

Romans 2:1-16 - Part 2

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[0:00] Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance.

! But because of your hard and impenitent heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. 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. But glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek.

For God shows no partiality. For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law.

[1:04] For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. For when Gentiles who do not have the law by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law.

They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts while their conscience also bears witness. And their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.

As I stated previously, we have considered the first of three points I hope to make from this text. This was a couple of weeks ago at the very end of March, which was the justice of God's judgment. It's right and it's good that God would judge the world for its evil. This morning we will attempt to proceed to the final two points, but I'll prepare you on the front end.

I anticipate only making it through point two. So that's where we're at. I'm ready to go on, but I think we're only going to make it through point two. But that said, the remainder of our outline is as follows.

[2:14] Number two, the basis of God's judgment. And number three, the impartiality of God's judgment. So second point from the text, the basis of God's judgment.

There will be this justice that comes. Our God will judge. And there's a basis for which he does this. And we see it at the beginning of verse six.

Paul writes, he will render to each one according to his works. And we must be careful in our handling of a text like this.

Paul here is stating that God's judgment will be based on our works. He is saying that one day you will stand before God almighty and be judged by what you did or did not do.

As a good Protestant, I hope this gets your hackles up. It raises the hair on the back of your neck. But let's take a moment to consider the premise more broadly from Scripture.

[3:23] So in brief, let me read to you from the prophet Isaiah. This is chapter three, verses 10 and 11. There, Isaiah, on behalf of God says, tell the righteous that it shall be well with them, for they shall eat the fruit of their deeds.

Woe to the wicked. It shall be ill with him, for what his hands have dealt out shall be done to him. So well with the righteous, ill with the wicked, according to their deeds.

The prophet Jeremiah, chapter 17 and verse 10. I, the Lord, search the heart and test the mind to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.

Not only those things done outwardly, but also those things done inwardly will be judged. And Jesus reinforces this in the New Testament.

He says in Matthew, chapter 16 and verse 27. For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father. And then he will repay each person according to what he has done.

[4:42] John, chapter 5, verse 28 and following. Jesus there says, do not marvel at this for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out.

Those who have done good to the resurrection of life and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment. Paul, as I have stated repeatedly in our study of the book of Romans so far, wrote this letter to make the point that we are justified by grace alone, through faith alone, in Jesus Christ alone.

Right? Declared innocent as well as righteous before God by grace alone, through faith alone, in Jesus Christ alone.

So is Paul's teaching about judgment here in this text running in contradiction to even his own thesis for the entire letter? Well, certainly not.

This would make no sense even in human terms that he would contradict himself in just a few sentences. And we certainly don't want to begin our study of this chapter and on into the following chapters thinking that the inspired word is contradictory in nature.

[6:01] There's other places that Paul says similar things to what he's saying here in Romans chapter 2. Like in 2nd Corinthians chapter 5, verse 10, where he says, for we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

Or Galatians chapter 6, verse 7 and following. Do not be deceived. God is not mocked. For whatever one sows, that will he also reap.

For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption. But the one who sows to the spirit will from the spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary of doing good.

For in due season we will reap if we do not give up. So, it's just a sampling of these types of tasks. How do we reconcile justification by grace alone, through faith alone, in Jesus Christ alone, with, verse 6, he will render to each one according to his works.

[7:11] And we will do well here to employ two hermeneutic, or you could replace the word there, interpretive, principles.

Number one, we should, we do well to allow more clear text to help us understand less clear text. Context.

And secondly, I just like to call this one context, context, context. And by that I mean, we have to look at the immediately surrounding verses, so context.

The surrounding chapters, and the whole book, context. Right? And the entirety of the Bible, context. So context, context, context.

We believe here at Christ Family Church in a doctrine called the perspicuity of scripture. I probably just mispronounced that. Somebody's going to tell me later that I did.

[8:09] Which, simply put, means the clarity of scripture. Which isn't to say that all texts are easy. We find ourselves in one today that's not the most simple to understand.

But it broadly can be understood. I like, just as a fun interjection, Bert Parsons, who's a contemporary pastor, said, Oddly enough, the word perspicuity, perspicuity, perspicuity, I think that's how you say it, is one of the more unclear words we could use to speak of clarity.

Let's allow more clear text to help us understand less clear text, and let's context, context, context. So first, let's allow more clear text to help us understand less clear text.

And let's begin with some of Paul's writing. Paul in 1 Timothy chapter 1, verse 15 and 16, says this, Paul recognizes that he himself was saved as a sinner.

He ranked himself first among those who Christ had saved. And then he says in verse 16, but I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.

[9:46] Ephesians chapter 2, verse 8 and 9. Paul there writes, And this, referring to the faith, is not your own doing.

You didn't muster up the faith on your own. It is the gift of God. Faith gifted to us by which, through that faith, we're saved by grace.

Why? Verse 9 says, Not a result of works, so that no one may boast. The only thing we have to boast in is the cross of Christ.

God has saved us. If our salvation or justification is entirely by grace alone, through faith alone, in Jesus Christ alone, then how does the judgment that Paul talks about in Romans 2 enter into the picture?

He goes on in Ephesians 2 into verse 10 by saying, For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

[11:00] We are saved solely by God, which is the great confidence of our salvation. We can stand firm because we have been saved by God.

But, having been saved by God, we are also granted the ability and the desire to obey him. We're gifted the helper, the spirit, who causes us to walk in his ways.

The prophet Ezekiel, chapter 36. You may be familiar with verse 26 and 27, where there God says, And I will give you a new heart and a new spirit I will put within you.

And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

This is the doctrine of regeneration. We were once dead. He makes us alive. He sets in us new desires and the ability to obey.

[12:06] We do not do this with perfection. We still have our flesh. But we're constantly putting off the old self and putting on the new as an evidence that we have been justified by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

So, thinking about clearer texts to help us to understand a less clear text, now let's also look at the broader context, which we will limit just to this letter for the sake of time.

I gave you some other biblical examples. But just in this letter, so you might turn with me now and follow these. Recall, Paul says in Romans chapter 1, verse 16 and 17, right?

Here's the thesis statement of the whole letter. There he writes, For I am not ashamed, or you could insert, I am proud of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

For in it, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, the righteous shall live by faith.

[13:15] Right? We have eternal life in Christ because Christ's righteousness, the righteousness of God, is imputed. It's granted to us.

We're declared righteous in him. Right? We need this external righteousness to be given to us. Flip a few pages to Romans chapter 3.

This is where he's driving us to in chapter 2. Verse 10 through 12. Exciting Old Testament text here. And he says, None is righteous.

No, not one. No one understands. No one seeks for God. All have turned aside. Together, they have become worthless. No one does good. Not even one.

Inescapably, we don't have a righteousness of our own. We can't possibly work it up on our own. This is what Paul is saying in the middle of this being judged by our works.

[14:15] This context is really important to understand where we are in our text today. He goes on in Romans chapter 3, verse 21 and following. But now, the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, from our works.

Although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. Right? Again, Jesus' righteousness imputed, given to us through faith.

Romans chapter 5 and verse 8. But God shows his love for us. And that while we were still sinners, right? And that when we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans chapter 6, verse 1 and 2. Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? And Paul says, by no means.

How can we who died to sin still live in it? Right. And there's the turn in his argument. Right. Having been justified by grace alone through faith alone and Christ alone.

[15:31] We now work. Our status has changed. No longer sinners. Now called saints. Justified. Adopted. Sons and daughters of the most high God.

Now possessing the spirit of God. Dead to sin. Alive to Christ. Our allegiance has changed. Positionally we are different.

Romans chapter 6. Verse 17 and following. But thanks be to God that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed. And having been set free from sin have become slaves of righteousness. And then finally there's more to be said of course. We're going to get into it.

In the coming. At the rate we're going. Years. Romans 8. 1. There is therefore. Now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

[16:30] You cannot faithfully read and study this letter. Just this letter. Much less the whole of the Bible. And not see that we are justified by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone.

But. That our justification proves itself. In our works. So. We are saved by faith.

But we will be judged. According to our works. A tree will be known. By its fruit. So hear me carefully.

Beloved. We do not work that we might be accepted by God. But if you have been accepted by God in Christ. You will work. Right. Joyful. Gracious. Grace. Response.

To his saving work. In your life. Note the language of verses 7 and 10. In our text today. Verse 7 says.

[17:31] To those. Who by patience and well-doing. Seek for glory and honor and immortality. He will give. Eternal life. And then verse 10.

But glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good. The Jew first. And also. The Greek. The justified in Christ. Will patiently pursue the ways of God.

For. His glory. First Corinthians 10 31. Whether you eat or drink. Or whatever you do. Do all to the glory. Of God. And. They will also do this for their own.

Eternal. Glory. Not temporal glory. But. Eternal. Glory. Paul writes in Romans 8 18. I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth.

Comparing. With the glory. With the glory. That is to be revealed. To us. The justified in Christ. Will patiently pursue the ways of God. For an honor.

[18:30] That God will bestow. Not an honor in. This life. But an honor in. The life. The life. To come. Those who are in Christ.

Who have been justified. By grace alone. Through faith alone. In. Christ alone. Would want it said of us. Matthew 25. Matthew 25. And verse 21. Well. Done.

Good. And faithful. Servant. You have been faithful over a little. I will set you over. Much. Enter into the joy. Of your master.

The justified in Christ. Will. Patiently. Pursue the ways of God. For. Immortality. Or. Eternal. Existence. It is to those.

That God will give. Eternal. Life. Which refers. Not just to. Quantity. I think that's. In the word. Immortality. But more specifically.

[19:26] To. Quality. Eternal. Life. It is the combination. Of glory. And honor. And. Immortality. Paul adds.

In verse 10. Peace. Which. As a parallel. To verse 7. I take to mean. As a qualifier. Of this. Eternal. Life. Now in.

Stark. And. Frightening. Juxtaposition. To this. Glory. And honor. And immortality. And. Peace. Paul states. In verses 8. And 9.

Those who are. Self-seeking. Serve themselves. And not the one. Who created them. Are idolatrous. In that way. And do not. Obey the truth.

But obey. Unrighteousness. There will be wrath. And fury. Punishment. Forever. There will be.

[20:22] Tribulation. And distress. For every human being. Who does evil. The Jew first. And also. The Greek. Spare yourself.

From such judgment. Flee. To Christ. Christ. And lest I be. Unclear. Fleeing to Christ. Is not a labor. Of your. Works.

Flee to Christ. By faith. Once again. We are justified. Before God. By grace alone. Through faith alone. In. Christ. Alone. We need.

The external. Righteousness. Of Christ. Right. This. Is the driving point. This is where. All of this. Is taking us. Paul has said it already.

He's going to continue. To say it. On through. The end of chapter 8. And beyond that. But. Certainly through.

[21:18] The end. Of chapter 8. Right. Remember again. Paul. 1. 16 and 17. I am not ashamed. Of the gospel. For it is the power of God. For salvation.

To everyone. Who believes. The Jew first. And also. The Greek. Right. No distinction. Categorically. We're either. Outside of Christ. Or we're in. Christ.

We are sinners. Or we are. Saints. We are dead. Or we are. Alive. Ethnic. Dividing lines. Is no distinction. In God's.

Sight. For in it. The gospel. The righteousness of God. Is revealed. From faith. For faith. As it is written. The righteous. Shall live. By faith.

I hope. With all. Honesty. This morning. That. As I'm. Walking. This balance. Of how it is. That we're justified. Before God. And then what happens. As a result.

[22:13] Of that. That you get it. That you're just going. Oh yeah. I'm totally on board. With all of this. Beloved. There's a lot. Of confusion. In our day. About this.

This very issue. Right. And it is. A gospel issue. It's not. It's not. Secondary. Or tertiary. It's a primary. Gospel. Issue. It's troubling.

How much confusion. There is about it. Even in our day. And there has been confusion. About it. All throughout. The ages. So. The Bible.

Is always our primary text. This is the inspired word of God. I also like to read to you. From Pilgrim's Progress. Not an inspired text. But written by.

A rather brilliant man. By the name of John Bunyan. And I think he does well. To put into words. Some of these ideas. Is. So. He engages. At this place. In the book.

[23:07] With a man named. Ignorance. And. He's encountered. Ignorance. He's with a friend. Named hopeful. He's encountered. Ignorance before. They've left him alone. For a while. He's not really been listening.

To the things. They've been saying to him. About the way. Walking in the way. And getting to the celestial. City. So they left him alone. And he's come back. He's rejoined. And they're hoping. That he's thought about.

Some of the things. That they've said. To him. Now. With a. With a careful reading. And knowing some of the history. Of Bunyan's day. You will know. He's speaking of those.

Who were part of the state. Church. Of his day. And what they believe. To be true. Of. Justification. But much of this. Is found in. The belief. Of many. Christians.

In our day. So I want to read. A bit of it. To you. And help you to understand. What Christian begins. Speaking to. Ignorance.

[24:02] Come along with us. And let us spend our time. Talking as we walk. Through the solitary place. Then he inquired of ignorance. Saying. How are you doing? How stands it between God.

And your soul now? Ignorance replied. I hope well. For I am always full of good thoughts. And intentions. That come into my mind. That comfort me. As I walk.

What good thoughts. And intentions. Christian inquired. Please tell us. Why. I think of God. And heaven. So do the devils. And damned souls. Christian pointed out.

Ignorance added. But I think of them also. And desire them. Christian asserted. So do many. Who are never going to make it. To heaven. The soul. The sluggard.

Desires. And hath. Nothing. It's Proverbs 13. Four. But I think of them. And leave all that I possess. And enjoy. That I might gain them. Ignorance claimed.

[24:58] I doubt that. Christian exclaimed. Since leaving all. Is a hard matter. It is a much harder matter. Than many are aware of. But what is

it. That persuades you. That you have left all for God.

And heaven. Here's a. Telling. Phrase. My heart. Tells me so. Personally. I feel like it's true. Christian challenged. The wise man says. He that trusts his own heart. Is a fool. Proverbs 28. 26. This is spoken of an evil heart.

But mine is a good one. Ignorance insisted. Christian quickly asked. But how can you prove that? Ignorance asserted. It comforts me with hopes of heaven. That may be your heart deceiving you. Christian warned. A man's heart may comfort him. With hopes of things. That in all truth. He has no reason. To hope for. Ignorance insisted. But my heart and life. Agree together. And therefore.

[25:56] My hope. Is well grounded. Who told you. That your heart and life. Agree together. My heart tells me so. Ignorance claimed. Strongly.

Christian suggested. Then ask your heart. If I am a thief. Your heart may tell you that I am. But that does not make it so. Unless the word of God.

Bears witness in this matter. No other testimony. Is of value. But is it not. A good heart. That has good thoughts. Ignorance questioned. And isn't a good life. One that is lived.

According to God's commandments. Yes. A good heart. Has good thoughts. And a good life. Is one lived. According to God's commandments. Christian agreed. Adding. But it is one thing. Indeed. To have these.

And another thing. Only to think. You do. Ignorance said. Please tell me. What you consider. To be good thoughts. And a life lived. According to God's commandments. Christian replied.

[26:49] There are good thoughts. Pertaining to different things. Some with respect. To ourselves. God. Christ. And other things. What do you think. Are good thoughts. In relation to ourselves.

Ignorance inquired. Christian answered. Such as agree. With the word of God. What kind of thoughts. About ourselves. Agree with the word of God. Ignorance asked further.

Christian explained. We think rightly. Of ourselves. When we pass. The same judgment. Upon ourselves. That the word passes. To explain myself. More fully. The word of God. Says of persons. In a natural condition.

There is none righteous. There is none. That doeth good. Romans 3. It also says. That every imagination. Of the heart of man. Is only evil. And that.

Continually. Genesis 6. 5. And again. The imagination. Of man's heart. Is evil. From his youth. Genesis 8. 21. Now then.

[27:45] We think. These thoughts. Of ourselves. Our thoughts. Are good ones. Because they agree. With the word of God. Ignorance insisted. I will never believe. That my heart. Is bad.

Therefore. You have never had. One good thought. Concerning yourself. In your entire life.

Christian exclaimed. But let me go on. As the word. Passes judgment. Upon our hearts. So it passes judgment.

Upon our ways. When the thoughts. Concerning our hearts. And ways. Agree with the judgment. That the word. Gives of both. Then are both thoughts. Good. Because they agree. With the word. Tell me what you mean.

Ignorance urged. Christian went on. While the word of God. Says that man's ways. Are crooked ways. Not good. But perverse. Verse. Psalm 125. It says that man.

Is naturally opposed. To the good way. And cannot. Know it. Now when a man. Knows in his head. And humbly believes. With all his heart. That the word is right. And that his ways. Are not good. Then he has good thoughts.

[28:40] Regarding his own ways. Because his thoughts. Now agree. With the judgment. Of the word of God. What are good thoughts. Concerning God. Christian went on. Just as our thoughts.

Of ourselves. Are good. When they agree. With the word of God. So they. So are they. Good thoughts. Concerning God. When they agree. With what the word. Says of him. We must agree. With the word. When it teaches us.

About the attributes. Of God. Which are too large. A subject. To talk about right now. In reference to ourselves. We have right thoughts. About God. When we understand. That he knows us better. Than we know ourselves. And can see the sin in us.

When we can see none. Our thoughts concerning God. Are good. When we understand. That he knows. Our inmost thoughts. And that our heart. With all its depth. Is always clearly seen. By him. Our thoughts about God. Are good. When we think. That all our righteousness. Stinks in his nostrils. And that therefore. He cannot stand to see us. Come before him. In our own confidence. [29:33] Even with all our best. Performances. Ignorance asked. Think that I am such a fool. As to think God. Can see no further than I. That I would come to God.

In the confidence. Of my best performances. So what do you think. On this matter. Christian asked back. I'm almost done. Ignorance replied. To be short.

I think I must believe in Christ. For justification. This is good. Right. Oh. Look at ignorance. He's getting something. How is it that you think. You must believe in Christ.

When you do not see. Your need for him. Christian questioned. You neither see your original. You neither see. Your original. Nor actual infirmities. You have an opinion. Of yourself.

And of your deeds. That puts you. In a category of man. Who sees no necessity. For Christ's. Personal righteousness. To justify you. Before God. How can you say. That you believe. In Christ.

[30:28] Ignorance insisted. In spite of what you say. I believe. But what do you believe. Christian inquired. Ignorance asserted. I believe.

That Christ died. For sinners. And that I shall be justified. Before God. From the curse. Through his gracious. Acceptance. Of my obedience. To his law. You hear that? That's Roman Catholicism.

Summed up for you. Right? I believe. That Christ died. For sinners. And I shall be justified. Before God. From the curse. Through his. Gracious acceptance. Of my obedience.

To his law. I believe. That Christ makes. My religious duties. Acceptable to his father. By virtue of his merits. And so. Shall I. Be justified. Let me. Discuss.

Your confession. Of faith. Christian offered. First. You believe. With a fantasy faith. For this faith. Is nowhere described. In the word. You also believe. With a false faith.

[31:22] That takes justification. Away. From the personal righteousness. Of Christ. And credits it. To you. The faith. You describe. Makes Christ. A justifier. Of your actions.

Not. Of your. Person. Thus. According to this faith. You are justified. By your actions. Which is false. Therefore. This faith. Is deceitful.

And will leave you. Under God's wrath. In the day of judgment. True. Justifying faith. Makes the soul. Aware. Of its lost condition. Under the law. The soul.

That comes. To the righteousness. Of Christ. For refuge. Understands. That it's Christ's.

Righteousness. Alone. That is acceptable. To God. There's not a mixture. Of both Christ's. Obedience. And our attempts.

At obedience. That justify us. To God. Your obedience. Is worthless. And full of sin. And it is. Only the obedience. Of Jesus Christ. That God accepts. As payment. For your sin. True faith.

[32:16] Causes the soul. To flee. Underneath the righteousness. Of Christ. For relief. From the condemnation. That we deserve. And it is Christ's. Righteousness. Alone. That will be presented. As spotless. Before God.

And accepted. By him. As payment. For our debt. Of sin. Justification. By grace alone. Through faith alone. And Christ alone. What? Ignorance exclaimed. Would you have us trust.

In what Christ alone. Has accomplished. Without adding. Our own accomplishments. Believing in Christ. And his righteousness. Would give us. Complete abandon. To live. As we choose. The moment.

We believe it. This way of thinking. Would loosen. The reins of our lust. And permit us. To disobey. God's commands. To our hearts. Content. Ignorance.

Is your name. And as your name is. So are you. Christian exclaimed. Your answer. Demonstrates. What I say. You are ignorant. Of what justifying.

[33:10] Righteousness is. And you are ignorant. Of how to secure. Your soul. Through faith. From the heavenly wrath. Of God. Yes. And you are also ignorant. Of the true effects. Of saving faith.

And the righteousness. Of Christ. The effects of which. Are to bend. And win. Over the heart. To God. In Christ. The heart. Went over to him. Will love his name.

His word. His ways. And his people. Saving faith. Will not. As you ignorantly imagine. Give license. To do evil. But will instead.

Give the earnest desire. And power. To do good. I hope you can see. Why I read. For so long. To you. Nowhere else.

Is it taught. That God. Saves. Gods save. Any version. Of a God. By. His. Righteousness. Every other.

[34:05] World religion. Places. Works. As the saving. Factor. Every other religion. Can be summed. Like this. Work hard. To follow. These rules.

And cross. Your fingers. That it's enough. And this is not the way. Of our God. Praise be to God. He requires. Of us. Righteousness.

And he grants. The righteousness. That he requires. In closing. Yep. 12 o'clock. In closing. Point three. Next week. I'll read to you a poem.

Called the stairs. By Theodosia Garrison. Oh how long. And dark. The stairs. I trod. With stumbling feet.

To find my God. Gaining a foothold. Bit by bit. Then slipping back. And losing it. There came a certain time. When I loosened my hold.

[35:01] And fell thereby. Down to the lowest step. My fall. As if I had not climbed. At all. And as I lay. Despairing there.

There came a footfall. On the stairs. And low. When hope. Had ceased to be. My God. Came down the stairs. To me. Let's pray together.