

# The Righteousness of Faith - Part 2

by Roy Hession

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*Roy Hession's sermon emphasizes the righteousness of faith and the necessity of recognizing our sinfulness against the backdrop of God's grace and judgment.*

**Duration:** 54:41

**Scripture:** Romans 1:18-25

**Topics:** "Righteousness Of Faith"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes that the Gospel is not just good advice or a set of ethical teachings, but rather it is good news that brings about transformation. He highlights the power of the Gospel as God's chosen instrument for moral miracles. The preacher then discusses the concept of judgment, stating that God's judgment is based on truth and deeds, not just words or intentions. He also points out the progression of man's refusal to recognize God, leading to God giving them up to uncleanness and ultimately to their own destruction. The sermon emphasizes the need for all people to recognize their guilt before God and the importance of the Gospel as the solution for bad people.

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## Transcript

Will you turn again to the epistle to the Romans? Romans chapter 1 and we will read from verse 18. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who, revised version, hold down the truth in unrighteousness. Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has showed it unto them.

For the invisible things of him, since the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse. Because that, because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like the corruptible man to birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things.

Wherefore, God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the creator, who is blessed forever. For this cause, God gave them up unto vile affections, for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature. And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another, men with

men, working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error, which was meat.

And even as they did not like, did not want to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient, being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, in strife, deceit, malignity, whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful, who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them. Therefore, thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest, for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself, for thou that judgest doest the same things. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against such, I'm sorry, I've missed my place, but we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.

And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance, but after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasures up unto thyself roar against the day of roar and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds, to them who by patient continuance and well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life. But unto them that are contentious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile, that glory and honor and peace to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile. For there is no respect of persons with God.

For as many as have sinned without law, shall perish without law. And as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law. For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

For when the Gentiles which have not the law do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law are a law unto themselves, which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of man by Jesus Christ according to my gospel. Behold, thou called a Jew, and wrestest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent being instructed out of the law, and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, the light of them which are in darkness, and instructor of the foolish, a teacher of days, which has the form of knowledge and of truth in the law, thou therefore which teachest another, teachest not thou thyself? Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonest thou God, for the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. For circumcision verily profiteth if thou keep the law, but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy vaunted circumcision is made uncircumcision.

Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision, and shall not circumcision which is by nature, if it fulfill the law, judge thee who by the

letter and circumcision does transgress the law? For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh, but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart in the spirit and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God. What advantage then hath the Jew? Or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way, chiefly because unto them were committed the oracles of God. Verse 9. What then? Are we better than they? No, in no way, for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under sin.

As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one. There's none that understandeth, there's none that seeketh after God, they are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable. There is none that doeth good, no, not one.

Their throat is an open sepulcher, with their tongues they have used to see it. The poison of asps is under their lips, whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood.

Destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace have they not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that what things whoever the law said, it said to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

May God add his blessing to the reading of his word. Those folks at the back, come in. Seats up here.

Now, yesterday we allowed ourselves to be introduced by Paul to the main theme of the gospel, the good news for bad people, which he is going to unfold. He says that this gospel is utterly different from a mere ethic. It isn't giving good advice, but it, it pronounces good news.

There's no power in mere good advice. The results depend entirely on whether the person receiving the good advice accepts it and does it. And as we are so utterly incapable, it always breaks down.

So often what we give to people is good advice. Sometimes what is preached from our pulpits is nothing more than good advice. Even we evangelicals, so often it's mere good advice, what we ought to be, what we ought to do, our responsibility as Christians.

And the more you labour that, the lower the spirit of the poor feeble saints goes. No, even when we preach to the saints, we have to give good news, good news for bad people. And this blessed good news, this gospel as we saw, is God's instrument of power, his chosen instrument by which he performs moral miracles, glorious transformations.

It's seen so many, and we have, have we not? We know it in our own experience. And he says the reason why it is an instrument of power, because in it is revealed the righteousness which is from God. A perfect divine rightness with himself is offered to the man who knows himself completely wrong.

God, for Christ's sake, is delighted to count the one who repents utterly right with himself. A divine righteousness is revealed for the sinner. And that is entirely and utterly for empty-handed faith.

Works, merit, and striving neither help nor hinder us. Indeed, I think they hinder us, they certainly don't help us. This is something for empty sinners.

And then having said that, about this wonderful, great, basic blessing of the gospel, which is revealed, he then gets onto something else. If this is good news for bad people, bad people must see that they're bad. Otherwise this message is utterly irrelevant.

And so we have in verse 18, in contrast to this rightness with God revealed for the sinner, the wrath of God is revealed in the same gospel, the very gospel that speaks of good news for bad people nonetheless has to present its gifts against the backdrop of the wrath of God. We can't get over it. There it is in the scripture again and again, the wrath of God.

Now in the book of Revelation you have that phrase, the wrath of the Lamb. And I believe that helps tremendously in understanding the wrath of God, the wrath of the Lamb. Those people in the book of Revelation who ask that the hill shall fall upon them and hide them from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb.

What an extraordinary phrase, the wrath of the Lamb. Why, the Lamb is the gentlest of all, the meekest of creatures. If there's one creature that doesn't retaliate, it's a lamb.

You can kick a lamb, it doesn't turn around and try and snap at you. And this is the name which heaven delights to give to our Lord Jesus, who was meek and lowly in heart, who when he was reviled didn't revile again. And yet here you have this phrase, the wrath of the Lamb.

And this wrath is all the more terrible because it is the wrath of the Lamb. You see, the Lamb is concerned for the downtrodden, is concerned for the others, he's pitiful towards weak people, pitiful towards those who have nothing. And when he sees me wrong another, his very love for that other provokes wrath in me who am hitting, hurting, being unkind to those that perhaps can't defend themselves.

He stands up for the meek of the earth because he is the Lamb. It is his very love, his very pitifulness towards others that brings me unto censure when mine have an attitude other than his. And oh, when he sees in this earth the oppressed, over the centuries, not only in the wider spheres of political oppression, but the oppressed in our homes, he's not unmoved, the wrath of the Lamb.

And because he is the Lamb, he must hold inquisition for blood. Because it is love for men that there's wrath against that which ruins and spoils the precious lives that he loves so much. And it's against the backdrop of the wrath of God that you have the glorious rainbow of the grace of God who submit to that wrath, acknowledge themselves worthy of it.

And the moment they do, there's good news for such people. I think, well, I don't know that we really enter into the reality of these things. Paul says, knowing therefore the terror of the law, we persuade men.

I don't know it really. And there's a sense in which we aren't perhaps expected fully to know it. We perhaps wouldn't sleep at night if we really knew it.

Might become demented about others. He knows what he's doing. He's calling out his elect.

But he's a fag. The wrath of God is revealed from heaven. And now the Apostle Paul has to apply this backdrop of judgment first to the two classes into which he divided the world of his day.

The world of his day to Paul was divided just into two. The Gentiles, all the many nations, and the one nation, the Jew. And there was a tremendous difference at certain levels between the two.

God had selected one nation out of the mess, out of the wreckage, and given them privileges that none else had, in order that ultimately the whole world should be blessed through them. They misinterpreted that, of course, as we know. Gave them a law of priesthood and knowledge of himself and of his demands

that others hadn't got.

Now the Apostle Paul is concerned to bring both those great classes of people under the judgment of God. They are under it, but he's concerned to get them to see it. Otherwise what he's got to offer them is going to be utterly irrelevant.

First of all, there's the Gentile. I think he found the Gentiles a little easier to convict of sin than the Jew. And by the way, of course, we can regard the world today divided into two sets of people.

The irreligious and the religious, that equally are to see themselves under the judgment of God. Now, the Gentile world of that day, I suppose it's true of the Gentile world today, was one terrible moral morass. One can just gather the state of the society of those days by the instructions given in the epistles to the little called-out ones who had to live in that corruption.

But the interesting thing that Paul does here, he doesn't describe the symptoms of immorality and perversion, principally. He goes right down to the source of the trouble. He doesn't merely hold up his hands in horror at the symptoms.

He reveals the source. And he tells us that they are men, though they seem to be so benighted, who nonetheless have the truth. But they're holding it down in unrighteousness.

And that is their supreme condemnation. And he's concerned to show us that the Gentile is without excuse, even in his darkness, in his idolatry, and everything else. He says, you see, that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them.

It isn't they don't know the truth. They, even these benighted Gentiles, and the truth is said is true of the heathen, they have had a revelation of God, says the scripture. They're not where they are in mere ignorance.

There is enough light from God to lead every heathen nation to the worship of the true God. That's what the Bible says. Very different from what we normally thought.

They're poor people, they're benighted, they just don't know, they've just been ignorant, and we must come and teach them. And we excuse their idolatry. The Bible does it.

They are without excuse for their idolatry. That's what the Bible says. And I believe the missionary has got to charge his benighted congregations of being without excuse.

It says so. That which may be known of God is manifest to them, for God has showed it to them. You say, how has he showed it to them? He's given them a glorious book in which they may read of their creator, the book of creation.

For the invisible things, ever since the creation of the world, are clearly seen. Hear that. Clearly seen.

Even his eternal power and Godhead being understood by the things that are made. That's what Paul says. They are clearly seen.

Oh, redemption isn't seen in the book of creation. But the supremacy of God, one glorious, beneficent God, is clearly seen. And if they're falling down to idols, if they're involved in the complications of Hinduism, my Bible says it's not because they didn't know.

Revelation has been made enough for them to turn away from such futile vanity to the true God. I don't know whether, how much this is the common method of going on on the mission field. I'm going to talk to Cyril after this and discuss it with him.

See, I think he's with me. It's what Paul says anyway. Oh yes, there's revelation made.

But they didn't want it. They didn't want it. They're without excuse because that when they knew God, literally it wouldn't be the God of redemption, but the God of creation, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful.

Now this really is the sin of the whole human race, that we have rejected God as God. And have refused to play our place as dependent creatures. The devil said to Adam and Eve, in the day you eat of that tree, you will be as God.

Remember that? In the day thou eatest thereof, ye shall be as God. You will be as God. You're only a dependent creature having to do what you're told.

But in the day you eat of that tree, you will be as God. And they rejected God as God and set themselves up as little tin-pot gods. If God is God, he is obviously intended to be the center of life around which we are to revolve.

But man's basic sin is this, that he's made himself the center. And each man wants his life to circle around himself. The central letter of the little word sin is I. I, at the center of my life, at the center of my day, rather than God.

And I rejected God as God. And I'm trying to be that sort of person myself. And that is the sin of the whole human race, including the heathen.

And because they wouldn't have God as God, all their thinking, all their philosophies, were utterly wrong. They couldn't but fail to come to the wrong conclusions all the time. Tremendous wisdom.

I know when I went to India, I was amazed at the depth, the intellectual depth, the philosophies of Hinduism, their religion antedates Christianity. A culture, an art form, a philosophy. Terrific.

But you see, if we are refusing only one factor in our consideration, everything else is going to be wrong, especially when that one factor is God. And so, Paul isn't talking about mere savages, intellectual heathenism, of which there was much in Greece, and there is in India and many other parts of the world. When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools. And the same is true of us in the West. If a man is unwilling to acknowledge God as God in his right place, in God's constellation, he's going to be wrong at every one of his thoughts.

I don't care what degrees he may have. Professing himself to be wise, he becomes a fool. And he's going to set up all sorts of false gods for himself.

And they change the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like a corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. And so, as Paul looks out on that Gentile world, on Greece with its wonderful mythology, and its gods, on Mount Olympus, and all the rest, so intellectual, so

beautiful, but utterly false. And he says, they are without excuse.

You see, an idol is very accommodating. You see, man wants to worship something. He must.

But this God who is revealed in creation, you've only got to think a little bit. There's a great God, and somehow you know that that invisible God is going to make moral demands on us. And we're not willing for moral demands.

And therefore, although we must worship, we make an idol. That's what they've done. In order that they might satisfy their religious instincts, but without any moral demands such as God makes.

Well, today, we may make our idols of other things, intellectual things, material things. These are the things that are controlling us. And it's convenient that they don't make these moral demands that the true God makes upon us.

Well, now, he penetrates things right through there. Before leaving this basic sin, which has caused all the rest, one other thing. Do you notice this? Apparently, the human race began in monotheism.

They knew God. And because man failed, then you get polytheism. The normal idea, perhaps not amongst us, but out in the world, is that the whole human race was polytheistic, and as we've evolved and got better and better and more enlightened, we come to monotheism.

The Bible says it's the other way around. The Bible does not teach evolution in any sphere at all, but always devolution. Man began with the knowledge of the true God, but he wasn't willing to have God as God.

And he degenerated into polytheism. That, by the way. Now, having shown us there is the source of all the trouble.

Man's refusal to recognize God as God. He can't even know God himself. Then, he says, God gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts.

It's this refusal to recognize God as God which lies at the bottom of all moral corruption in our world. Three times we have this phrase in this portion. God also gave them up to uncleanness.

Verse 24. Verse 26, for this cause, God gave them up unto vile affection. Verse 28, even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to... Please turn the cassette over now.

Do not fast wind it in either direction. Verse 28, even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind. This is the history of the sin of man.

It's just because men wouldn't have God as God that God says, all right, I'll let you go. And moral perversion, of which there seems to be such an increase today, is explained here. Because a man does not like to retain God in his knowledge, God can give that man up to uncleanness, to sexual perversion.

And not only to sexual perversion, but to all the many other things that mark life today. Yes, I can see a graduation here. First of all, man's refusal to recognize God as God.

Secondly, God giving him up to uncleanness. Thirdly, the men themselves giving themselves over to it. For in verse 32, we read about them, who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such

things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but consent with or have pleasure in them that do them.

I think that's the last ditch. A man may be doing things in secret, but he hates them sometimes. And certainly, he would always profess to disapprove of those that do them, other people who are doing them.

But when a man not only does them, but is hand in glove with others too, who approves them, who says this is the right sort of thing, that is the last ditch. Knowing the judgment of God, that they that do such things are worthy of death, not only do them, but consent with and get in with the others that are doing them too. Not only has God given him up to uncleanness, but he's given himself up.

And you know, I didn't have quite enough time to get all the references along this line, but you who know your New Testament will know that when Paul talks about the wrath of God, it is so often in connection with uncleanness. Is that right? In Ephesians, Colossians, Galatians? No whoremonger shall inherit the kingdom of God? As I've told you before, the they that do such things shall inherit the wrath of God? Let us get this quite clear. These are the things that incur the wrath of God, not the only thing.

But somehow or other, Paul seems to link them. And we've got to regard, we've all got these tenets in our heart, we've got to regard them in the light. This thing is something that is worthy of the wrath of God.

There's a movement perhaps to say, well, these things are natural. For such things sake, the wrath of God, we read, comes on the children of disobedience. And we must expose every tendency in our own hearts to that wrath.

And yet, isn't it interesting? There's no class of sin for which there's such ready and quick forgiveness as this class of sin. None seem to be so quickly restored, so readily forgiven, as those that were adulterers and fornicators in the gospel. Oh, how quick God is to forgive and at last be repentant.

But if we don't, we're incurring the wrath and censure of almighty God. These are the things for which God brought the flood upon the world of the ungodly. Did you know that? There was an extraordinary sexual perversion that nearly wrecked the human race.

God had to exterminate them, lest they'd spoil his race. This was the reason why the Canaanites were exterminated as they were. Our race wouldn't have been a pure race, it could have corrupted the face of the whole race.

God in mercy used Israel as his scourge. It was his very love for the race that said, this must go. And I think we must always regard it in that light.

It absolutely rots and destroys the root of the race, of the family life, of the community of God. And it's here again and again. When I just make that, give you that reference, again and again, I'm going to have a look at and list those.

That invariably, when he speaks about the wrath of God, it's in relation to uncleanness. And yet, for our sake, man must have forgiven so quickly and readily as those who have been guilty, if only in minor degrees of these things. And it seems to make little difference to the grace of God, if the man is guilty of them in major degrees.

Where sin abounds, grace, oh so quick, is quick to abound. Then he goes on to the Jew. And again I say, his purpose is to show both classes of people, not only subject to the judgment of God, but to be without

excuse.

And the reason why he's at pains to show both Jew and Gentile to be without excuse for their sin is in order that grace might truly be grace. You see, if you answer badly, it isn't really your fault, then there's some little procuring cause for mercy. And if that's the case, grace is no longer grace.

Did you know that? Perhaps we put our fingers in there and turn over to Romans 10, to see a definition of grace. Romans 11 rather, Romans 11 verse 6. And if by grace it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace. The moment you're not so bad, the moment there are extenuating circumstances, then you're not really a fit object for grace.

Grace is for those for whom there is no excuse. No excuse. We read that the purpose of the law is that every mouth may be stopped.

No excuse. Well, he's shown that in the case of the Gentile. No excuse.

Only that they might thereby see themselves as fit objects of this grace that never did look for any procuring cause in its object. And the Jew, likewise. Now, the Jew differed in many ways, but basically in this.

Whereas the Gentiles not only did the things, but took pleasure in those that did them, and approved of them, the Jew didn't approve of them. He held up his hands in horror of what went on in Gentile communities. He condemned a lot of them.

He was given the law of God that so roundly condemned these things. He approved it. He embraced it.

And in the light of that law, he looked at these people, and he condemned them. And yet, apparently, they were only men. They were fallen men.

And in one way or another, they were doing exactly the same sort of things, perhaps on a more polite scale. Perhaps doing them in the back garden where the Gentile was doing them in the front. And yet, utterly unaware that he was equally a sinner in God's sight as those Gentiles.

And therefore, Paul has to bring the word of God to them. Therefore, thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest, for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself, for thou that judgest doest the same thing. And God has been bringing that home to my own heart.

We do not stand very much, in some ways, like those Jews of old. We are Christians. Some of us are not yet born again, but perhaps, nonetheless, members of churches with a good Christian heritage behind them.

And we hear these things, and we disapprove them. We condemn them. And yet, we may be doing the same thing, but on a more polite scale.

But that more polite scale just doesn't count with God. Maybe, if we hadn't got the background we had, we'd be much more abandoned in the things we're doing quietly. Maybe the fact that we're not openly abandoned is not because we love holiness for its own sake, but because we just wouldn't dare.

If we are willing to dabble in sin on a small scale, it's quite clear we would do it on a big scale if we could do it with its unity. If we were actuated by the love of holiness alone, we would be as scrupulous about little

things as in large things. The fact that we're not scrupulous about little things shows we're really actuated only out of concern for ourselves, our reputation, what people would say.

If those considerations were removed, we probably wouldn't be any different from anybody else here. We are allowing ourselves to play with sin on a small scale. And yet, in spite of the fact that we're doing that, we so easily take out a disapproving attitude to others, and we condemn them, whereas we're doing the same things ourselves.

How easy that is to do. David did that. When he was told that story by Nathan, about the rich man who spared to take of his own flock, but stole the one new lamb of that poor man-neighbor of his, he said, the man that's done this thing is worthy of death.

And the prophet said, you're the man. He was inexcusable. For wherein he judged another, he was condemning himself, for he that judged was doing the same thing.

And only the dear Holy Spirit can show us that fact. We'll deceive ourselves, we just won't see it. Thou art the man.

And you know, the best way to help that other person is to get alongside him and say, brother, God showed me I'm in the same boat. Maybe not on the same scale, but it doesn't count with God. It's probably only selfish considerations that kept me within bounds.

We've got to look at ourselves, but in spite of the fact that we've got so many privileges others have, that hasn't helped us one bit in the sight of God. We're sinners as much as them. I did want to turn, we won't have time, to Matthew 5. You know the passages.

I'll just allude to them, you know. It is said that you shouldn't commit adultery, but I say unto you, he that looks on a woman to lust. We haven't done the deed, but we have the lust.

It's the same in God's sight. It is said you shall not commit murder, but I say if you hate another, resent loving, it's the same. Oh, we condemn those who do the outward things, but we're doing the same thing in God's sight.

Now quickly, he says three things to people in this state. First he says, verse three, do you think, do you think that you will escape the judgment of God just because you're judging others doing these things? We feel the judgment of God is worthy on the moral purpose of today. All right, if the judgment of God began with them, are you quite sure it would end with them? Would it not include us too, of course? But we do think that just because we take up a disapproving attitude toward these things, that will save us from the judgment.

It will do nothing of the sort. The judgment will apply to them, will apply to us, in spite of the fact we take such higher ground. Then he says, are you presumed, verse, the next verse, are you presumed on the kindness and forbearance of God? You see, we've been doing all sorts of things, not always honest, not always pure, not always truthful, manifesting very unsavory attitudes in our homes, and much else.

But nothing's happened to us. We haven't been struck dead. In fact, we seem to have been blessed.

Do you know you can even be used of God? And we think that because judgment against an evil work is not executed speedily, it doesn't matter, that we are all right. We don't know that the forbearance of God,

his forbearance, he's not visited us, was intended to provoke us not to go on in those things, but to repent of them. The very goodness of God was intended to lead us to repent.

And sometimes we may have been used in his service when we went right, when things went clean. That isn't an occasion for saying, it doesn't matter, but rather a verse, oh lord, your goodness, if you could ordain me to do that, makes me hate it more. But oh, we can misinterpret the goodness of God, and regard it as a license for going on.

I speak this to my own heart. The fact that God uses you doesn't necessarily mean you're right with God. The fact that he seems to answer your prayers, that he seems to pour good things into your laps, and prospers your family, doesn't mean necessarily you're right with God.

It means, maybe, that that very goodness is intended to lead us to repent. Later on in this epistle, Paul says, behold the goodness and severity of God. Sometimes it is through his severity, his humbling chastening that he provokes us to judge ourselves.

Other times it's his goodness. And yet we can misinterpret that. These things hast thou done, says God in Psalm 50, and I kept silent.

Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself, but I didn't care any more than you did. My silence was my goodness to give you space to repent. And then he says, thirdly, what in actual fact you are doing is treasuring up to yourself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

We've heard that praise about laying up treasure in heaven. Here's another sort of treasure we may be heaping up every day when I'm not willing to repent and come to Christ and get things right. And the same is the day for which I've got to, the more for which I've got to give an account, treasuring up ourselves wrath against the day of wrath.

Now I'm speaking to you, I don't know, not necessarily speaking to you saved or otherwise. We're starting at the beginning. This is the truth which we've got to see.

And then I'm hurrying on now to certain things he says about judgment. This is a classic of judgment, this chapter. It's still in the Bible.

It isn't it's still there. First of all he says four things. The judgment of God in verse two is according to truth against them that commit such things.

He says it's going to be according to truth. He knows the whole truth about it. Others don't know it.

They may misjudge, but he knows the truth. And we, the sinners, are going to be judged by the truth. Secondly he says our judgment is going to be according to deeds, to works, who were rendered to every man according to his deeds.

Not according to his words, not according to his intentions, but according to his works. It's very interesting to note that whereas salvation is by grace, judgment is by works. It's going to be pre-eminently fair.

It's according to works. And Paul sets out. He says on the one hand, the man that's done good, eternal life.

The man who's been contentious and doesn't obey the truth, law. But you say that sounds like as if there's an offer of salvation by works. Yes, there is an offer of salvation by works.

But Paul is at pains to show that there's no one qualified to obtain salvation by works. Yes, the offer, sure, God must be fair. If you can obey the law's commands, then you get eternal life.

But Paul's at pains to show you haven't and you never will. Therefore you're shut up under grace. It means that if a man goes to hell, he's only got himself to thank.

But if he goes to heaven, he's only got Jesus to thank for him. Judgment by works, salvation by grace. Well, thank God some of us know that wonderful grace that's saved.

And then in verse 11, judgment is without respect to the person. Oh, the judgment seat. There's going to be no distinction.

Every distinction is going to be level. The church member is going to be on the same level as the prostitute. They're going to be judged according to works, not their intention, never outward, but say it really.

Even the preacher, if he's unsaved, is going to be on the same level as everybody, without respect to persons. And even in we who are saved, this daily judgment of judging sin in God's light is always without respect to a person. The fact that I'm on the platform doesn't make any difference without respect to persons.

I've got to answer. I've got to judge myself. The fact that I'm doing what I'm doing for God doesn't give a man one little bit of a special place of consideration.

It's sinnerly. And then it's going to be by Jesus Christ, verse 16, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of man by Jesus Christ. In John 5 it says, God hath committed all judgment unto the Son.

And do you know, I believe men will prefer to be judged by any other than by Jesus Christ. They prefer to be judged by God rather than by Jesus Christ, because there's quite a lot of acknowledgement of God. God this and God the other.

We go to church to worship God. But you know, somehow how the word Jesus sticks in the old thread, unless you've been to Calvary. And God says, all men are to honor the Son as they honor the Father.

If a man honors not the Son, he honors not the Father that sent him. God's going to judge men by the very one whom they turned away from, whom they were ashamed of, whose grace they were not prepared to receive. You've heard the old story maybe of the man who was involved in a court case and who refused the services of an attorney, of a barrister.

He thought he'd get through without such a big expense. When at last the court case came on, he found that the one who was his judge was the one who before had offered himself as his barrister, as his attorney. He'd been promoted.

He knew a whole story. He hadn't a chance. He'd prefer to anybody else to be the judge than that one.

And the one who offers himself, my friend, to be your savior. If you don't receive him, he'll be your judge. You'll be without excuse.

You had the opportunity. You say, oh, but I'm a church member. I rest in the law.

I'm a Sunday school teacher. Just what is said in this very passage. I do it to prove of these things.

But you've been doing them yourself, friend, in one way or another. And our crowning sin was that we never veiled ourselves of Jesus and his blood and his grace. May I just close by paraphrasing verses 17 onwards.

God and knowest his will and approves the things that are more excellent being instructed out of the law. And are confident that thou thyself are a guide to the blind, a Sunday school teacher, which has the form of knowledge and truth in the law. Thou therefore which teaches another, do you teach yourself? Thou that preached a man should not steal, do you steal? Are we always purposely honest? Thou that says the man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit it in your heart, in your thoughts? What a passage.

Then in verse 18, for he is not a Christian which is one outwardly. He is not a Christian which is one outwardly. Neither is that confirmation which is outward in the flesh.

But he is a Christian which is that which is one inwardly, whose confirmation is that of the heart in the spirit, not in the letter, whose praise is not of man but of God. And so what Paul has to say to the Jews applies to us who have had religious privileges. Well now, this is all very inadequate because there's so much of it, but I'm taking one more minute or so.

He sums it up in the first half of the next chapter. He says in verse 9, we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles that they're all unworthy. It seems to me that Paul would have us understand that you and I have an almost unlimited power to commit sin.

But once it is committed, we have no power at all to atone. Once it's done, there's nothing that you can do to undo it. Nothing can ever rescind the great edict that the wages of sin is death.

Here's a man whose house is due to be demolished by the city corporation in a week's time. He's nonetheless busy redecorating the house. He can redecorate it if he likes, but it's going to make no difference.

It's coming down in a week's time. And we can be religious. We can be respectable.

But it's going to make no difference, friend. You're lost nonetheless. If only by our unwillingness to repent it and receive the Lord Jesus as our Savior.

Power to commit sin, but no power to atone for it and to remove it once it's done or to rescind its wages, which means that I'm shut up unto God. And what is my astonishment when I find he's the God who wants to save me. He's the God who wants to bless me.

He's the God who wants to put me into right relationship with himself. And so Paul prepares us for his glorious next bit. It begins with, but now.

Having shown us to be without any righteousness before God, but now it shows us there's a new right standing, a new rightness with God for the man who sees he hasn't got any at all. It was singing that hymn, Lord I was blind, I could not see, in thy fair visage any beauty you know, but now, but now. And I trust we're going to have a glorious but now, all of us, in a new way in our lives.

We see grace meeting people who are without excuse and are prepared to acknowledge that fact. We then find ourselves able to appreciate as never before God's blessed good news for bad people. Let us pray.

Lord Jesus, we want to submit ourselves to thy judgment now. We, Lord, confess that we have subtly thought that because we disapproved of certain things, that that very fact would cause us to escape thy judgment. We know it doesn't, but oh how we thank thee that when we do submit ourselves to thy judgment now, and not wait to that time of the great white throne, we may taste the sweetness of that grace and mercy that's extended to us.

Interpret these things for us, we pray thee, in our hearts, in thy dear name, the grace, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, evermore. Amen.

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