

Romans Chapter 2B

Before I continue in the exposition of Romans Ch. 2 this morning let me remind you of the great value that the reformers placed on the study of this wonderful book.

John Calvin said: *“When any one gains a knowledge of this Epistle, he has an entrance opened to him to all the most hidden treasures of Scripture.”*

Martin Luther said: *“Romans is the chief part of the New Testament and the very purest Gospel.”*

William Tyndale: *“No man verily can read it too oft, or study it too well; for the more groundly it is searched, the preciouser things are found in it, so great a treasure of spiritual things lieth hid therein.”* (You’ve just gotta love the old English)

- Friends I do not believe there is a more comprehensive exposition of the Gospel of Jesus Christ or a more thorough explanation of God’s plan of salvation than that which is found right here in this book of Romans.

Remember in Ch. 1 Paul laid out His Thesis Statement for the book when he said:

Romans 1:16 **I am not ashamed 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.** 17 **For in it (in the Gospel) the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."**

- The good news that Paul proclaims throughout this book of Romans is that Sinful men and women can be reconciled to God by grace alone, through faith in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- By that same grace, the power of sin is broken, death is destroyed and all those who believe are raised to new life by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Looking ahead in our studies, Lord willing, we will explore the breadth and depth and heights of God’s love and find That Nothing in all of creation can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- BUT my friends, before we can scale the mountain tops of God’s love and climb the peaks of his grace, we must begin our journey in the valley of the shadow of death where we are confronted by the fearful reality of our own sinful condition.
- In order for us to truly appreciate the glory of the Gospel and the great salvation that is found in Jesus Christ alone, we must first come to grips with our own depravity. You See.....
- The Good News is only Good News for those who understand the Bad News.
- Friends I realize that our studies in Ch. 1 through 3 may be difficult to swallow week after week. But I assure you, IF you come to grips with the depravity of your own soul here in these early chapters; it will make the glorious feast of the Gospel ALL the more delectable when we reach Romans Chapter 8.

Now, In these early chapters, Paul is playing the role of a prosecuting attorney. He is strategically and meticulously laying out a compelling case for the guilt and corruption of all men. Proving beyond a reasonable doubt that they are without excuse as they stand before the Holy and Divine Judge.

- Moving forward in Ch. 2, after detailing the sinfulness of both the pagan and the outwardly religious populations Paul describes the Judgment of God.

Let's pick up the text in Ch. 2 Vs 2

Romans 2:2 **We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things. 3 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?**

And then in Vs 5

Romans 2: 5 **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.**

- Because Paul has repeatedly mentioned the Judgment of God, He will go on to explain how that judgment works.

Every prosecuting attorney labors diligently, presenting sufficient evidence to prove the guilt of the defendant BUT Only The Judge can determine the verdict.

- In this case, Paul is the prosecuting attorney and God is the Judge. As we move on in Ch.2 we discover the criterion BY which God will judge all men.
 1. INDUSTRY (WORKS) - God Judges men according to their works.
 2. INDIVIDUALLY – God will repay each man individually
 3. IMPARTIALLY – The judgment of God is always just and impartial

First, in Vs 6, Paul states very clearly that God judges men according to their works.

Romans 6: 6 **He will render to each one according to his works:**

- Although this is A very simple and straightforward statement, we need to consider it carefully so that we don't drift off course and end up corrupting the Gospel.
- Now, I am going to give you two statements, I will provide Biblical support for those statements and then I will show you How those two seemingly oppositional statements come together in God's plan of redemption. (Ready?)
 1. God will judge all men by their works. (Vs 6)
 2. Salvation is by grace alone. Through faith alone apart from works.
 - So, Salvation is by grace but judgment is by works. How can that be?

First let's consider the judgment of God which Paul says, is **“according to his works.”** You should know that this idea of judgment by works is found throughout the entire Bible. As a matter of fact, here in Romans 2 Paul is actually quoting from Psalm 62 11 *(Let's read that)* **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.

You see it right there at the end of verse 12, God will render to a man according to his work. And this Judgment by works is affirmed by the Prophets.

Jeremiah declared: "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." 17:10

Moving into the Gospels and we find Jesus teaching the same principle of judgment when he said: 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. Matt. 16:27

- On another occasion Jesus declared:

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. John 5:28-29

- So we've seen this idea of the judgment of God according to the works of man in the Psalms, in the prophets and in the Gospels, let's take a look at the Epistles:

1 Corinthians 3: 13 each one's work will become manifest, for the Day (judgment) will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. 14 If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

- Once again, on that great day, God will Judge all men by their works
- Finally, in a vision from God, recorded for us in the Book of Revelation the Apostle John actually witnessed the great day of God's Judgment and he wrote down what he saw for our benefit. Listen to John:

Revelation 20:11 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. 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. 13 And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, 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.

- As you can see, there is no question about it:
- The Scripture is very clear, both the Old and New Testaments teach that God judges men in righteousness according to the works they have done.

AND yet the Scripture is Just as Clear that Salvation, the cleansing of our sins, our justification and adoption into the family of God is NOT the result of our works but rather, salvation is a gift that comes to us by the grace and mercy of God.

- In the O.T. Abraham received a right standing with God by faith. (Gen 15:6)
- David received the forgiveness of sin by faith in the revealed Word of God.

In Romans Ch. 4 sinful men are justified (declared righteous) by faith apart from works. Romans 4:4 **Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. 5 And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted (or credited) as righteousness,**

- Friends the clear testimony of Scripture is this: No one can earn a right standing with God by human effort or the works of righteousness. Paul's letter to the Ephesians makes that abundantly clear.

Ephesians 1: 7 **In him (In Christ) we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,**

Ephesians 2:8 **For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.**

- SO my friends, we see these 2 points clearly revealed throughout the Scriptures, Salvation is a gift of God that comes to us by grace through faith in Jesus Christ apart from the works of man.
- But it is also clear that When we stand before God on the day of judgment we will be judged according to our works. So My question is this: How can both of these things be true?

Quote John MacArthur

“The subjective criterion for salvation is faith alone, with nothing added. But the objective reality of that salvation is manifested in the subsequent godly works that the Holy Spirit leads and empowers believers to perform. For that reason, good deeds are a perfectly valid basis for God's judgment.”

The Wonderful work of God in regeneration provides sinful man with a new heart and a New Spirit (Ezekiel 36) Now as New Creatures in Christ, those who have been Born of God are enabled by the H.S. to do those good works that God foreordained.

- Regeneration brings the gift of faith, and that faith naturally produces good works in the life of every believer. And that's exactly what Paul said in Eph. 2

Ephesians 2: 8 **For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.**

- In a display of His abundant grace and creative power God transforms the lives of the elect so that they become fruitful in every good work.

James affirms the unbreakable connection between saving faith and good works when he writes: **So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. 18 But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.** James 2:17

- Having been saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, believers possess a newfound confidence as they face the day of judgment. John speaks of this confidence in his first Epistle.

1 John 4:17 **By this (Abiding presence of Christ in Us) is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world.**

- By the indwelling Holy Spirit, And the fruit that He produces, Believers exhibit some of the same character traits that are in Christ.
- Paul describes these traits for us in his letter to the Galatians: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness and self-control.

Now that we understand the criterion by which God will judge mankind let's consider HOW that judgment takes place. God judges every man individually.

Second Point, Individuality

In Verse 6 Paul said, He (God) will render to each one according to his works.

In Verse 9 He said, **"tribulation and distress for every human being"**

In Verse 10 He said, "glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good,"

- It's evident then, that the judgment of God will be an individual judgment. Every human being that has ever lived will appear before God in this judgment. It is both universal and personal. Why do we need to know this?

Because in Paul's day the Jews believed AS the descendants of Abraham, they were a uniquely privileged people. As a part of their national heritage they had a corporate "Get out of Jail Free" which enabled them to pass "GO" collect \$200 and enter into heaven with no questions asked. SO long as you were a Jew you were safe.

- In a similar way many years ago it was thought if you were an American you were automatically a Christian and like the people of Israel you could trust in your godly heritage to bring you all the way to glory.
- I have spoken to a number of people who believed that their membership in a certain church and their adherence to the sacraments of that church provided them with a corporate benefit when facing the judgment of God.
- But my friends, the Scripture consistently teaches Individual Accountability.

While we understand that every one of us will be judged by God individually according to our works, We Also understand that there are only two verdicts that can be rendered from the works of man, He is either Righteous or Reprobate.

- When it comes right down to it you either pass or you fail. You are either a sheep or a goat, a good tree or a bad tree. And the fait of these two groups is correspondingly different. In verses 7 – 10:
 - Paul identifies the Saints by the internal motivation which drives their outward works. And then he moves on to describe their destiny.
 - In the same way Paul describes the motives and actions of the unsaved and He speaks of the destiny of destruction that awaits them.

Romans 2: 7 **to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life;**

- Here Paul describes the life of a believer as one who “Does good” and “Persists continually in doing good.” By virtue of their union with Christ, like a branch connected to the vine they begin producing good fruit. They are not perfect but are productive.
- And then Paul moves on to highlight three essential motivations that drive a believer to do what is good. They are driven by the hope of 1. Glory, 2. Honor and 3. Immortality.

When God graciously opens the eyes of a man to see His Kingdom, the glamour of this passing world fades away like the glory of the moon when the sun breaks through the morning sky.

No longer is that believer driven by lusts of the flesh or the pride of life instead he seeks a different kind of glory. HE is not searching for the glory or honor of men, instead his heart longs for and desires the glory of God.

- Even now, in this present world. the sanctifying work of God is transforming believers into the image of Christ. Paul writes to the believers at Corinth:

2Co 3:18 **And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.**

- According to Paul, even the trials that we face are preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.
- John tells us that when we see him we will be like him because we will see him as he is. And that my friends will be glorious.

Along with that glory believers seek honor, which is the approval of God, and immortality which refers to the hope of resurrection.

- Paul refers to a Believer’s hope of resurrection in Romans 6:

Romans 6: 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

- The New Heart that God gives His children when they are “Born from Above” produces new motivations and new desires that result in Glory, Honor and Immortality.

IN verse 8 Paul contrasts those who prove BY their good deeds that they belong to God with those who prove by their bad deeds that they are dead in sin.

Romans 2: 8 but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.

- The unbelieving are described here as self-centered mercenaries who contend with God because they are bent on rebellion. They reject the revealed truth of God because they are slaves to sin, wholly dominated by unrighteousness.
- And the righteous judgment of God on these rebellious malcontents is described in Vs 9.

9 There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek,

- Tribulation speaks of the crushing weight of God’s wrath. (THLIPSIS – the sled that crushed the grain, or the crushing of the grapes of wrath Rev. 14:18-20)
- The word “Distress” speaks of a narrow place of confinement or constriction. These terms vividly depict the outer darkness of hell.
- BUT the judgment of God on the righteous will result in the realization of all their hopes and dreams. They will experience the glory and honor that they desired and the peace that comes in the presence of God.

10 but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek.

- What have we learned so far? When God judges men, He will judge Him by his Works. We’ve learned that each and every man will be judged individually by what He has done. Every one of us will stand before the judgment seat of Christ to receive what is due for what we have done in the body, whether good or evil.
- Finally Paul assures us that the Judgment of God will be Impartial!

Romans 2:11 For God shows no partiality.

Listen, all of us are sufficiently influenced by our flesh to the point where it is impossible for us to provide an impartial or unbiased judgment. Our knowledge is limited and our wisdom is skewed by our self-serving desires.

We are lenient with ourselves, our family members and friends. We show favor to those who are like us, those who share our ideals, our beliefs even our socio-economic status.

And as much as we would hate to admit it, most of us hold some form of prejudice that clouds our judgment.

- BUT my friends, God is not like us. Within Him, there is NO respect of persons, therefore He shows no partiality in his judgment.
- Peter discovered this truth in the house of Cornelius in Acts 10:

Acts 10:34 **So Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, 35 but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.**

With that in mind I want to take you back to Verses 9-10 where Paul states that the righteous judgment of God will be carried out to, **"The Jew first and also to the Greek."**

- By saying, **"to the Jew first"** Paul recognizes the privilege that was enjoyed throughout history by the Jews. In Ch. 3 He elaborates on that privilege:

Romans 3:1 **Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the value of circumcision? 2 Much in every way. To begin with, the Jews were entrusted with the oracles of God.**

- IN addition to the "General Revelation" that has come through Creation and Conscience, the Jews had the "Special Revelation" Of God's Word.
- They could boast in the fact that among all of the nations of the World, They were privileged to be the stewards of God's revealed Word.
- They had the testimony of the Law and the Prophets.

BUT just because they possessed the Law didn't mean that they obeyed it.

Just because there is a 55 MPH speed limit sign posted every 1/2 mile doesn't mean that you drive 55 MPH Right?

- When the State Trooper stops you along the highway, He is not interested in knowing IF you saw the signs, He is stopping you because you broke the Law.
- The Jews did not get a pass simply because they Possessed God's Law. On the contrary, Their greater revelation gave them greater responsibility.
- When YOU stand before God on that Great Day, the FACT that you had a Bible in your Possession will not matter, WHAT WILL matter is this: DO you Believe the message that is contained in the Bible?

Romans 3: 23 **All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.**

- My Friends it is the Proclamation of the Gospel that Separates the Sheep from the Goats. It is in this life where the eternal destiny of all men is sealed,
- It is in this life where God calls His sheep by name and they follow Him.
- It is in this life God's sovereign plan of salvation is worked out in the lives of his elect.

In the Judgment on that final day, God will be glorified for His Powerful Work in the lives of the elect. God will be honored for His Redeeming Grace and the Children of God will receive a rich reward for the works they have done in HIS name.

Matthew 25:31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne.

32 Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

33 And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left.

34 Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

35 For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me,

36 I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.'

37 Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink?

38 And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you?

39 And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?'

40 And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'