

We only took six weeks in chapter one. Remember, if Dr. Barnhouse were your pastor it would have been six months. Don't be too concerned about our rapid pace. Just keep the context in mind each week as we continue. Paul has greeted this church in Rome and told them of his desire for mutual encouragement. He has emphasized that righteousness is by faith for everyone who believes. He has said there is no one that has an excuse to not believe, for the truth has been revealed to everyone. But those who reject the truth have been given over to immoral sexual behavior. As he describes them further, he makes us uncomfortable.

<sup>29</sup> *They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice.* (Can any of us say we have not coveted things, or held malice in our hearts toward someone?) *They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness.* (Now wait a minute, why is envy in with this list?) *They are gossips,* (Now hold on! Just because I have mentioned what someone was doing, is Paul adding me in with these given over to sin?) <sup>30</sup> *slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,* <sup>31</sup> *foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.* Romans 1:29-31 (ESV) Some of these surely shouldn't be included... or should they? Paul is drawing us all into the understanding that none of us is righteous. We all need to have faith to be justified before God (1:17).

Chapter two begins by emphasizing that we must not only have faith to be justified, but we live by faith every day if we are justified. It is true that the one who by faith is justified lives. They have eternal life. But it is also true that the just shall live by faith each and every day. This is what he is describing to us in the beginning of this second chapter. It will sound very much like works based salvation if you ignore what preceded this and what follows. But that is not the point Paul is making. He is showing us that **if we have faith our life will manifest the fruit of that salvation in good deeds** (James 2:24).

I've heard so many stories about people who lived like hell, but when they died the pastor told about the time they prayed the prayer of salvation when they were a child, so they must be going to heaven. Well, let's see how that lines up with our passage for today.

<sup>1</sup> *Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things.* Romans 2:1 (ESV) Do you remember Jesus' parable of the tax collector and the Pharisee (Luke 18:9-14)? They both went to the temple to pray. The Pharisee stood apart and prayed a prayer of thanksgiving for being so much better than others,

**Commented [notes1]: Romans 1:17 (ESV)**

<sup>17</sup> For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

**Commented [notes2]: James 2:24 (ESV)**

<sup>24</sup> You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.

**Commented [notes3]: Luke 18:9-14 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: <sup>10</sup> "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. <sup>11</sup> The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. <sup>12</sup> I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.' <sup>13</sup> But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' <sup>14</sup> I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

and especially that he wasn't an extortioner, unjust, or an adulterer, or even like the tax collector. The tax collector just bowed his head, beat his chest, and asked God to please be merciful to him because he was a sinner. Jesus said the tax collector was the one that went home justified. You see, the Pharisee was comparing himself with others (2Corinthians 10:12). The tax collector was comparing himself to the righteousness of God. The Pharisee was boasting. The tax collector was confessing.

Did the Pharisee practice the very same things as the tax collector? If there was envy in his heart, he certainly did. If he just made an unjust comparison, then he certainly did. If he ever lusted after a woman in his heart, then he certainly did.

Paul is telling us the same thing Jesus taught. We are all in need of His saving grace! We ought to be pulling the beam from our own eye before we attempt to help someone else with a speck in their eye (Matthew 7:3). We will be judged by the standard we apply to others (Matthew 7:2).

Paul is telling us that comparing ourselves to others is not a good excuse before God. That isn't God's standard. Many people that you ask today about whether or not they should go to heaven and why will tell you they are pretty good people. They give the same reasons the Pharisee gave in a milder, less demanding form. "I haven't hurt anyone. I don't do bad things. I've never committed adultery." That isn't a good enough excuse. **The wrong we see in others is recognizable because it is in our own heart.** In the case of mankind, it takes one to know one. Remember in the Garden that cunning lie of Satan, "Your eyes shall be open and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." (Genesis 3:5) Half-truths are the enemy's key weapon. They would know good and evil, but not because they were all-knowing, rather it would be because they would identify with the sin in their own heart.

*<sup>2</sup> We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things.* Romans 2:2 (ESV) Well, at least they knew it in Paul's day. We refuse to recognize that truth today. We have excuses for every sin. Some are even saying the Boston Bomber was a victim of gun violence. But that refusal to recognize we are sinners is just what Paul is getting at. We are all destined for the wrath of God unless we are changed by faith. **Believing faith transforms the way we live.** It doesn't make us perfect in this life, but it certainly changes the emphasis of our life, our motivations, and actions.

We do know it deep in our hearts. We may try to ignore it, but it's there. Sexually transmitted diseases and other consequences of evil behavior are plain to see for those who are willing to honestly look at the actions' results. God's judgment isn't just in the next life. It often comes upon us in this life. For the believer it is discipline to turn us back to walking in the Spirit. To the unbeliever it is to bring them to a place of desperation that they might turn to Him and be saved.

**Commented [notes4]: 2 Corinthians 10:12 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> Not that we dare to classify or compare ourselves with some of those who are commending themselves. But when they measure themselves by one another and compare themselves with one another, they are without understanding.

**Commented [notes5]: Matthew 7:3 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?

**Commented [notes6]: Matthew 7:2 (ESV)**

<sup>2</sup> For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you.

**Commented [notes7]: Genesis 3:5 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

Manasseh was one of the vilest kings of Judah. He undid every reform of his father. He offered his sons to idols, burning them in the fire. He set up altars to foreign gods even in the temple of God. He used fortune tellers, mediums, and necromancers. He filled the nation with innocent blood. But when Babylon came and dragged him away with hooks and chains, he didn't turn to those gods he so enthusiastically promoted. He turned to God. God heard his prayer and forgave him and even restored him to the throne before he died. The result of a changed heart was a changed life. He tore down the altars he had built, cleaned out the temple, and restored Biblical worship (2Chronicles 33:12-13). **God's wrath in this life is to save us from future wrath.**

Manasseh's father was godly king Hezekiah, but even he needed the wrath of God to turn him from the pride he slipped into later in life. (2Chronicles 32:25-26) He immediately humbled himself and turned back to the LORD. God's wrath preserved Hezekiah's testimony and heavenly reward.

*<sup>3</sup> Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God?* Romans 2:3 (ESV) If we acknowledge it is wrong and yet do the same, we are even more deserving of wrath. I don't think Paul is saying the readers of the letter practice homosexuality, but rather that we are all sinners. Our sexual temptation may be to crave a romance novel Prince Charming that worships you, or it may be thoughts of adultery, but it is all the same thing. Homosexuality is wrong because it is ignoring God's design, will, and commands. The same is true of all illicit sexual contemplation. It's not about the thought you take captive (2Corinthians 10:5), but the thoughts you dwell on. Paul is trying to get us to see we are all sinners who need to be saved by grace through faith.

*<sup>4</sup> 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?* Romans 2:4 (ESV) Just because we have not come down with some disease or have not acted out what is in our mind does not mean we can continue in our sin while we accuse others. Because you have said the prayer of salvation does not mean you can do as you please because God will overlook your sin. If the LORD loves you, He will discipline you (Hebrews 12:6)! The fact that you haven't met with His discipline yet is just His patience waiting for you to see how merciful He is with you. It does not mean your sin is not so bad or even acceptable to Him. His desire is for us to repent out of a heart of gratitude and love. He would rather you come to Him that way than to have to discipline you.

Isn't that how we are with our own children? We try to help them see how dangerous their disobedience is. We warn them. We sit them in the corner. But if they will not listen, if they will not receive our gentle loving warnings, harsher discipline is needed for their sake.

**Commented [notes8]: 2 Chronicles 33:12-13 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> And when he was in distress, he entreated the favor of the LORD his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers.

<sup>13</sup> He prayed to him, and God was moved by his entreaty and heard his plea and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD was God.

**Commented [notes9]: 2 Chronicles 32:25-26 (ESV)**

<sup>25</sup> But Hezekiah did not make return according to the benefit done to him, for his heart was proud. Therefore wrath came upon him and Judah and Jerusalem. <sup>26</sup> But Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD did not come upon them in the days of Hezekiah.

**Commented [notes10]: 2 Corinthians 10:5 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,

**Commented [notes11]: Hebrews 12:6 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives."

*<sup>5</sup> 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.* Romans 2:5 (ESV)  
For those who are not justified by faith, who refuse to respond to the goodness of God, or to the wrath of God in this life, there will be a day of reckoning. Justice will be served. The hardened heart that continued to resist the love and goodness of God must face His wrath. They are making deposits each day as they use others for their selfish pleasure. As they resist the grace of God and selfishly live for themselves alone, they add to their sin debt that cries out for justice (Deuteronomy 32:31-35).

*<sup>6</sup> He will render to each one according to his works: <sup>7</sup> to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; <sup>8</sup> but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.* Romans 2:6-8 (ESV)  
This truth, that God will reward us according to our deeds, is recorded in Job (Job 34:11), Psalms (Psalms 62:12), Proverbs (Proverbs 24:12), Jeremiah (Jeremiah 17:10), and most importantly is quoted by Jesus (Matthew 16:27). In fact, God is called by the name *El Gemulot, the God who recompenses* (Jeremiah 51:56). Jesus declared that He is the one who will repay. In that day you had better hope you have by faith exchanged your sin for His righteousness.

Your works don't save you, but they do testify of who you are. If you are in Christ you will be walking in the good works God prepared in advance for you to do (Ephesians 2:10). Your sins are covered. If you are not redeemed, you have no remedy for the justice your actions deserve. Jesus, *El Gemulot*, will repay you in full for every evil thought and deed!

How do we balance verse seven with the need to call on the name of the Lord and to believe on the Son (10:13)? The contrast is seen in the next verse. It is seeking to please God versus self. To those who truly seek - calling on the name of the LORD, God will reveal Himself. They will find. They seek the honor that comes from God, not man. They seek the life that He alone can give.

In verse eight we see the great contrast in a word, *self-seeking (ex eritheias - of self)*. The hard hearted seek only to please themselves. Selfish behavior is their normal life. Contrast that with those in whom is the life of Christ. They seek to please Him alone, and in doing so they love their neighbors as they love their own life.

Of the selfish, Paul says they know the truth but refuse to obey it (2Thessalonians 2:12). That is why they deserve judgment. If they did not know, it would be different. As Paul made clear in the first chapter, everyone knows, but they can accept or suppress it (1:18). It is because they live for self that they are unwilling to obey God! Though unrighteousness is their master, they often can't see it.

**Commented [notes12]:** <sup>31</sup> For their rock is not as our Rock; our enemies are by themselves. <sup>32</sup> For their vine comes from the vine of Sodom and from the fields of Gomorrah; their grapes are grapes of poison; their clusters are bitter; <sup>33</sup> their wine is the poison of serpents and the cruel venom of asps. <sup>34</sup> "Is not this laid up in store with me, sealed up in my treasuries?" <sup>35</sup> Vengeance is mine, and recompense, for the time when their foot shall slip; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and their doom comes swiftly.'

**Commented [notes13]: Job 34:11 (ESV)**  
<sup>11</sup> For according to the work of a man he will repay him, and according to his ways he will make it befall him.

**Commented [notes14]: Psalm 62:12 (ESV)**  
<sup>12</sup> and that to you, O Lord, belongs steadfast love. For you will render to a man according to his work.

**Commented [notes15]: Proverbs 24:12 (ESV)**  
<sup>12</sup> 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?

**Commented [notes16]: Jeremiah 17:10 (ESV)**  
<sup>10</sup> "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."

**Commented [notes17]: Matthew 16:27 (ESV)**  
<sup>27</sup> 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.

**Commented [notes18]: Jeremiah 51:56 (ESV)**  
<sup>56</sup> for a destroyer has come upon her, upon Babylon; her warriors are taken; their bows are broken in pieces, for the LORD is a God of recompense; he will surely repay.

**Commented [notes19]: Ephesians 2:10 (ESV)**  
<sup>10</sup> For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

**Commented [notes20]: Romans 10:13 (ESV)**  
<sup>13</sup> For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

**Commented [notes21]: 2 Thessalonians 2:12 (ESV)**  
<sup>12</sup> in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

**Commented [notes22]: Romans 1:18 (ESV)**  
<sup>18</sup> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

<sup>9</sup> *There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek,* Romans 2:9 (ESV) Whether saved or not, (every human that does evil) evil has consequences. Even those who are not saved and do evil face consequences in this life. The Jew first because they have the Word of God. The more we know the more we are accountable (1Peter 4:17).

<sup>10</sup> *but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek.* <sup>11</sup> *For God shows no partiality.* Romans 2:10-11 (ESV) The soul who seeks God rather than self, who by the power of Christ in them obeys the truth revealed to them, will do what is good. They will receive from God, glory, honor, and peace through Jesus.

Paul says that tribulation and distress is for everyone who does evil, but there is also the promise of glory, honor, and peace for those who do good. The Jew receives it first chronologically, but there is no difference (Acts 10:34; Ephesians 6:8). God blesses what is good, He judges what is evil. That is His nature. He can't be otherwise. One's status in life, nationality, head knowledge, religious upbringing, does not matter - the difference is good or evil, self-seeking or God seeker - obedient to the truth or disobedient to the truth they have.

So what are we to take from this? How do we apply it? If you have not exchanged your sins for the righteousness of Christ, you better not wait another day! God is just! If your life hasn't changed don't be fooled into thinking you are saved.

If you are a believer, you will be seeking to live a holy life. Be encouraged. God will reward your labor in Him. **You'll enter heaven because of what Jesus did for you, but you will be repaid in heaven for what God did through you.** We so emphasize that salvation is not by works, and well we should, but we neglect that our heavenly reward is recompense for the work that we allow God to do through us.

If you are under that tribulation and distress, it doesn't matter if you are like good king Hezekiah or the evil Manasseh, turn to the LORD so that He can bless you and lift that burden from you. Glory, honor, and peace are there for all who allow the life of Jesus to be manifest in their life. That is the only way to be good in the eyes of God, as we'll see even more clearly later in this letter to the Romans.

#### Questions

- 1 Do you see yourself in 1:29-21?
- 2 What is the point of our passage?
- 3 What was the Pharisees problem?
- 4 Review examples of the kings' afflictions.
- 5 Why is God so slow to anger?
- 6 What does "store up wrath" mean?
- 7 Does God reward according to works?

#### Commented [notes23]: 1 Peter 4:17 (ESV)

<sup>17</sup> For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?

#### Commented [notes24]: Acts 10:34 (ESV)

<sup>34</sup> So Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality,

#### Commented [notes25]: Ephesians 6:8 (ESV)

<sup>8</sup> knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free.

- 8 What is one of Jesus' God titles?
- 9 What are the main descriptions of those that do evil?
- 10 What is the promise to those who do good?
- 11 How would you apply this passage?