

Romans 2:6-11

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 15 May 2011

Preacher: Chris Steward

[0 : 00] You guys be seated. We are continuing our study through the book of Romans.

! We are in Romans chapter 2.! If you want to grab a copy of God's Word. Romans chapter 2. We're going to start.

Our text this morning is verses 6 through verse 10. And it reads, He will render to each one according to his works.

To those who by patience and well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.

There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil. The Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality.

[1 : 27] Pray with me. Fathers, Fathers, as we have read your Word, I pray, God, that you would speak now through it.

That you would teach us that your Spirit, who is already here, who is already moving, would continue to move and work in such a way that our ears would hear a word from you, that our hearts would be changed.

And because of our hearts being changed, our lives and our actions and our works will be changed. God, we need you this morning. We plead with you to speak to us.

In Jesus' name, Amen. There's some great weight to these verses this morning. The truth that all of us, all of us are going to be judged and some will be in tribulation and distress forever, while others will be given honor and glory and peace.

And I hate to tell you, but this is just the tip of the iceberg of theological questions that Paul is really going to start answering as we go through Romans. We're just scratching an itch that will not stop itching for quite a long time.

[2 : 46] This morning, we start dividing people into two groups or two teams. Now, do you remember a couple of weeks ago, we talked about the superiority issue of the Jews when we talked about verses 1 through 3 or 1 through 2.

They thought that they were better and they put themselves in one group and everybody else in another. They thought better of themselves or more of themselves.

This morning, we're going to break into two groups. We're going to talk about two groups and the only two groups that matter. The only two groups that matter, and that is righteous and unrighteous, Christian and non-Christian, believer and unbeliever.

One team you can and will never leave and the other, by God's grace, you can leave and join the other team. This, for us, is kind of like the playoffs.

This is like game one. Each team, each win, each team builds momentum with the win. So as we get further and further down, we end up winning the championship.

[3 : 56] And for us, that championship is Romans 8, Romans 9, Romans 10, 11, 12, onward. Right now, Paul is building a case and we're just now starting to really get into the teeth of this case.

An ancient Roman ruler named Brutus the Elder had two sons and learned that these two sons were conspiring to overthrow the government. An offense carried the death penalty.

At the trial, the young men tearfully appealed to their father, calling him by endearing names and appealing to his parental love. Most of the crowd there also started pleading for mercy for them.

But because of the severity of the crime and possibly because they were the son of a high-ranking official and he held them hot to a higher standard, he not only ordered, but witnessed their execution.

Parents, feel free to use that as an illustration for your kids. I know I will be using that with my four. Someone commented about the incident and said, The father was lost in the judge.

[5 : 09] The love of justice overcame the fondness of the parent. The love of justice overcame the fondness of the parent.

This morning we're talking about judgment. As cruel and as terrible as that story, our judge judges rightly. Our judge judges based on his righteousness.

He'll never get lost in the judge. For he cares about his creation. We are created in his image. And he cares so much that he does not want any to perish, but all to come to repentance.

As 2 Peter 3, 9 tells us. He is fatherly. He is caring. He is righteous. But he is also just. Which means, as we've been studying through Romans, Romans 1, and beginning of Romans chapter 2, we are all guilty for sins that we've committed, the sins we will commit.

And this, this is what makes the gospel so great. This is what makes it so awe-inspiring and so much more mind-blowing, is the fact that we're all guilty.

[6 : 22] And the judge who judges justly, who judges righteously, is also merciful and cares for what he has created. You see, I know everybody in here knows that Osama bin Laden has been killed.

You see in the coverage how a lot of the news used Google Earth and we were able to zoom in onto the compound and zoom in kind of to the area. Google Earth, you couldn't do that five years ago.

Maybe six. I don't know. I'm kind of lost when it comes to time. But I think that concept of zooming in, we kind of need to do for this text this morning.

We kind of need to start with a big picture, make a couple observations, and then close in on the text. So, big picture. Judgment is inevitable.

It's going to happen. Verse 2 tells us that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things. Verse 3, if you practice such things, do you think you will escape the judgment of God?

[7 : 27] Verse 6, He will render to each one. Verse 9, there will be tribulation and distress. There's a future tense to those last two. He will render and there will be.

It's going to happen. Turn to Revelation chapter 20. Last book of the Bible. Revelation chapter 20. We'll read a few verses.

The book of Revelation is a vision given to the Apostle John concerning things that come and things that have already happened or are happening. Revelation chapter 20, verse 11.

Then I saw a great white throne and Him who was seated on it. From His presence, earth and sky fled away and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne.

The books were opened. Then another book was opened, which was the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it.

[8 : 41] Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

This is what's going to happen. It is inevitable. This is what is to come.

So all of history is moving towards this day. Everyone dead and alive will be judged. So judgment is inevitable. Big picture. Judgment is going to happen.

Another observation, big picture, is judgment will be made on all people. Verse 6 of Romans chapter 2 says he will render. So judgment will be rendered or paid on all people.

In Romans chapter 2, verse 1, it says every one of you who judges. Every one of you who judges. Verse 2, falls on those who practice such things. Verse 3, those who practice such things escape the judgment of God.

[9 : 48] Verse 6, to each one or everyone. Verse 9, every human being who does these things. Verse 10, everyone who does good. And then we have the two groups that the Jewish people divided into.

Jew first, verse 9, and also the Greek. And repeats it again in verse 10. Jew first, and also the Greek. Christian and non-Christian, those who know Jesus and those who do not are going to be judged.

Paul is building the case that all people, no matter who they are, from whatever walk of life, are guilty and will be judged. The man who lives in the city who used to go to church. The woman who works in a church. The homeless guy in Gainesville. The teacher who is an atheist. The tribe in Indonesia who has never heard Jesus or the gospel. The cello player in Italy. Mother Teresa. Adolf Hitler. John Calvin. All will be judged. You and me. And without Christ, we will be found guilty. And must be punished like the sons of Brutus the Elder.

[10:55] Father. This is where we are. So two big observations. Judgment is inevitable. It's going to happen. Second, judgment will be made on all people.

But thirdly, where I kind of want to stay, where we're going to kind of camp out this morning, judgment will be based on works. Judgment will be based on works.

Verse 6 of chapter 2 says, He will render to each one according to his works. Now, if you were just to say this verse, if you were just to say it just the same way that I read it to you, just that verse, you could build a works-based theology out of these ten words.

No doubt. He will render each one according to his works. You could build a teaching out of it and it would be heresy.

And it would deem the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ pointless. If salvation was totally based on how good we could be, of how many good things we could do, have the good things outweigh the bad, then there would be no need for a substitutionary atonement.

[12:10] There would be no need for Jesus to die for our sins because we could just live good and earn it. Live good and earn God's favor. Remember, in holding the atonement precious, we are holding to our depravity.

We're realizing the reality of who we are and our need of God's grace. And that is biblical. So, if that's not what Paul is trying to say, what is he trying to say?

Because, let's be honest, that sounds like what he's saying is if we just do good works, then we'll be judged accordingly and we'll make it. In the context of Romans, though, Paul is making a case that all mankind have been cursed from the Garden of Eden and each one of us carry the guilt of sin.

As we've gotten into chapter 2, he's left no one out. Not a single person is without sin. And all of us are in need of something miraculous that we cannot do.

Chapter 1, chapter 2, and chapter 3 are all on a collision course for verse 21 of chapter 3. They're all headed to this one verse. And then Paul unfolds that one verse.

[13:26] Look at chapter 3, verses 11 and 12. None is righteous. No, not one. No one understands. No one seeks God. All have turned aside.

Together, they have become worthless. No one does good. Not even one. Verse 20. For by works of the law, no human being will be justified in his sight.

So by works of the law, by being good, no human being will be justified in his sight since through the laws come knowledge of sin. And then we come to verse 21 and 22.

But now, the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law. the righteousness of God has been unfolded, has been made aware of, has been laid out for us apart from the law, separated from the law.

Although the law and prophets bear witness to it, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. This is where we're headed in Romans chapter 2, verses 6 through 10.

[14:36] This is the context. This is kind of where we sit. So now we have what he's not saying. In order to see what he's saying, we need to bring it in a little bit.

Verse 6. He will render to each one according to his works. Judgment is based on works, but salvation is not. Okay? Judgment is based on works, but salvation is not.

Salvation is secure in Christ, is through Christ, is for Christ. What he's saying, what Paul is saying here, is that our works will prove which group we're in.

They'll prove what team we're on, so to speak. Our works will show the world who we belong to. What Paul has done is he's basically put a giant poster board or a giant white board up, drawn a line down the middle and said, here's team one, believer, here's team two, non-believer, and your works are going to prove which side you're on.

That's what Paul has done here and laid it out for us. As definite as God's judgment is, our works are just as definite in determining who we are in Christ or with Christ.

[15:51] It doesn't matter. It's that definite. Now, this shouldn't shock any of us. In Matthew 7, Jesus teaches on false prophets and says in verse 16 and repeats it again in verse 20, you will

recognize them by their fruit.

Now, this is regarding false prophets, but the same is true for those who do good, who seek, as verse 6 says, for glory and honor and immortality. You will know them.

You will recognize them by their fruit. And the idea of doing good works is an idea that's been preached since the beginning of the church because it's been in the word of God.

Ephesians 2.10 says, for we are his workmanship. Listen to this. Created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

So we were created in Christ Jesus for good works. Philippians 2.12 and 13 says, therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence, but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

[17:04] For it is God who works in you both to will and to work for his good pleasure. The twist, the mistake, is when people take verse 6 of Romans 2 out of context or take Ephesians 2.10 without reading Ephesians 2.8 and 9.

For by grace you have been saved, not by works. We as believers have a responsibility to do good. To live as if our lives have been changed. Because guys, our lives have been changed. The gospel doesn't just change your heart. This doesn't give you a new heart. The gospel changes a life.

It changes the life to the point that things you used to do, you don't do. Decisions you made, you make no more. Your want-tos change. See, when the Bible talks about the heart, for example, Matthew 22.37 where Jesus says, You shall love the Lord your God with all of your heart, with all of your soul, and with all of your mind.

He's not talking about an organ the size of your fist. He's talking about your gut, your inner person. What makes you who you are? What causes you to make the decisions that you make?

[18:20] And the gospel transforms that heart. So as verse 6 reads in Romans chapter 2, He will render to each one according to his works.

The gospel transforms a life so that our works then are different than what they used to be. And we'll be okay with being judged by our works.

Another observation that we need to be clear on is that there is a distinction or a division between teams. And I've kind of highlighted that with the whiteboard example. You're on one team or another.

That's it. Christian or non-Christian. Righteous or unrighteous. You cannot live both lives. If you have a new heart, you are a new creation, as 2 Corinthians 5 tells us.

Matthew 6, 24 in the Sermon on the Mount. I love the Sermon on the Mount. I don't know if you've noticed how many references we've had going through Romans in the Sermon on the Mount, but it's incredible.

[19:25] 624 says, you cannot serve two masters. You can't do it. It cannot be done. And it's your works that tells us which master you serve.

Now, this does not mean that we'll live perfect lives. It does not mean that we'll be perfect. But it means that we try. It means that we were convicted of our sin and we repent of that sin and we continue down that road.

Turn to 1 Timothy 4. This is a small observation, but it communicates what I'm trying to say here. In chapter 4, Paul is giving Timothy some instructions of being to a young pastor.

He gives these instructions starting in verse 12. In 1 Timothy 4, let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believer an example in speech and conduct and love and faith and purity.

Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift you have which has been given you by the prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you.

[20:41] Practice these things. Immerse yourself in them so that all may see your progress. Praise God that doesn't say all may see your perfection.

all may see your perfect life. No, it's your progress. It's a small observation, but even Timothy, who was a pastor, who Paul discipled and led, was not going to be perfect.

And you and I are not going to be perfect. But we can progress down this road of the Spirit and having a new life and a new heart.

So if there's division, if there's a distinction between the two teams, let's look at what makes that division up. Back to Romans chapter 2. So the first group, we're going to say the first group is the righteous, the Christians.

And these distinctions are found in verse 7 and verse 10. To those who by patience and well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality you will give eternal life.

[21 : 48] Verse 10, but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good. The Jew first, also the Greek. So verse 7, by patience in doing good. Patience, one of the fruit of the Spirit.

So God's Spirit is on our lives. Patience in well-doing and doing good. Seek glory. Sounds selfish, but it's God's glory that we seek. His glory will be our desire.

And it should be our highest desire. Verse 7, again, seek honor. Not the honor we'll receive here on earth because that feeds my flesh.

That feeds my desire to please people. Even as I'm standing up here. But to not the honor that we'll receive here on earth from men, but the honor from God, like in Matthew 25, 21, where he says, well done, good and faithful servant.

That will be our desire. That will be our goal. That will be what we seek for. Again, in verse 7, we'll seek immortality. First Corinthians 15, 53 says, when it's perishable body must put on the imperishable and this mortal body must put on immortality.

[23 : 00] The end result of our final perfection. Verse 7 says, God will give eternal life. Now guys, that's a simple term, but born again or not, Christian or not, we're all going to have eternal life.

It's where that eternal life is going to be. Are we going to be with Christ? Are we going to be honoring and worshiping Him alone? Are we going to be in torment? As we'll see here in a few minutes.

Verse 10, glory and honor and peace. And we will seek these things with our lives. And through our works, God will give them to those who do them. So that's the first group.

The second group, the characteristics of the unrighteous, the non-Christian. These are found in verse 8 and verse 9. But for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.

There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil. The Jew first and also the Greek. Self-seeking. Where yourself, your desires, your yourself, I'll say that again, yourself is your God.

[24 : 22] If that is your God, then there's no room for God in your life. That person does what pleases them. No matter what, they worship whatever they feel like.

Verse 8 says, does not obey the truth. If a person only does what feels good and what they want, then the obvious outcome is not to obey anything except themselves.

And of course, they're not going to obey God and they're not going to obey His truth. Rebellion and disobedience is at the root of the fall in Genesis chapter 3.

You know, Galatians chapter 5 tells us the fruit of the Spirit, but it also tells us the fruit of the flesh. It also gives us a more exhaustive list of the fruit of the flesh.

The outward working of the flesh. Verse 8 says, they obey unrighteousness. As I've already said, no one can serve two masters, so you obey the other.

[25 : 29] A person is either righteous or unrighteous. He's either godly or ungodly. Verse 8 says, wrath and fury will come to the unrighteous.

Wrath signifies the strongest kind of anger. The strongest kind of anger when God's mercy and grace are fully removed or fully exhausted.

Wrath. Fury. Another translation says indignation. The root was used to describe of a man's breathing violently while pursuing an enemy in great rage.

Breathing violently while pursuing an enemy in great rage. In Hebrews, in the book of Hebrews, it's used to describe Pharaoh's murderous fury at Moses.

In Luke 4, it's used to describe the Jews in the synagogue in Nazareth who wanted to throw Jesus off a cliff. In Acts 19, it describes the pagan Ephesians' reaction when he described their idols as being worthless and no gods at all.

[26 : 40] This fury will be released from God into or towards those who remain unrighteous. Verse 9 tells us tribulation and distress.

Tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil. The Jew first and also the Greek. Now guys, after last spring, we went through the book of 1 Peter.

We know that there's going to be tribulation. We know that believers and unbelievers are going to suffer. Believers especially are going to suffer in this world. We know this.

But our hope is in the temporary nature of our suffering that it ends. It comes to a point of ending. But for the unrighteous, it will never end. For the unrighteous, it will be eternal tribulation and distress.

The word of distress literally means a narrow place and used to describe solitary confinement. Solitary confinement is described as one of the worst punishments for people in prison.

[27 : 48] One of the worst. Imagine, guys, imagine an eternal punishment that involves that same type of torture or distress without ever being lessened.

that's what happens. That's what the people who do evil are headed to. For every human being who does evil. So their works will prove or their judgment will be based on works.

So why is this important for us? Why do we need to know any of this? If we're a Christian, we can just kind of glance over this and say, it doesn't concern me.

I hope I've proved to you that it's important, but here's four things. The first thing is we need to know what group we're in. We need to know what team we're on.

And our works will tell us. We need to know, secondly, we need to know what others look like on the other team.

[28 : 54] We need to know their works so that we can decide how to minister to them. And we can help them. Third thing, works are important, but not so that they lead to salvation.

They're important because they prove salvation. They prove salvation. And fourthly, why this is important is the gospel doesn't just change a heart.

It changes the life. So if you're truly born again and you don't have a changed life, I'd question the first part. James chapter 2 verse 14 through 26, James is laying out and basically saying that faith without works is no faith at all.

Faith without works, in fact, is dead. It does not exist. It does not live. So my question for all of us, for everyone in here, does your works prove your salvation or does your works prove that you are truly not born again?

Does your works prove your salvation or does your works prove that you are truly not born again? That's where the rubber meets the road. It's good to do good things.

[30 : 20] It is good to be loving. It is good to be caring, to have mercy on people, to be part of social injustice groups, and all that is great.

But without Christ, it is worthless. Without Christ, you're still doing evil. Tribulation and distress is what's in your future.

we're going to be judged. Like the Roman Brutus the elder, justice will be given.

His two sons deserved it. They were conspiring to overthrow the government. They committed a crime and he followed through with justice. But unlike Brutus the elder, mercy will be shown mercy will be shown.

And so we can rejoice in reading through Romans chapter two and all of the word of God, because God is merciful. God is just and he is right.

[31 : 37] Let's pray. pray. Heavenly Father God, great are you, worthy of all praise.

Your grace and your mercy that you have shown me and that you have shown others in this room, sometimes leave me speechless. why?

I don't know. Why do you love me so much? I don't know, but I'm thankful that you do. I'm thankful that you've given me your word and that I can rejoice in knowing that my works prove that I know you and that I'm your son.

God, I pray that you would move in this room, that you would penetrate the hardest of hearts, that we would leave here changed because you had spoken to us, you had touched us and you had taught us.

God, be honored and pleased this morning. In Jesus' name, Amen. It's a time of our service where we worship by celebrating what Christ has done on the cross.

[32 : 54] We partake of the Lord's Supper. And guys, if you're not a believer, if you are unrighteous, if you are part of team two, there's no reason for you to take this.

You're not celebrating anything. You're just taking a drink of juice. But if you are a Christian and are part of team one, celebrate, rejoice, because Christ has done what no man can do. a Christian Amen.

Hiding rock and treacherous shoal, John and compass come from thee, Savior, pilot me.

