

# What we do Matters

6.23.24

Romans Series

Message

Romans 2:1–16 (CSB)

## GOD'S RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT

**2** Therefore, every one of you<sup>1</sup> who judges is without excuse. For when you judge another, you condemn yourself, since you, the judge, do the same things. <sup>2</sup>Now we know that God's judgment on those who do such things is based on the truth. <sup>3</sup>Do you think—anyone of you who judges those who do such things yet do the same—that you will escape God's judgment? <sup>4</sup>Or do you despise the riches of his kindness, restraint, and patience, not recognizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance? <sup>5</sup>Because of your hardened and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment is revealed. <sup>6</sup>**He will repay each one according to his works:** <sup>7</sup>eternal life to those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor, and immortality; <sup>8</sup>but wrath and anger to those who are self-seeking and disobey the truth while obeying unrighteousness. <sup>9</sup>There will be affliction and distress for every human being who does evil, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek; <sup>10</sup>but glory, honor, and peace for everyone who does what is good, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek. <sup>11</sup>For there is no favoritism with God.

<sup>12</sup>For all who sin without the law will also perish without the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. <sup>13</sup>For the hearers of the law are not righteous before God, but the doers of the law will be justified. <sup>14</sup>So, when Gentiles, who do not by nature have the law, do what the law demands, they are a law to themselves even though they do not have the law. <sup>15</sup>They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts. Their consciences confirm this. Their competing thoughts either accuse or even

excuse them <sup>16</sup>on the day when God judges what people have kept secret, according to my gospel through Christ Jesus.

## 1. Being Jewish does not save you.

A. This is Paul's key point:

1. We all fall short of God's glory.
2. All are lost.
3. We all need Jesus.

B. The Jews weren't raised that way.

1. They believed that as long as they were circumcised and had the Law, then they were saved regardless of what they did.
2. Many believed that Abraham himself sat at the gates of hell to ensure that no Jew would enter there.
3. To draw a modern parallel, many believe that they are guaranteed eternal life as long as they are baptized or receive the Last Rites.
4. Many in our day believe that by attending church, we are assured eternal life.

C. **But the Apostle is adamant:**

- 1. We are saved by Grace through faith.**
- 2. And what we do matters.**

## 2. What we do matters.

A. We are never saved by works.

1. Paul addresses those who are trying to keep the Law.
  - a. The trap was that by having the Law, the Jews thought they were special.
  - b. But the Law could only reveal God's righteousness and show our sinfulness.

2. The Law never had the power to save from sin, but only expose it.

a. That's why sacrifices had to be repeated.

b. That's why the priests never lacked a job, because the Law's power was to show sin, not forgive it.

3. But when the Jews thought salvation came from the Law instead of as a gift from God, they worked like their salvation depended on it.

a. Many of us work for the Lord not as an act of worship but as a way to avoid hell.

b. We can easily believe that we are saved by our work.

c. This is especially true in the Mormon and Jehovah Witness, where salvation is never certain.

4. Salvation by Works says we are saved by what we do.

B. Salvation by grace through faith teaches that because Jesus loves me and has changed me, I do what pleases him.

1. My work becomes worship.

2. Salvation is understood as a gift instead of a wage (Paul talks much more about this in Chapter 4).

3. Wages are what we are owed, and what we are owed is death.

4. But the Gift of God is eternal life.

C. But this does not excuse sinful behavior.

1. **Grace does not excuse sin.**

2. Here is what Paul writes in Romans 6:

**Romans 6:1–11 (CSB)**

What should we say then? Should we continue in sin so that grace may multiply? <sup>2</sup> Absolutely not! How can we who died to

sin still live in it? <sup>3</sup> Or are you unaware that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

<sup>4</sup> Therefore we were buried with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too may walk in newness of life. <sup>5</sup> For if we have been united with him in the likeness of his death, we will certainly also be in the likeness of his resurrection. <sup>6</sup> For we know that our old self<sup>r</sup> was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be rendered powerless so that we may no longer be enslaved to sin, <sup>7</sup> since a person who has died is freed from sin. <sup>8</sup> Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him, <sup>9</sup> because we know that Christ, having been raised from the dead, will not die again. Death no longer rules over him. <sup>10</sup> For the death he died, he died to sin once for all time; but the life he lives, he lives to God. <sup>11</sup> So, you too consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

3. Grace is not a license for sin.

a. Grace is permission to walk in a new life.

b. Mercy is not a free pass but the death of the old life and resurrection to a new life.

4. The Apostle Paul declares in Romans 2:6, God will repay.

5. Repay what?

### 3. God repays according to works. V.6-8

A. Notice what the Apostle writes:

Romans 2:6–8 (CSB)

**<sup>6</sup> He will repay each one according to his works:** <sup>7</sup> eternal life to those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor, and immortality; <sup>8</sup> but wrath and anger to those who are self-seeking and disobey the truth while obeying unrighteousness.

1. Eternal life is given to those who BY persistence in doing good...

2. Persistence and doing good are required for repayment.

3. This is not a one-time moment but a continuous and progressive action.

a. This depicts someone who isn't satisfied with merely showing up.

b. But they participate, they train, they practice, they continuously and regularly persist.

4. When we persistently pursue good by seeking glory, honor, and immortality, we receive Eternal life.

a. Glory, honor, and immortality can be deadly pursuits.

b. Many great people of history have chased after these things: Napoleon, Alexander the Great, and the Roman Emperors.

c. But the difference here is that instead of finding glory, honor, and immortality through the normal means of conquest, greed, or oppression, instead we persist in finding these things in and through Jesus Christ.

d. Jesus told us to seek first the Kingdom of God.

e. Jesus told us that those who seek to save their lives will lose them...

5. Persistence seems to be one of the missing ingredients in American Christianity.

a. We have no time or appreciation for the process and demand immediate results.

b. We've gotten away from traveling, meditating, fasting, and seeking.

c. Our prayers, our churches, our worship have become disposable.

d. If it doesn't work, throw it away and get something different.

B. The self-seeking receives wrath and anger.

Romans 2:6–8 (CSB)

**6 He will repay each one according to his works:** <sup>7</sup> eternal life to those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor, and immortality; <sup>8</sup> but wrath and anger to those who are self-seeking and disobey the truth while obeying unrighteousness.

1. This is what Jesus said!

a. If we put ourselves first, we are last.

b. When we put ourselves first, we receive God's wrath and anger.

2. The sins of glory and gratitude.

a. When I elevate myself or anyone else ABOVE God and give His glory and Gratitude to lesser things, I receive God's anger and wrath instead of eternal life.

b. The Apostle says that when we do this, we are disobeying truth while obeying unrighteousness.

C. Here is how this applies to us:

1. **When we act contrary to what God has revealed, walk in disobedience, and suppress the truth, we confess to the world that we are not saved.**

2. When our lives do not demonstrate righteousness, Paul says we despise God's riches: riches of kindness, restraint, and patience.

D. How we live matters.

1. One of the things that I'm noticing among my generation and those coming up is that we have no tolerance for hypocrisy.

2. The sense of justice is high.

3. The expectation of leaders is high.

4. One of the surest ways to lose credibility with younger generations is to declare you are a believer while hiding sin.

#### 4. The God who reveals will reveal the secrets of humankind.

##### **Romans 2:12–16** (CSB)

<sup>12</sup>For all who sin without the law will also perish without the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. <sup>13</sup>For the hearers of the law are not righteous before God, but the doers of the law will be justified. <sup>14</sup>So, when Gentiles, who do not by nature have the law, do what the law demands, they are a law to themselves even though they do not have the law. <sup>15</sup>They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts. Their consciences confirm this. Their competing thoughts either accuse or even excuse them <sup>16</sup>on the day when God judges what people have kept secret, according to my gospel through Christ Jesus.

A. The same God who reveals wrath and righteousness also reveals our innermost lives.

1. Regardless of whether we are Jews and judged by the Law or Gentiles judged by nature and conscience, we all will be judged.
2. The God who loves to reveal reveals the truth about each of us.

B. This understanding of God is clear in the OT.

##### 1. **Numbers 32:23** (ESV)

<sup>23</sup> But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the LORD, and be sure your sin will find you out.

##### 2. **Proverbs 28:13** (CSB)

<sup>13</sup>The one who conceals his sins  
will not prosper,  
but whoever confesses and renounces them  
will find mercy.

C. If you are paying attention to what is happening in the body of Christ, you will notice that there is a great revealing of past and secret sins.

1. Just last week, two very popular pastors confessed to hidden sin in their past.

2. This is not by accident, nor do I believe the revelations that are happening are the work of Satan.

a. The exposing of sin is the Lord's work.

1. Satan pounces on the opportunity.

2. But it is the Lord who reveals sin.

b. The exposing of sin satisfies what Paul spoke of here in Romans 2.

c. He will repay each according to his works, first to the Jew (those closest to God) and to the Gentile.

### 3. **1 Peter 4:17 (CSB)**

<sup>17</sup>For the time has come for judgment to begin with God's household, and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who disobey the gospel of God?

What does this mean for us today?

#### **A. No one can hide from the eyes of God.**

1. There is coming a day very soon that ALL of humanity's sins will be revealed at the judgment of Christ.

2. In the present, the Lord is exposing the sin and wickedness of those who claim to be followers of Christ.

3. Confession is important because it brings out the secret places of our lives that do not belong.

a. Either we can expose our sin to the light and word of Christ or He can expose it for us.

b. But someday, it will all be revealed.



c. 1 Cor. 4:5 says that the Lord will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and reveal the intentions of the hearts.

**B. Exposing sin can precede revival or exile.**

1. For example, When God exposed the sin of Nineveh, it led to repentance and a season of revival.

2. When God exposed the sin of Israel, too often, they rejected God's leading, and it led to exile.

3. In the history of Christianity, revivals, great awakenings, and reformations began with a revelation of our sin and need for a Savior.

a. Then, when the people responded with repentance, God did amazing work among them.

b. As God exposes the sin of the American Church, we can either respond with repentance or we can respond with arrogance and disobedience.

c. **We get to choose Revival or Exile.**

**C. There is great grace and great power.**

1. God forgives!!!

a. He forgives sin.

b. He heals broken people.

c. He restores, reconciles, and redeems.

2. And, God empowers.

a. God has not left us powerless to the influence of sin.

b. The Holy Spirit helps us overcome sin.

c. It is not God's will for your life to fall back into sin.

d. You don't have to live a scandal-filled life because God has not left us without tools, armor, weapons, and power.

Prayer for forgiveness and empowerment.