

The Hammer of Righteousness

Romans Series

6.16.24

Father's Day and Baptism

Romans 1:32 (CSB)

³²Although they know God's just sentence—that those who practice such things deserve to die—they not only do them, but even applaud others who practice them.

Romans 2:1–16 (CSB)

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

¹²For 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. ¹³For the hearers of the law are not righteous before God, but the doers of the law will be justified. ¹⁴So, 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. ¹⁵They 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 ¹⁶on the day when God judges what people have kept secret, according to my gospel through Christ Jesus.

Introduction

A. Back nearly 100 years ago, small towns had a much smaller form of government.

1. Small towns like Birch Tree, MO, would elect one person, and he would serve as mayor, town sheriff, and judge.
2. My great-grandfather served in that capacity and he had two symbols of office.
3. The town sheriff carried a badge, and as judge, he wielded a gavel.

Most of us have seen this sort of thing in episodes of Andy Griffith, in which Andy was the sheriff and local judge.

B. The symbol of authority for the sheriff is not the gun, but the badge.

1. The symbol of authority for the judge is not the jail, but the gavel.
2. It isn't the threat of punishment that gives them power; it's the embodiment of truth within the law.
3. The goodness and perfection of righteousness requires wrath and punishment.

C. Romans 1 opened with a shot aimed at Gentiles.

1. Imagine being in the crowd, and Phoebe reads this to you.
2. If you are Jewish, you are cheering the letter because you aren't an idolater or involved in sexual sin.
3. You don't struggle with homosexuality or gossip or slander.
4. So Preach, Paul, Preach.

D. And then Paul drops the hammer that shatters us all:

1. We all are guilty of gossip, pride, boasting, being unmerciful, and unloving.
2. The hammer of righteousness, without Grace, destroys us all. Vs 3.
3. For all have sinned and fall short of the Glory of God.
 - a. None of us are without sin or excuse.
 - b. None are righteous; none are holy;
 - c. None have it all together.

Let us look at what Paul is saying here.

1. Paul opens with, Therefore, every one of you who judges...

A. This opening directly ties us to the end of Chapter 1.

Romans 1:32 (CSB)

³²Although they know God's just sentence—that those who practice such things deserve to die—they not only do them, but even applaud others who practice them.

1. With this, the Apostle Paul brings the Jewish audience under the same sentence of judgment.

- a. All are without excuse.
- b. All are guilty of sins of glory and gratitude.

2. Both those who practice such things and those who approve deserve to die.

B. This was big because many Jews believed they were exempt from Hell.

1. A common tradition claimed that Abraham himself sat at the gate of Hell to keep all Jews out, regardless of their deeds.¹
2. The Jews believed they were the favorites and exempted from the plight of the non-Jews.

a. But this wasn't true, as Paul tells them in Romans 2:11 that there is no favoritism with God.

1. Yes, the Jews were a special people.
2. Yes, God had shown them great favor.
3. But they fell under the same judgment as everyone else.

b. It's much like the story of a wealthy, well-connected son who is shocked when he is convicted of crimes.

c. Surely, he thinks, the law does not apply to him.

C. But that's the point:

1. The law of sin and death does apply.
2. Apart from Jesus, we are all lost.
3. Apart from declaring Him King, the hammer of righteousness destroys us all.
4. Jesus said that "No one is good except God." (Mark 10:18)

2. You can't judge me!

A. Paul says, "Therefore, everyone who judges is without excuse."

1. Because all are guilty, gentiles and Jews, and because sin and unrighteousness are not limited to those who do the sin but also those who applaud and approve, all fall under judgment and condemnation.

¹ R. Kent Hughes, *Romans: Righteousness from Heaven*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1991), 52.

2. But some of the Jews, again, thought they were exempt.
3. They judged others guilty and worthy of death and eternal punishment, but they, too, were guilty.

B. Christianity is a religion of judgment.

1. We all stand judged either through or by Christ.
2. The waters of Baptism represent this:
 - a. To identify with Jesus' death in water baptism is to declare that our old ways of life have been judged through Jesus.
 - b. Because the old me has passed away, I live a new life in Jesus.
 - c. I do not fear future death or judgment because the punishment for my sin has been paid by Jesus.
3. **But those who do not confess Christ as Lord will one day be judged and will pay the price of sin, which is eternal death.**
4. Judgment is foundational to Christianity.

C. The Apostle Paul did not have problems with Jesus' judgments but ours.

1. One of America's most popular Bible verses is "judge not lest you be judged."
 - a. These words from Matthew 7 are usually thrown about and mean, "Leave me alone."
 - b. But the biblical teachings on judgment are actually bigger than we give it credit for.
2. Notice what Jesus says in Matthew 7:1-6 (CSB):

"Do not judge, so that you won't be judged. ²For you will be judged by the same standard with which you judge others, and you will be measured by the same measure you use. ³Why do you look at the splinter in your brother's

eye but don't notice the beam of wood in your own eye?
⁴Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the splinter out of your eye,' and look, there's a beam of wood in your own eye? ⁵Hypocrite! First take the beam of wood out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to take the splinter out of your brother's eye. ⁶Don't give what is holy to dogs or toss your pearls before pigs, or they will trample them under their feet, turn, and tear you to pieces.

D. Both Jesus and Paul agree that our judgment is flawed.

1. But neither throw up their hands.

2. In 1 Corinthians 5 and 6, Paul told believers in Corinth to judge each other:

1 Corinthians 5:9–13 (CSB)

⁹I wrote to you in a letter not to associate with sexually immoral people. ¹⁰I did not mean the immoral people of this world or the greedy and swindlers or idolaters; otherwise you would have to leave the world. ¹¹But actually, I wrote you not to associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister and is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or verbally abusive, a drunkard or a swindler. Do not even eat with such a person. ¹²For what business is it of mine to judge outsiders? Don't you judge those who are inside? ¹³God judges outsiders. **Remove the evil person from among you.**

a. Paul boldly tells the church not to judge those outside the body, for they are already judged.

b. But they were to boldly judge each other according to God's righteous standard.

c. **To confront sin in the body of Christ is biblical and necessary.**

3. Yet our judgment must be:

- a. Redemptive, not just punitive.
- b. Gracious and merciful, for we have been shown both.
- c. Based on God's Word, not our personal opinion.
- d. And humble, as we all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

3. Are we condemning ourselves?

Romans 2:1-4

Therefore, every one of you who judges is without excuse. For when you judge another, you condemn yourself, since you, the judge, do the same things. ²Now we know that God's judgment on those who do such things is based on the truth. ³Do you think—anyone of you who judges those who do such things yet do the same—that you will escape God's judgment? ⁴Or do you despise the riches of his kindness, restraint, and patience, not recognizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?

A. When we judge others for sins we are presently committing, we stand judged.

- 1. The warning is not to judge, but don't condemn in others what is condemned in us.
- 2. The excuse, "nobody is perfect," is too often a cop-out instead of a confession.
- 3. If we keep living in sin when we know God's righteous judgment, we "despise the riches of his kindness, restraint, and patience," whose purpose is to lead to repentance.

- a. God shows mercy because He wants us to be changed.
- b. The Jews too often confused favor for permission.

B. Is the American Church condemning herself just like the Jews were in Rome?

- 1. I LOVE the Church, because Jesus loves the Church.

2. But are we measuring up to God's righteous standard?
3. Are we not guilty of all the same sins that Paul mentioned in Romans 1?
4. What are we to do?
 - a. The answer is not for us to be silent.
 - b. The answer is for us to align our words and our actions with what Scripture teaches.
 - c. To humbly and boldly walk the paths of righteousness that God has laid before us.

C. I submit to you today that the Church is losing influence in the culture because we are guilty of the same sins we condemn.

1. Too often, the Church assumes the same hypocritical place as the Jews in Rome.
2. We believe that because we go to church, give money, and are good people, that we are kept from God's righteous decrees.
3. But verse 3 applies to us as well:

³Do you think—anyone of you who judges those who do such things yet do the same—that you will escape God's judgment?

4. What is this passage saying to us today?

#1. Going to Church does not make us exempt from judgment.

1. We must ask ourselves, "Are we doing the same things we are condemning?"
2. Are we declaring one standard for the world while giving ourselves exemptions?

#2. Righteousness matters because wrath matters.

1. Remember, both the righteousness and the wrath of God are revealed from heaven.
2. Why should we live the righteous lives that Jesus calls us to?

3. Because truth matters, and God's truth is not just the goal but standard.

#3. Live by standards, not goalposts.

1. These past two weeks, I've been careful.
 - a. I neither want to condemn people nor confirm their sin.
 - b. What Paul lays out for us is a description of living that draws God's wrath.
2. What we see is a standard.
 - a. Standards are predetermined, clearly defined measurements.
 - b. For example, a meter is a meter and is clearly definable.
 - c. A yard is always a yard.
3. Consider the image of a home plate from a baseball field.
 - a. The size of the home plate is always the same regardless of what age group and level you play at.
 - b. The size does not change from Little League to Major League.
 - c. Home plate is a standard, not a goal.
4. Compare that to the Goalposts in football.
 - a. The goalposts in football are different in high school compared to college and NFL.
 - b. High school goalposts are 23'4" wide and 20' tall, while NCAA and pro goalposts are 18'6" wide and 30' tall.
5. The Apostle Paul is giving the church standards, not goals.
 - a. It doesn't change from me to you, clergy to laity, or Jew to Greek.
 - b. God's standards are standards.

c. Scripture is the standard by which we measure.

6. When Christlikeness is a goal and not the standard, we make optional what should be required.

a. Ephesians 5:1-2 (CSB) Therefore, be imitators of God, as dearly loved children, ²and walk in love, as Christ also loved us and gave himself for us, a sacrificial and fragrant offering to God.

Close: The hammer of righteousness, without Grace, destroys us all.

A. But thanks be to Jesus who redeems us, saves us, and empowers us to live for Him.

1. In a few moments, we are going to celebrate with those who are being baptized in water.

2. Before we do so, are you living for Jesus?>

B. Are there areas and arenas in your life that God is convicting you in?

1. The good news is that conviction is a sign of love.

2. Where God convicts of sin, He also empowers us to live for Him in holiness and righteousness.

3. My prayer for you today is this:

C. May you never, again, be comfortable in your sin.

1. But instead, may you be empowered for holy living.

2. May we all live lives that glorify God and express gratitude for His life-changing love.

Pray:

Baptism:

Romans 6:4 (CSB)

⁴Therefore 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.

What we see today is a declaration that the old me has died and I'm walking in newness of life.

That is why the front of our baptistry says, "Repent and Be Baptized!"

The waters of baptism proclaim death to the old me and happy birthday to the new me.