

#10 - Romans 2:1-5

Context & Transition

Paul has just finished laying out a huge indictment of humanity.

- *1:18 - the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.*

Mankind is presently experiencing the wrath of God since He has given them over to their own destruction by sin.

- *1:28 - **28** And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done.*

Those who walk in the ways of sin (e.g. evil, covetousness, malice, envy, strife, gossip, slander, disobedient to parents...see vv. 29-31) deserve to die.

- *1:32 - Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.*

Wait, What? (v. 1)

Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges.

- No excuse - "It is a human trait to use blaming others as a cloak for our own failures." (Thiselton, 93)

Here in v. 1, Paul turns the tables on those who were self-righteously nodding their heads in agreement with Paul throughout chapter 1. You can imagine someone saying, "Wait, I have no excuse? Don't you mean "they" have no excuse? How did we get from the world's issues to me? I'm not as bad as they are!"

- Anthony Thiselton points out that this is very similar to what Amos does when he calls out the nations (Amos 1:3-2:3) and then switches into pointing out the "transgressions of Judah" (Amos 2:4).

Paul's reply: Yes You Are!

- *For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things.*
 - On Hypocritical Judgment see Matt. 7:1-5 and Luke 6:41-42
 - "Remember that the majority of Paul's list of wickedness in 1:29-30 is not about

our actions; rather, he is focusing on our attitudes. We are to look at our hearts before looking at our hands.” - Tim Keller

- ‘Pass judgment’ - is to believe that others are worthy of God’s judgment while you are not. (Keller, 40)
- Example from The Sermon on the Mount and Current Issues
 - *Matt. 7:21-22* - **21** “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ **22** But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment;
 - Whether it’s Derek Chauvin on the neck of George Floyd or a deathly shooting by someone in a blocked off protest zone. What’s our judgment?
 - It’s not, “I can’t believe people are that evil and I’m so glad I’m not like them.”
 - It’s, “God has said that murder is evil. He will perfectly judge and we must represent his heart and ways as we work against evil today. Lord have mercy on me where I have been similarly angry toward my fellow man.”
 - See Luke 18:9-14
 - N.T. Wright (quoted by Thiselton) - “God’s judgement is ‘addressed to anyone who...tries to adopt a superior posture.” (92)

God's Judgment (v. 2-3)

We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things.

- *NIV - 2 Now we know that God’s judgment against those who do such things is based on truth.*

God’s Judgment is Perfect!

- “Paul is affirming that God’s judgment against sin is fully in accord with the facts, that it is just.” - Douglas Moo, 131

God’s Judgment is Impartial!

- “Paul invites anyone who might judge another to include himself or herself in the scope of his accusation. But he particularly wants Jews to realize that they cannot be excused from this category.” (Moo, 130)
 - “Like John the Baptist (Matt. 3:7-10) and Jesus (cf. Matt. 21:28-32) before him, Paul denies that belonging to the covenant people per se ensures acceptance with God.” (Moo, 126)
- Moo’s Syllogism of Paul’s Argument:
 - God’s Judgment falls on those who do “these things.”
 - Even the self-righteous judge does “these things.”

- Therefore: even the self-righteous judge stands under God's judgment. (132)

God's Kindness (v. 4)

4 Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?

"Where then the fear of God does not rule, confidence, on account of prosperity, is a contempt and a mockery of his great goodness. It hence follows, that a heavier punishment will be inflicted on those whom God has in this life favored; because, in addition to their other wickedness, they have rejected the fatherly invitation of God. - John Calvin, 87

"For the Lord by his kindness shows to us, that it is he to whom we ought to turn, if we desire to secure our well-being, and at the same time he strengthens our confidence in expecting mercy. If we use not God's bounty for this end, we abuse it." - John Calvin, 87

"we may hence learn... That the ungodly not only accumulate for themselves daily a heavier weight of God's judgments, as long as they live here, but that the gifts of God also, which they continually enjoy, shall increase their condemnation; for an account of them all will be required: and it will then be found, that it will be justly imputed to them as an extreme wickedness, that they had been made worse through God's bounty, by which they ought surely to have been improved. Let us then take heed, lest by unlawful use of blessings we lay up for ourselves this cursed treasure. - John Calvin, 88

False Security in the Kindness of God:

- How would Paul correct the often mentioned, flippant Bible-belt sentiment that "God forgives"?

God's kindness is to lead us to repentance!

God's forgiveness is not an excuse to sin but a rescue from sin!

God's Future Wrath (v. 5)

5 But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed.

Proverbs 24:10-12 -

10 *If you faint in the day of adversity,
your strength is small.*

11 *Rescue those who are being taken away to death;
hold back those who are stumbling to the slaughter.*

12 *If you say, "Behold, we did not know this,"
does not he who weighs the heart perceive it?
Does not he who keeps watch over your soul know it,*

and will he not repay man according to his work?

Psalms 62:11-12 -

11 Once God has spoken;

twice have I heard this:

that power belongs to God,

12 and that to you, O Lord, belongs steadfast love.

For you will render to a man

according to his work.

God's judgment will RIGHTLY condiment all humanity, both irreligious AND religious!

"Storing up wrath"

- Ironic, in light of Jewish teaching on storing up rewards (cf. Matt. 6:19-20)

The Wrath of God:

- Definition: "it denotes his personal indignation towards human sinfulness." (Colin Kruse, 90)
 - Kruse quotes Byrne who says, "The sense of divine wrath is bound up with the biblical conception of a personal God whose dealings with humankind are attended by an intense moral will. The wrath of God blazes out when that will, and specifically the love that lies behind it, is thwarted by human pride, rebellion, obstinacy or disloyalty". (90-91)

The wrath of God is his eternal detestation of all unrighteousness. It is the displeasure and indignation of divine equity against evil. It is the holiness of God stirred into activity against sin. It is the moving cause of that just sentence which he passes upon evildoers...

...The wrath of God is a perfection of the divine character upon which we need to frequently meditate. First, that our hearts may be duly impressed by God's detestation of sin. We are ever prone to regard sin lightly, to gloss over its hideousness, to make excuses for it. But the more we study and ponder God's abhorrence of sin and his frightful vengeance upon it, the more likely are we to realize its heinousness. Secondly, to beget a true fear in our souls for God: "let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:28, 29). We cannot serve him "acceptably" unless there is due "reverence" for his awful Majesty and "godly fear" of his righteous anger; and these are best promoted by frequently calling to mind that "our God is a consuming fire." Thirdly, to draw out our souls in fervent prayer for our having been delivered from "the wrath to come" (1 Thes. 1:10).

A.W. Pink, *The Attributes of God*, p. 83-85

God's Character
Our Predicament
God's Redemption
Our Worship!