

(Romans) Judgment According to Truth

by Brian Brodersen

God's judgment is according to truth, and everyone will be judged based on their actions, not intentions.

Duration: 40:37

Scripture: Romans 1:18, Romans 2:2-6, Romans 2:14-15, Romans 3:20

Topics: "Gods Judgment", "Repentance"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the principles by which God will judge mankind. He emphasizes that God's judgment is based on truth and that no one can escape it. The speaker also highlights the goodness and patience of God, which should lead people to repentance. However, those who have hardened hearts and refuse to repent are storing up wrath for themselves on the day of judgment. The sermon concludes with a call to action, urging believers to take what they have learned and share the gospel with others.

Transcript

Let's open up to Romans chapter 2. All right. Well, we're picking up in Romans slowly inching our way along here and picking up tonight in the second chapter. We're going to look at the first 16 verses of chapter 2 tonight, but just just to refresh your memory, Romans has been called the gospel of grace.

And the reason for that is because it's in this particular epistle that Paul so marvelously expounds the grace of God. But before he goes deep into the subject of grace, he first shows the absolute need on man's part for God's grace by really showing that every man is guilty of sin. And stands condemned in God's presence.

So he first of all, really, you know, he paints a real bleak picture, which is man's sin, man's depravity. But then he will come and then begin to add God's grace on top of that. And so in these first few chapters, chapter one, verse 18, as we mentioned on through chapter three, verse 20 here, Paul really is acting in a sense as sort of the chief prosecutor.

He's a prosecuting attorney, if you will. And he's building his case against mankind. And so he's in doing this, he's looking at men and in a sense, he's sort of making a division.

All are sinners, but he's in a sense sort of dividing them up into different categories that we, from the human standpoint, would acknowledge or recognize. So in the verses that we looked at previously in our

last study, we looked more or less at the first group and they are those that you might refer to as the debased. They are the openly wicked, the transgressors, those to whom sin has become second nature.

We talked a little bit about that. They're the shameless, the insolent. And he's pretty much stated very bluntly that those who practice such things are worthy of death.

But now, as we come to chapter two, we come to initially this next group, and the next group would be those who do not believe that all the awful things said about the debased pertain to them. Listen to what he says in the first couple of verses here. He says, Therefore, you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge.

For in whatever you judge another, you condemn yourself. For you who judge practice the same things. You see, there would be a group of people that would wholeheartedly agree with Paul's assessment of the debased.

The insolent, the shameless, the openly wicked sinners, they would agree wholeheartedly. Yes, Paul, their condemnation is absolutely just. We concur with you.

But they would see themselves as superior. And these are those that you might refer to as respectable sinners. Now, perhaps you've met a person like that.

Perhaps you have been in the past, maybe, a person like that. Now, the respectable sinners are those who agree quite readily that certain in society need a savior. You ever met people like that? They say, Oh, yeah, boy, I'll tell you, man, that is good for you.

That is great that you got saved. Boy, yeah, you really needed that. But, of course, they don't see themselves in that same category.

They see themselves in a completely different category. They look at certain people. They look at the drunks.

They look at the prostitutes. They look at the drug addicts. They look at the criminals.

In some cases, they might even look at the poor, the uneducated. And they would agree with Paul that these people are deplorable. And they would be willing to concede that these people need some help.

But, of course, they would not see themselves in the same category. They would not see themselves as having any such need. And so it's to this person that Paul is now speaking.

He's speaking to the respectable sinners, if you will. And he says, for in whatever you judge another, you condemn yourself. For you who judge, practice the same thing.

See, here's the reality. The so-called moral man is really no better off in the sight of God than the debased man. And the problem that we have, of course, as people is we tend to judge things by the wrong standard.

We tend to judge things by the standard that we set rather than the standard that God sets. But the moral man, although from the human standpoint, he might be in a completely different category, from the biblical standpoint, he is virtually in the same boat with all of the rest of sinful humanity. You know, your sins never really look all that bad until somebody else is committing them.

You know what I mean? It's amazing how we have that capacity to just sort of be blind to our own condition. But to see that very thing that we are also guilty of in somebody else, it brings out righteous indignation in us. The classic example of this, biblically speaking, of course, would be David.

And you remember the story where David had taken the wife of another man. And he, in order to try to cover up his sin, he even had this man put to death. And then the prophet Nathan came to David with a parable, sort of a story about something that had occurred in his kingdom.

And he told him a story about a man who was very wealthy, had all the livestock you could imagine, and lived in opulence and all of that. And he had a neighbor who was poor and just had one little lamb. And the rich man had a visitor come by.

So instead of going out to his own flock and taking an animal to sacrifice and to feast on, he goes and takes the animal from this one poor man. And Nathan builds this story. And David's sitting there, and he's listening intently.

And his anger is building up in him. And he gets to the point of rage as he hears what this man has done, this great injustice in his kingdom. How dare this man do something like this to a poor man? And he says to Nathan, finally, he just, you know, in this outburst, he says, That man shall surely die.

And Nathan says, David, you are that man. Boy. Oh, he could see clearly, somebody who did anything like that, oh, that's worthy of death.

But he couldn't see that he was the one who was actually guilty of it. And you see, that's the thing. Paul says here, he says that, For in whatever you judge another, you condemn yourself.

For you who judge, practice the same things. Now, of course, there would be many that would look at that previous list that he'd given, and they would deny participating in any of these things. But there are some serious, gross types of sins that he mentions.

But there are a lot of other things that we don't normally think of as sin so often. You know, how often do we really realize that pride is sin? But he mentions here the proud. But pride is a great offense to God.

How often do we think of boasting as being sin, really? We spend much time boasting and being unloving or things. You know, we tend to sort of downplay the seriousness of a lot of these things when God takes them all very seriously. And so, although I might not be guilty of all of the things in this list, I'm certainly guilty of some of them, and that puts me in that same predicament.

It puts me in that same situation. Now, in verses 2 through 16, and that's where we're going to spend our time here this evening, Paul lays down a series of principles by which God is going to judge man. So, let me just quickly read over 2 through 16, and then we'll go back and look at five of these principles by which God is going to judge man.

So, he says, But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart, you are treasuring up for yourselves wrath and the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to each one according to his deeds.

Eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality.

But to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish on every soul of man who does evil of the Jew first and also of the Greek. But glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God.

For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law. And as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law, for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified. For when Gentiles who do not have the law by nature do the things in the law, these although not having the law are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them, in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

So there's several things here, but first of all looking at the principles by which God is going to judge. Now we looked in our previous study at that whole topic of God's judgment. We've been looking at this idea of the wrath of God being poured out.

And now here Paul tells us the principles by which God is going to judge. In verse 2 notice that he is going to judge men according to truth. According to truth there's not going to be any hiding of anything in that day.

There's not going to be anything that's not exposed. You remember Jesus said what you whisper in the ear will be shouted from the rooftops. And there's going to be a complete exposure.

You know, there are those who get themselves into a deluded state thinking that somehow they're fooling God. You know, because they're able to fool other people, they think that somehow they've sort of rationalized the whole thing. And they've really come to such a delusion that they think that somehow they're deceiving God.

Somehow God doesn't see. Somehow God doesn't really know what's going on. But of course the Bible tells us that all things are naked and open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

Man, God sees more than we could ever imagine. He sees it all. He doesn't only see the activity that takes place, but He knows the motive behind every action.

He knows the thought and the intent of every human heart. And all of those things will factor in to the judgment. So, you know, what this basically tells a person and what a person is to derive from this reality is that you don't have a chance of squirming your way out of justice if you happen to make it before the great white throne of God.

There's not a chance. Because judgment is going to be according to truth. Now, we live in a corrupted world and a corrupted culture and our judicial system, of course, is so filled with all kinds of problems.

And there's so much deception. All of the lies that just are constantly being told and all of the deceit that is involved. You know, we've seen so many examples of this.

And yet God's judgment is going to be according to truth. Whatever God does, it's going to be according to the absolute truth. Secondly, in verse 5, we see that God's judgment is going to be according to

accumulated guilt.

Paul says that as a man refuses to repent, what he's actually doing is he's treasuring up wrath for himself. The longer a person resists, the more wrath he stores up for himself. That's what's happening.

And it's that accumulated guilt that will ultimately bring the judgment. Have you noticed? I'm sure you have. We see it biblically, but we also experience it in life.

We see it in our world. How slow God is to judge a situation. He just goes on and on and on, being good to people, blessing them.

Now, what's God's purpose behind that? Why does God do that? Quite often, I have been frustrated by God's slowness in judging a situation. God, why don't you deal with that? Why don't you deal with those people? Why doesn't God deal with people swiftly? Because God loves people. Because God wants to give them every opportunity.

Because He wants them to repent. Because God doesn't want to judge anybody. So instead of immediately judging people, He keeps blessing them.

He keeps being gracious to them. Now, what Paul says here is that that goodness and graciousness of God. God's intention is that a person would come to their senses and repent.

That's what He says. He says that the goodness of God. You're despising His riches and His goodness.

His forbearance and His long-suffering. Not knowing or not realizing that the goodness of God is intended. That's the idea.

Is intended to lead you to repentance. That's why. But people draw the wrong conclusion.

They say because God hasn't judged, it means He doesn't care. It means He doesn't know. It means I can just keep doing this and I'll get away with it forever.

No, that's not what it means. It means that God loves you and He doesn't want to judge you. But as He demonstrates His goodness toward you, that is His call to repentance.

But when we resist that, then the wrath builds up. And it's an accumulated wrath when it eventually comes. The scripture says that He that hardens His heart or He that stiffens His neck often.

Will suddenly be cut off and that without remedy. You see, God will be patient with a person. He'll give them opportunity after opportunity after opportunity.

And people inevitably misinterpret that. But there's a point when all of that stops. There is no remedy and then the judgment comes.

But that is going to be the case with the final judgment. It's going to be according to accumulated guilt. And then in verse 6, we read that judgment is going to be meted out according to deeds.

You see, it's not going to be based on what a person intended to do. You know, how many times have we used that excuse? Oh, well, you know, I was going to get to that. I was planning to do that or, you know, I didn't mean to do that.

Now, I have never intentionally meant to speed. I mean, I don't jump in my car and think, all right, I am going to break the speed limit right now. But I have had a few speeding tickets.

Now, I have tried to convince the officer that he shouldn't give me a ticket based on the fact that I didn't mean to do this. I wasn't paying attention. It wasn't an intentional violation of the law.

But, you know, the officers that I have dealt with have just never been interested in any of my explanations. They could care less about what I was thinking or wasn't thinking. All they care about is this.

Hey, look at the radar screen. Look at your speed. That's what I am giving you the ticket for.

And so that's what Paul is talking about here. Man is going to be judged by what he has done. People are going to say, oh, well, I didn't mean to do it.

It doesn't matter if you meant to do it or didn't mean to do it. The fact of the matter is you did do it. And that's, the judgment is going to be based upon what people have done.

Now, of course, there are many things that we do that we don't even think all that much about. And there are probably things that we have done that we might not even remember. But I'm sure God has a creative way of reminding people on that day of why they're being judged.

I know for sure, and I'm sure you would agree, there are going to be many people that would be tempted to protest the judgment against them. They would be tempted to say, well, wait a second. No, I didn't know that.

Or, no, I didn't really mean that. And I'm sure that God's got better technology than we do. And He's going to be able to just bring it right back up on the screen or whatever.

And say, no, well, let's just look at that situation. And then, you know, let's see what really did happen. And, of course, we'll know at that moment that, again, the judgment of God is according to truth.

But look at verse 11. The judgment of God is without partiality. You see, in a corrupt world, and when you have a judiciary that's become corrupt, one of the things that you have is you have partiality in judgments, don't you? I mean, you think of some of the cases that we've seen over the past, you know, maybe 15 years or so, where there's obvious partiality that's being shown to certain people because of their position in society, because of their wealth, perhaps, because of their family connections or something like that.

And because that's the way the world operates, people deceive themselves into thinking that they're going to somehow be able to pull something like that off if they do happen to arrive before God's throne, if there happens to be such a place. You know, they're going to plead some family connection or something like that. Hey, did you know that my second uncle on my mom's side, did you know he was a minister? Do I get any points for that? No, no points for that.

No partiality. Doesn't mean anything. You might be, you know, related to the most godly person that ever lived in your generation or in your location or whatever, but that doesn't matter.

There's no partiality. God is judging things absolutely according to the facts. But here's the ultimate one.

Verse 16. God is going to judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ. In other words, the standard that every man will be measured by is the standard of Jesus Christ.

You see, that's what everyone needs to realize. It's not how much better I am than the guy next door. It's not how much better I am than the guy I work with.

It's not how, you know, all of those comparisons that we make, which is what we generally do to sort of excuse ourselves, don't we? If we've got a problem and we try to find somebody else that's got a worse problem, and then we console ourselves to the fact that, well, I'm not as bad as that guy. But that's not the standard. And this is the mistake that people constantly make.

Humanity constantly makes this mistake of failing to see the standard by which God is going to judge. The standard is Jesus. God's not going to line you up beside me or vice versa.

He's not going to put you up against another person and say, Oh, yeah, well, you know, you did a lot better than he did, so come on in. Every man is going to be measured alongside of Jesus Christ. And guess what's going to happen? Obviously, you know what's going to happen.

Every man is going to fall far short of the standard that God requires. So now, you see, Paul is bringing all of this out to basically show one point. As I mentioned to you before, in these first three chapters, Paul has one purpose, one purpose only.

He comes at it from a lot of different angles, and he's dealing with these different groups of people, the obviously wicked, the respectable sinners. And then we'll move on to see how he deals with the religious man. But his point is always heading in the same direction, that man, apart from the grace of God and the salvation of Jesus Christ, is absolutely hopeless in regard to saving himself.

There's no way he can do it. It's an utter and complete impossibility. Anybody who thinks they're going to get to heaven because they've been a pretty good person doesn't have the slightest idea about spiritual realities.

Of course, there's a lot of people around us that are in that boat, aren't there? Many people, they don't have the foggiest idea. They somehow have just bought into this, you know, it's almost like an American folk religion that's permeated the culture where the idea is you just try to do your best, you know, try to be kind and helpful to people and not be too bad. And just hope for the best in the end and, you know, shoot up a prayer to the, you know, to the guy upstairs once in a while, and, you know, it'll all work out.

The good Lord will take care of it, you know. How many times have you heard that? You know, the good Lord's going to... The man upstairs, you know, got the connection, you know, and all that. This is a delusion.

This is a complete deception. The last thing any human being ever wants to do is stand before God in his own or her own righteousness. That's the last thing you want to happen to you.

The very last thing. You only want to stand before God clothed in the righteousness of Christ, and that's what the gospel is all about. Now, we'll get back to that in just a second, but I want to just take a quick diversion here just to explain something.

Now, you know that people are very often trying to find fault with God and always implying that God is somehow not fair, and especially when you bring up the topic of judgment. And any talk of judgment or thought of judgment generally brings out of people that, well, that wouldn't be fair. Well, God wouldn't be fair.

And oftentimes people are accusing God of somehow not being fair. Now, in verse 12, I want you to notice what it says, For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law.

Now, based on the statement there in verse 12, many people have said that. Hey, well, that's not fair. What do you mean? They're going to perish without the law.

They never had the law in the first place, but they're still going to perish. Shouldn't it be that because they didn't have an opportunity to have the law that they would be given a break? And there's that constant attempt to point the finger back at God and to somehow accuse Him of unfairness. But verses 14 and 15 answer that accusation.

Look what it says. It says Gentiles who do not have the law. He's talking about the Mosaic law.

When Gentiles who do not have the law by nature do the things in the law, these also not having the Mosaic law are a law to themselves. And listen to this. Who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness.

You see what Paul is basically saying is that the reason God can judge and even condemn those who have never laid eyes on the Mosaic law is because even though they don't have the Mosaic law, they still have laws. And those laws are derived out of those traces of God's law that still remain in the heart of man. You see, when man was created, apparently, God's law was written on his heart.

Now man, of course, rebelled against God and sin entered in and man died spiritually and that law that was written on his heart was marred to say the least. But what Paul implies here is that there's still enough of that contained within every single person to condemn them. And we talked about that before.

People know intuitively what's right and wrong. They just know it. Never having necessarily even been taught, people know that certain things, that's wrong.

How do you know that? You know that because there's traces of God's law in the heart of every man. Now, every society, every culture throughout all of time has had some legal system, has had some standards, some rules, some laws. They're derived from this darkened sense of law within them.

Now, understand this. You see, human laws are all connected back to the greater laws of God. Now, if we fall short of the human standard, how much farther short do we fall of the divine standard? So you see, here's the thing that Paul's saying.

When these people break their own laws, they indirectly break the law of God because their own laws are derived from the law of God, but their own laws have an even lesser standard. And if we can't keep the lesser standard, how could we ever imagine that we could keep the higher standard? So what Paul is proving is that it's not an injustice for God to condemn people because everyone is in violation of the law. Not necessarily the written law of Moses, but that which is connected to it, the law that was written on the human heart.

So, point being this. God is going to judge according to truth. There's no unfairness.

And for those people who are often very concerned about the Aborigines or that, you know, group of people that nobody's discovered yet out in the jungle and, you know, how is God going to deal with them?

Don't worry about them. Worry more about yourself because the Scripture is full of examples of greater light brings greater responsibility. So we've got the greater responsibility because we have a greater revelation and the judgment, of course, will be more severe.

And Paul is going to point that out as he moves on to the Jews. The Jews who thought they were better than everybody else, Paul is ultimately going to show them you're actually in a worse predicament than the Gentiles because you have a ton more light and you've sinned against more light. That puts you in a more desperate state.

Now, in closing, this is, again, what we want to keep in mind. What Paul is saying here in looking at the principles by which God is going to judge is this. He is basically saying that God's judgment is going to be so complete and so thorough that no man will possibly survive it.

There's no way to survive the judgment of God. If you end up before the great white throne of judgment, you're only there for one reason. You're only there to be sentenced to eternal damnation.

You see, we do not go before that throne of God to see whether or not we've lived up to the standard so we can get into heaven. God's told us in advance, we've fallen short of His glory. The person who arrives before the great white throne of God arrives there to be sentenced.

So, what we want to do is make sure we never end up there. And, of course, that's what the gospel is about. That's why Jesus came.

He came to pay the penalty for our sin, to cover our sins, to clothe us in His righteousness so that great white throne, that dreadful day of judgment is something that doesn't even come into the picture for me. That's why Jesus said, He who hears my word and believes in the one who sent me has everlasting life and shall not come into judgment, but they have passed from death into life. That's what He's talking about.

When He says they won't come into judgment, what He's saying is, those who believe in Me will not appear before the great white throne of judgment because we have already passed from death into life. You see, those who end up at the great white throne of judgment and have these principles applied in their judgment, these are the ones who have attempted or sought or in some way deceived themselves into thinking that they could stand before God and pull it off, that they could actually make it out of that judgment and make it into heaven. That's Paul's point.

It'll never happen. It's an impossibility. That's why the gospel is absolutely necessary.

That's why Paul said that he was a debtor to all men because he understood like nobody else did, well, others did, but I mean, he had a thorough understanding that no adherence to moral principles, no devotion to any religion, none of those things would avail a man in the day of judgment. The only thing that will avail a man in the day of judgment is to be clothed in the righteousness of Christ that he offers through what he accomplished for us on the cross. You know, to reject God's gift of salvation is the greatest offense in the universe.

I hear people say a lot of times, well, you know, I just have a hard time with this idea of hell and how could God judge people eternally? You see, a person who says that doesn't understand what the issues are. This is the greatest offense. God extends a royal invitation to people and to reject a royal invitation is a serious thing.

You know, if you lived under a monarchy and the king summoned you to the palace, you don't just blow that off and say, well, you know, I'm busy. I don't have time. I can't go.

What does the king think, you know? Does he know I've got a job and I've got responsibilities? No, you drop everything you're doing and you get down to the palace. And that's what's happened. The gospel is a royal summons from heaven.

And anyone who spurns that, anyone who rejects that, the wrath of God comes upon them. So this is what's driving the apostle. This is what's causing him to go against all of the odds, to board ships and sail all around the Mediterranean, to hike all over the countryside, to put himself in danger of being robbed and being beaten and all of those things, to risk going into a mob and proclaiming the gospel, even though he might be beaten or stoned or something like that.

To him, none of it matters because this message and this reality outweighs it all. And, you know, I really feel, guys, that we've got to get that perspective back. Cheryl was telling me yesterday, we have this thing, it's a little devotional, and it's 365 days of church history put into a devotional thing.

So it gives you some little church history event each day. And she was telling me about the one she read yesterday where a person, George Whitefield, when he came to the colonies from England to preach, he had many people that opposed him. And this particular little quip talked about one of the men who was originally an opponent of Whitefield, but he was converted through Whitefield's ministry and became a follower of Jesus Christ and a helper of Whitefield, but how he was taken by Whitefield's opponents and he was beaten half to death.

And her comment to me just in passing was, you know, it's interesting that the thought of any such thing, we just couldn't imagine anything like that in our culture. We couldn't imagine anything like that in our experience. If we get a little bit of flack at work or somebody says they don't like us because we're Jesus freaks or whatever, we have a meltdown.

I can't believe it. But we're talking about people who risk their lives. And I personally think that in the days ahead, that's the kind of people that we're going to have to be.

But if we understand what's at stake, if we understand the reality of the gospel and the utter hopelessness of the human situation, like Paul, we will be men who are driven. We will, like Paul, be able to say, you know, I'm a debtor. I have an obligation to take what I know and to get it out to other people.

And may God use us. May God use you. May He use you on the job or in your neighborhood, with your family.

You know, in these days, I believe the Lord wants to get us up and moving. You know, out of the spectator mode and right into the thick of the battle because it is a battle. And it's a battle for souls.

And the stakes are high. It's eternity. So we know that.

We're coming to understand that more and more. And may God empower us to take what we're learning and translate it into action. Lord, we thank you that we have heard the gospel.

And Lord, that we've received the gospel. Lord, that you have poured your grace upon us and that we are saved. And that we don't have to live in fear and trembling of that judgment that's coming.

But to know, Lord, that we've passed from death into life. Lord, may these realities, may these great truths, may they sink into us deeper and deeper. And Lord, may they motivate us to love you, to obey you, and to serve you.

And Lord, for those respectable sinners, help them to see their true state. Help them to see their true need, that they might come to their senses and be saved. Lord, pour out your spirit upon us.

Pour out your spirit upon this church, Lord. Upon this community. Father, we pray for this event Saturday morning.

We thank you, Lord, for all the men that are going to come and gather together and the opportunity to worship you collectively and to be encouraged. And may we, Lord, indeed be greatly encouraged this weekend. And built up, bless the speakers, the guys that are coming to share the word.

May they come with a word from the Lord. Lord, may it be not us men up there merely, but may we be the oracles of God. May we be speaking into the lives of your people on this occasion.

And may you do a great work in the hearts of many, we pray. And bless, Lord, our meeting now as we gather together to encourage one another. Bless that time, we pray.

In Jesus' name, amen.

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