



Pilgrim Home Baptist Church

NT 260 2022 • GOD'S RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT • ROMANS 2:1-11 • 6/5/2022

MAIN POINT

God does not show favoritism, and His salvation is based solely on faith in Christ.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What was one news story this week that reminded you of humanity's fallen nature?

Which news stories or specific injustices make you the most angry to hear about?

What judgments do you tend to make toward the people involved in those stories?

If we look around, it's not hard to find examples of injustice in the world. Whether we experience mistreatment of ourselves or see it happening to others, it's a reminder of the fallen world we live in. But it won't always be this way. God will eventually judge the world without favoritism. But He will also extend mercy and grace to all without favoritism.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ROMANS 2:1-2.

Why are we not to judge others?

What do we communicate about ourselves when we judge other people for their sins?

What do we communicate about God?

After giving a detailed description of human sinfulness (1:18-32), Paul was amazed that some people thought they were free to judge another. Paul's message was clear. We are not free to judge others for their sins, because we too are sinners—at times, committing the very sins we

condemn or worse. Paul focused on the sin of self-righteousness that deceives us into thinking we have the moral standing to pronounce judgment on others. The real issue for Paul was that the judges who self-righteously condemn others do the same things. Sin is remarkably equalizing. It makes beggars of us all—from the best to the worst of us. We all need something we cannot give ourselves. We cannot plead ignorance, and we cannot plead innocence. We are all without excuse. The truth is that sinners deserve judgment.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ROMANS 2:3-8.

What words or phrases indicate good news in these verses?

How have you experienced God's kindness, restraint, and patience?

Why is God patient with us?

In what way does God's kindness lead to repentance (v. 4)?

The apostle made clear that if God had not yet brought judgment on some, such delay was an example of His great kindness, restraint, and patience. Kindness refers to God's benevolent actions toward people (see Ex. 33:19; Dan. 9:18). God was also showing restraint—that is, He was allowing for possible repentance, but only for a time. God does not abolish punishment all together, but He will suspend it temporarily (see 2 Pet. 3:9). Finally, God was patient, longing to see people come to repentance. While God thus shows the riches of His kindness in that He holds back deserved judgment, it is the height of conceit that people sin all the more blatantly, rather than turn to Him in repentance.

What are the standards by which God will judge people?

What kind of behavior characterizes those with eternal life?

Paul was not teaching how to be made right with God. He was talking about how God evaluates whether faith in Him is real. All works are the actions of people responding to one of two opposing sources: the domain of darkness and the kingdom of the Son (see Col. 1:13). Every deed has a signature that links it unmistakably to either the work of self or the work of God.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ROMANS 2:9-11.

What judgment awaits the people whose works reveal their faithlessness?

On the other hand, what judgment awaits the people whose works reveal their faith in God? Why are each of these eternal rewards good news for the Christian?

Paul wanted to convey the complete misery of those who reject God. The pleasures they embrace turn into pain. The rules of judgment apply to every human being. The movement of Paul's thought becomes increasingly clear. All fall under judgment apart from Christ. But God is fair, and anyone who does good will receive the good rewards of glory, honor, and peace. Peace deserves special attention. It is the equivalent of the Hebrew word shalom and means wholeness. It is the end result of salvation when a believer is remade into the kind of person God intended. Then there is no more strain, and we feel the beginnings of this blessing. In the last days we will experience it fully.

How does God's impartiality speak good news into the bad news of this world?

How can you demonstrate your gratitude that God is impartial? Why is impartiality the only way to demonstrate real love?

Paul reaffirmed there is no favoritism with God. All will be judged by God's righteous standard. Paul's teaching on God's impartiality can be a source of great comfort. It assures us that the deck has not been stacked against us and that no one will gain salvation by any other way other than Christ. Whatever reward we receive in the life to come will be based solely on actions that reflect we are believers in Jesus Christ. We can be thankful that God will evaluate us with His standard, not ours.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How might people today indicate they rely on who they are or how they live rather than on faith to have a right relationship with God? Do you exhibit any such tendency?

What can you do to be more consistently aware of the kindness God has shown you?

As you grow older, how has your appreciation of God's grace changed?

What are appropriate responses to God's goodness and grace to us?

PRAYER

Close in prayer, thanking God for the kindness and patience He has shown us through His offer of salvation. Pray that the truths of this week's study would compel you and your group members to share the gospel with people in their lives this week. .

COMMENTARY

ROMANS 2:1-11

2:1-2. Note the transition Paul makes between discussing the unrighteousness of the Gentiles (people in general; 1:18-32) and the unrighteousness of the Jews (2:17–3:8). The last thing he mentions in 1:32 is that people's minds are so depraved that they, in a manner of speaking, boast about their sin. Not only do they sin willingly (knowing they will be judged for it); they encourage and approve of others doing the same. It would be hard to describe boastful, sinful arrogance much more plainly. Yet there is another kind of boasting that is just as sinful: the kind that the Jews were guilty of. They boasted in and bragged about their privileged relationship to God (2:17). Mentioning the concept of "boasting" at least thirty times in his epistles, Paul never yielded to the temptation to boast in himself. Rather, he knew that, like the guilty tax-gatherer who stood in stark contrast to the boastful Pharisee in Jesus' parable (Luke 18:9-14), there was only one thing that he would ever be able to boast in—the mercy and grace of God (1 Cor. 1:31; 13:4; 2 Cor. 1:12; 10:17; 11:30; 12:5, 9; Gal. 6:14; Eph. 2:9).

2:3. The answer to the question that begins with do you really think is obviously no and naturally follows the previously agreed to premise. People who sin deserve condemnation for their sin and will not escape God's judgment. The moral equation is set and unbending. Sin brings judgment. That those who condemn others also do such things should lead to the obvious conclusion they too are under condemnation.

2:4. In fact, the audience Paul had in mind thought they would escape judgment. God's character includes many qualities that are designed to give people a chance for salvation. God demonstrates His kindness to all people, everywhere and every day. His restraint is a divine tolerance in which He temporarily suspends the immediate punishment of sin. His patience is an attitude of allowing people multiple opportunities to understand and embrace His truth. Instead of taking advantage of these qualities to turn to God, these people despise them; that is, they hold them in contempt. The main expression of such contempt is not taking the opportunity for repentance. This word literally means "a change of mind." Instead of accepting God's truth, the Jews continued to hold on to misguided notions of personal righteousness. They made gods in their own images, which was, ironically, the very idolatry they condemned.

2:5. Consistent resistance of truth produces a callousness in the mind and soul that Paul described as hardness. Those who regularly reject God's message become less open to hearing it. They are unrepentant and risk becoming deaf to God's call. This truth should produce in Christians a sense of urgency to gently press on unbelievers their need to respond positively to the gospel. When unbelievers resist the opportunity for repentance, they are storing up wrath for themselves instead of taking advantage of the great storehouse of God's kindness. The

judgment in this verse is in the future, at the consummation of history, and is different from the wrath that is revealed presently against sin (see Rom. 1:18). Paul's point was that our actions have eternal consequences.

2:6. Repay is normally used in regard to a debt. God will give to all what they deserve, a judgment that fits precisely the deeds they have performed. However, Paul did not intend to violate the truth that salvation is by faith apart from the law (a point made clear in 3:21-22). Careful attention to its context shows the present verse does not teach salvation by works. Paul was addressing Jewish readers who believed in a judgment based on works. He would agree up to a point; but as he soon would make clear, the only way we can do God's will is through Jesus Christ. Faith is not divorced from real life. It is made clear by how a person lives, by his or her works. Anyone who clings to the notion of good works leading to salvation apart from faith is lost. However, good works as a result of faith is the proof of real faith.

2:7. This verse and the next contrast two sets of people. The first group is composed of those who pursue honorable and eternal qualities such as glory, honor and immortality. These qualities are God-oriented. They are not an end to themselves and do not represent an effort at self-glorification. Patiently describes those who persist even in the face of extreme difficulty. Their eyes are fixed on God; they are open to His truth and they consistently turn away from sinful behavior. They have received eternal life, and their good works prove it.

2:8. People who reject the gospel also are described with three terms. To be self-seeking is the exact opposite of the denial of self that Jesus demanded. The word describes someone who attempts to purchase favor by self-promotion and gifts. It indicates a selfish ambition. Our self-help culture actually does more harm by being self-seeking. Those who disobey the truth are people who prefer their version of truth to God's truth. Again, this is a real form of idolatry. Obeying unrighteousness is the natural result of disobeying the truth. God's judgment on such people is wrath and indignation, two words similar in meaning that indicate God's rejection. As earlier, Paul's point was not that people who consistently do good works can earn salvation but the good works that matter can be produced only by a life of faith. Paul would make this abundantly clear later, but in the present context he had in mind those who trust in good works alone. They, in fact, were not as good as they assumed; and their good works were actually attempts at self-justification.

2:9-10. Paul continued by showing the results of living for self or living for God. Affliction and distress await all who have done evil. The conditions mentioned are ongoing. Clearly this refers to the eternal state in the lake of fire (see Rev. 20:13-15). On the other hand, good works that arise from one's relationship to God through Christ lead to glory, hon- or and peace. The term

glory refers to the glorified body the redeemed person will receive at the resurrection (Rom. 8:17; 1 Cor. 15:49). Honor speaks of the dignity that comes with putting on the glorified body. The term rendered peace signals not only the end of hostilities between God and people but also the restoration of fellowship with God, resulting in peace. Notice that Paul set believers' peace in contrast to the awful fate of the unjust. While the unredeemed experience continual affliction and distress, the redeemed will live in peace eternally. Does this scenario apply only to Gentiles? Are Jews excluded because of covenantal promises? Paul asserted twice that God's impartial judgment and assignment of destiny occurred first to the Jew, and also to the Greek.

2:11. This bold statement would have been somewhat shocking. A Jewish audience would have agreed with Paul's "Jew first" concept, especially with regard to God's blessing. They were the chosen people, but Paul was about to redefine the meaning of being chosen. Becoming one of God's chosen people is a matter of faith, not a matter of birth.