousness does not come in hearing the law. Just going and listening does not do anybody any good. But it is the doers.

If that sounds familiar to you it is because it comes from James. Actually James taught on the same thing. James chapter 1. I want to read that to you because it is interesting, exactly, you have probably heard it quoted, you might have even quoted it yourself. In James chapter 1 verses 22 to 25 James says, **But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.** In other words, he pictured Jews going into the synagogue and listening to the reading of the law and they go home and they say, "Well, we went to church. I listened." He says, "Be doers of the law and not hearers only."

(Verse 23) **For if anyone is a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: (verse 24) for he beholds himself, and he goes his way, and immediately forgets what manner of man he was.** See, when we come face-to-face with God's word it is like God holding a mirror up in front of us. He is showing us who we are and

what we are like. The sinner that he is talking about is me. But a person who is just a hearer and not a doer - you can see now that doer does not mean *humanly go do it*, it has do the application. "I went to church today. God convicted me of my sin. But as soon as I left I just suppressed it. I put it out of my mind."

He beholds himself, verse 24, goes his way, and immediately forgets what manner of man he was. (verse 25) But whoso looks into the perfect law of liberty, and continues in it, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deeds, or in his doing. So the person who not only hears but applies the word of God, "This is me. God is showing me my need for Him." To that person he will be blessed in what he does, because it will bring us to our knees before Him. He is constantly involved in the process even after were saved of constantly showing us our need to not be self-sufficient but to depend totally upon Him and follow Him.

So Paul says in Romans chapter 2 verse 13, **For not the hearers of the Law are justified before God but the doers of the Law will be justified.** He goes on to say, verse 14, **For whenever the Gentiles, that is the ones not having the law, should do by nature the things of the law, these having not law, they are a law unto themselves.** Once a person responds to that illumination, that enlightenment about God through creation, they become a law in themselves as he is going to tell us in verse 15, because it comes from the conscience.

So let me explain the word for *conscience* from a Greek perspective. The word *conscience* from Greek literally means *to have knowledge with*. That is what it means: to have knowledge with. Our conscience is an information gatherer. It is part of our intelligence, it is part of our understanding, except that the conscience is that little black box that is going to record everything according to truth. And it is all going to be based on knowledge. I think that is interesting because I grew up thinking that your conscience is just placed there by God and every time you do something wrong an alarm goes off, you know. And when you do something right it does not go off and you spend your whole life trying to unwire this thing because the alarm keeps going off all the time. But in reality a person's conscience will be developed by what they learn.

That is why when we come across people who are who have seemingly no conscience whatsoever - they are incorrigible, we call them. When we were in LA I had to go to court one time because there was a boy an adopted boy with a foster family who had no conscience and was causing all kinds of trouble. Tried to burn down a school. Tried to burn down the neighborhood. That is when the parents said, "Enough." He was incorrigible. The courts took him back. Of course put him in a situation where he is locked up and helped. But you see, his conscience was programmed with the wrong stuff. A person's conscience can, as the Scripture tells us, either accuse you or excuse you depending on what kind of information you have fed the conscience. So it is incorrect to say that a person is born with a conscience that automatically has an alarm to it that goes off if you are doing something wrong in the sight of God. It will only be wrong according to how you were taught what is wrong, which is why we need as parents - our responsibility is to raise our kids under and with understanding of the word of God. So that as they get older and they get in their rebellious years they have an alarm going off inside of

them and they do not like it. Trying to get rid of it. Sorry, the black box has been programmed. They might not submit to it at first but they have to live with it. That is our job.

It says in verse 15, **These ones who are demonstrating the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing with them** (that is, with their hearts) **and their thoughts** (that would be the reasoning processes amongst them) **either accusing or defending them.** In fact in the Greek text there is a little conjunction there that says, "Accusing or also defending," which means that it can do both. If people learn to manipulate and excuse themselves for everything they do wrong, that is coming from their conscience. Not everyone's conscience adheres to the truth of God. It is that information gathering part of a person's life, not the one that you feed when you go to school and college but the one that responds to spiritual illumination and enlightenment, wherever that might come from. And all of this, it is written in their hearts testifying with their conscience and even their thoughts coming out from all of this, it is either accusing them or defending them.

And that is the word we started off with in verse 1, **You are inexcusable,** (that is, you are without defense) **O man who is judging.** See, their conscience defended themselves. A religious person, their conscience will defend them. "Well, I am not like the heathen. I am not like them." And so their conscience - I think religion is one of the worst things for a person's conscience. It helps people excuse themselves for sin. "I go to church all the time so God forgives me automatically. But the heathen in my neighborhood, they do the same thing but they do not go to church so they are sinners."

Verse 16 the fifth principle. **In a day when God is judging the secrets of men, according to my gospel** - there is the fifth principle - **through Jesus Christ.** He puts that in there because it is not Paul's gospel only, it is through Jesus Christ. But look at the statement that is made. This has to do with content. I am going to be judged according to Paul's gospel. Not just him alone, it will be through Jesus Christ, but the content that I am going to be judged by his what Christ gave Paul. Compare that and put that together with what we are studying from Galatians. That is powerful, powerful talk.

Anybody preaches any other gospel than that which Paul has preached, let him be accursed. Paul says everyone is going to be judged according to his gospel through Jesus Christ. Wow. Who does he think he is anyway? God's representative or something? Does he not know that in our age and our generation we have better revelation? No, we do not. We have extra revelation outside of that truth which is established in the word of God. And again, the main reason that people cannot accept that as a basis of the teaching of Scripture as they tell me, "because I am limiting God. God can do whatever He wants." I agree, He can do whatever He wants, but He has chosen to do this to limit us not Him. So that we can test the spirits, the influences, the teachings. We can be like the Bereans in Acts chapter 17, **Search the scriptures to see if it is true.** Not the persuasiveness of the people giving it nor the appeal - how it appeals to the flesh. Search the Scriptures to see if it is true. Test the spirit whether it is the spirit of God or not. We have been given everything for that.

(Verse 16) **God who will judge the secrets of men according to my gospel,** Paul says, **through Jesus Christ.** Powerful statements. The five principles that he has laid out for us:

1) Correct Information

We know the principle that man judges by - we judge according to our own sins, our own prejudices. If we are defending ourselves and excusing ourselves somebody else is going to get it. In verse 2, the correct information, God's judgment will be based on the facts, the truth.

2) Condition of the Heart

Secondly verse 5, God is going to judge those who - it is based on the hardness and the impenitent unrepentant heart. So the condition of the heart.

3) Conduct of Life

Thirdly the Conduct of a person's life, verse 6, according to his activities.

4) Consistency

Verse seven, consistency. The person who endures under the good work of Christ will be the basis for those who enter in.

5) Content

Then Paul brings us up to verse 15 where he gives us the fifth principle which is content. I am going to be judged by the content of Paul's gospel through Jesus Christ so do not go by my gospel. Do not go by a gospel that you hear over the television, or the radio, or the internet. Go by God's word no matter how persuasive they are and how appealing their teaching is. Because some things will appeal to us in our lifestyles and culture.

Next week we will continue on in Romans chapter 2. Paul ministered about the Gentiles and judgment coming upon them at the end of chapter 1. In chapter 2 he is turning to the Jewish or the religious person and he is saying to them, "These same heathen that you just read about in chapter 1, you also are going to be judged by the same standard." For the Gentiles it will be their conscience because they were not raised under the law, and for the Jew they will be judged according to the law, which they did not keep. But everyone will be judged according to the truth and the facts; according to the condition of their heart; according to their conduct, the activities in that person's life; and the content of Paul's gospel. Powerful stuff. But it is nice to know that if you embrace it as the word of God it brings things more into a more specific detail rather than a loose, truth is relative, and however you want to believe. Well, either Paul is wrong or I am wrong. That is what it boils down to.

Next week we will continue as he ministers to the Hebrew or Jewish person, the religious person if you will. And when we get into chapter 3, the first few verses of chapter 3, he is going to put everybody together, both Jew and Gentile. **All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.** Whether you are religious person or not, all will be judged according to the truth.

Let's close with prayer.