

## “Jews, Gentiles & a Judge”

### Romans The Gospel of God

Romans 2:1-11

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**Jeff:** Our gracious Father in heaven, we are thankful, thankful people because of what You have done for us in the Lord Jesus Christ. Father, thank You for redeeming us from sin. Thank You for lifting our feet from the mire. And Father, thank You for doing that by sending Your Son who stepped into the mire on our behalf, that He might be treated as if He were a sinner when He was not, that we might have His righteousness and life abundantly in His name. Father, as we come to You we are thankful for these things.

And we need to preach the gospel to ourselves daily. And so we pray, Father, that You will give each one of us help in where we are. Some of us need to hear the convicting power of the gospel. And some of us need to hear the blessing of reward. But Lord, we know that Your Spirit is in us and will minister to us just where we are. So we ask for it, we plead for it.

And Father, we ask that You will bless us as we find ourselves in Your word in Romans, the Word that You've used throughout history for the good of Your people. Father, we anticipate You using this same Word for good in our presence and in our midst—and not just here, and not just to tickle our minds, but so that our lives might be changed—that they might be different, that they might be shaped according to the cross, that we might go out into the world and into our families, and be different as a result of having been in Your word.

Father, we pray that You'll be with Sig while he is apart from us. We pray that You'll be with his wife Nancy and continue to minister to her. Father, we pray as well for Bruce. And we ask, Lord, that Your hand would be upon him for good. Lord, we ask and pray that You will certainly strengthen his wife as she cares for him.

And Father, be with us. We each have needs. We each have concerns of the heart. We pray that You'll minister to us and to those we love. Adapt our eyes to Your word and bless us. Strengthen us by Your grace as we study it, for we ask it in Jesus' blessed and precious name. Amen.

**Brave Men:** Amen.

**Jeff:** Okay, Don.

**Don Maurer:** Okay, Jeff.

**Jeff:** Okay. Why don't we turn to Romans chapter 2, verses 1-11. Let me read God's word to you this morning.

*“Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you who judge practice the very same things. We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things. Do you suppose, O man, you who judge those who practice such things and yet you do them yourself, that you will escape the judgement of God? Or do you presume on the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.*

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*“He will ‘render to each one according to his works.’ To those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, He will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, for the Jew first and also the Greek, but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality.”*

**Ted Wood:** This is the word of the Lord.

**Brave Men:** Thanks be to God.

**Jeff:** I was a little late in—*(Laughter)*

**Ted:** It should flow naturally.

**Jeff:** Huh?

**Ted:** It should flow naturally.

**Jeff:** Yes, it should flow naturally. You know, sometimes it does, and then other times,-- *(Laughter)*

**Don:** It flows naturally if you’re an Anglican. *(Laughter)*

**Jeff:** It flows more naturally if you’re an Anglican.

**Ted:** It’s part of the historic church.

**Jeff:** Historically. *(Laughter)* All right. Oh, we’re in trouble now! *(Laughter)* Now let me talk to you about what we’re going to do today. First of all, today we’re going to think about three heads. But we’re really going to go through two sections. When we think about what we’ve just read in 1-11, that’s really two sections. 2:1-5 is its own section, and then 6-11 is its own section. This is all part of the argument that Paul is unfolding for us.

Now what I want us to do is, I want us to talk about three critical items. I want us to talk about an introductory point which I’m going to subtitle “The Unexcused Gentiles?” And then I want us to think about “the excused Jews?” And then I want us to think about God as Judge, because we see God as Judge later in this text. So I want us to think about those three points.

First of all I just want us to think again about some introductory points. And I’m thinking first of all about Romans 1:18-32. And here’s where I’m thinking about the unexcused Gentiles? In other words is that what we find here? Do we find inexcusable Gentile behaviors? And I think the answer, of course, is yes. I think that when we think about what we opened up and read about the last time, we look at behaviors that are what I think for the most part are reprehensible.

Now I realize that in our modern culture that that’s not popular to say. I mean, idolatry is in and so is sexual deviance. And yet these are two things that are very prominent in this text. We find that when a heart leaves its God, then that heart will gravitate toward other things—abysmal things. And the way I put it to you the last time is that when there is an unnatural relationship with God, God allows unnatural relationships between human beings to take place. And that’s exactly what we see in this text.

But we see more than that. In verse 28 and following we see other practices. In other words, these aren’t the only practices. This is certainly the pattern that we see in a society when unnatural relationship with God gives way to unnatural relationships with human beings. And this is really the worst of those unnatural relationships that takes hold. But there are other unnatural relationships that are here in the text. In other words, we find children disobeying parents, and so on and so forth. We find other relationships disrupted

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because of sin. And so that’s what we find when we look at Romans 1:18-32. And we do find behavior that is inexcusable; we do.

Now I want us to move to the second point. That’s just by way of introduction; I wanted us to catch up. But what I want us really to move on and think about is the Jews, or the excused Jews? I want us to think about the first five verses of our text.

Now I want you to look at how this text starts out. Look at verse 1. It starts off with the word “*therefore*.” Now I don’t know about you. But when I learned philosophy, when I studied symbolic logic, when I did those kinds of things I understood that the word *therefore* is a concluding word. In other words, it’s drawing down upon what has been previously said, and here is the conclusion of the matter—therefore.

Now the interesting thing is that when you look at this text, and you look at the word *therefore*, scholars are a little perplexed. They find it difficult to find the argument from which *therefore* culminates. And so they say, “where in the world was there an argument for Paul to conclude like this?” In fact, those who see Paul really having a dialogue here between the Gentiles on this side and the Jews on this side really are perplexed, because they say, “Well, wait a minute. Paul was just talking to the Gentiles. And now he’s about ready to pick up with the Jews. And in picking up with the Jews he starts with a conclusion—therefore.”

So how do we understand that? How do we understand the way that Paul begins here? Well, scholars have looked at this text and they’ve said that perhaps what Paul is doing is that he has already started with his conclusion in mind. In other words, he’s already started with the idea that we’ll read about in Romans chapter 3—that all are under sin and judgment, Jew and Gentile alike. And so he starts with that in mind, and he pulls that argument down.

Now how do those scholars see that in the text? Well, go back to Romans 1 and look at verse 18-20 for just a minute. Don, do you have that?

**Don:** Yes.

**Jeff:** Read all three verses.

**Don:** Okay. “*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made—even His eternal power and Godhead—so that they are without excuse.*”

**Jeff:** Okay. Now there are a couple of things there that I want to point out to you. The first thing that I want to point out to you is that Paul does seem to be dealing with men in general. Now how do we see that? We see that because he talks about “*all ungodliness and unrighteousness*.” He doesn’t simply say, “let’s deal now with Gentile unrighteousness,” or “Jewish unrighteousness.” He talks about “*all unrighteousness*.”

And so some scholars have said that 18-20 then appears to be something of a heading from which these other things will fall out—things like we find in chapter 1 regarding the Gentiles, but also things like we find in chapter 2 regarding the Jews, and so on. So it seems as if Paul may be starting with everybody in mind—not just Gentiles, not just Jews—but all ungodliness and all unrighteousness, because God is revealing His wrath against everyone who practices those things. That’s the first thing I would say.

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The second thing I would say is this. Notice that we are told that *“they are without excuse.”* Look at the words again. *“The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.”*

**Transcriber’s Note:** ESV.

**Jeff:** And why is that? Well, because the things that can be known about God are plain to them. *“God has shown it to them.”* How? In His invisible attributes revealed in creation. So *“they are without excuse.”*

And then he takes this detour. Now think about it like this. He says that men are without excuse. And yet they give up on a natural relationship with God and have an unnatural relationship with Him—that is, an idolatrous one. And oh, by the way, that gives way to unnatural relationships with men. And then Paul moves into verse 28 with this proliferation of these unnatural things.

And then he comes back to the Jews, and what does he say at the beginning? He says, *“Therefore you have no excuse.”* Now he’s talking to the Jews. And so it’s as if he pulls what we find in 18-20 down into the beginning of his argument with the Jews. Not only do the Gentiles have no excuse, but you have no excuse.

Now I think that’s probably the best way to understand the text. And so we might say something like this. These Jews are not misunderstood. And the question that we have to ask ourselves then is, if they are not misunderstood, where, Paul, is the evidence for that? In other words, it seems, Paul, that you have made some assumptions. And the assumption at the head might be right. God is revealing His wrath against all unrighteousness and ungodliness. But where you seem to fail, Paul, is that you equate the Jews with those who are unrighteous and ungodly. So where is your evidence for lumping the Jew in with the ungodliness of the Gentile? Where is it, Paul?

And Paul says, *“Well, I’m glad you asked. Let me give it to you.”* And so he unpacks his evidence at this point. And he begins with something that I think that we might be a little surprised about. He says, *“Let me tell you what you do that gives your hand away. You pass judgment.”*

Now all of a sudden we have to stop and ask ourselves a question, because we know and we make fun of people who misuse Matthew chapter 7:1-6, right?

**Transcriber’s Note:** Matthew 7:1-6, ESV. *“Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite! First take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye. Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot, and turn to attack you.”*

**Jeff:** And you know, we say to people who misuse Matthew 7:1-6—you know that passage; people use it all the time. *“Don’t judge me!”* And they pull it out of context, because then we say to them, *“Well what do you do with John chapter 7, for instance, when Jesus says, ‘Stop judging by mere appearances, and make a right judgment?’*

And we say to ourselves that judging is not wrong. But you have to be careful how you do it. Remember what Jesus does say in Matthew 7. He says, *“With the measure that you judge you will be measured.”* So He’s giving a caution about judging—a very strong

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caution, but a caution nonetheless. But He’s not forbidding judging. Otherwise, how in the world can you live in this world?

I mean, let’s face it. You men know as well as I do that Don has judged me many times. *(Laughter)*

**Ted:** In your hearing and out of your hearing. *(Laughter)*

**Jeff:** And most of what I do at the beginning is purely self-defense. *(Laughter)* I feel like I’m pressed in that corner. *(Laughter)* But you get the idea. Judgment is something that we do. I mean, if we weren’t allowed to pass judgment ever, if that is what the Bible was really saying, our kids would have us over a barrel, right? And what would we do with the judicial system?—that sort of thing. So we all know that passing judgment isn’t wrong. But we need to be careful how we judge. And so judging isn’t wrong; we just need to be careful.

But that’s not what he’s talking about here. The problem isn’t care in judgment. Paul says that the problem is that you who pass judgment—and he is likely speaking about Jews—you who pass judgment on the Gentiles, you do the very things that you accuse them of doing. You judge them for doing them. That’s what Paul says to them. You do the very things that you judge them for doing. That’s the problem.

Now I want you to think about that for a minute. I think that doesn’t take a whole lot of explanation, right? I mean, who in the world is going to be happy with a judge who is convicting people of crimes that he himself is doing? You know, that’s the kind of thing that when it comes out there’s public outrage about it, right? Because this guy who is standing on the bench, consigning all kinds of people to prison and judgment, and so on, he himself is doing those things. It doesn’t excuse others. But he takes that hypocritical posture. And we have a problem with that, and rightly so.

But the thing I want you to notice is this. How in the world do we connect this text with what has gone before it? Or should we? And what I want you to notice is that we probably should be able to connect these texts together, because think about it. Paul is saying that what the Gentiles did you are doing, though you pass judgment on them for doing it. So let’s see if we can connect what has gone before with what we find in this text. We’ve already been able to connect that they were without excuse, and here Paul says that you’re without excuse. Let’s see if we can connect this, at least linguistically. And I think we can.

I want you to go back to 1:28-32. Now 28-32 tells us things that fall out of the kind of society that forsakes God and adopts unnatural relationships with others.

Notice: God gives this people up “*to a debased mind,*” so that they are filled with all manner of unrighteousness. Now think about that. That goes back to 1:18. God’s wrath is revealed against unrighteousness. He has given them up to all manner of unrighteousness. What manner of unrighteousness? “*Evil, covetousness, malice; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness; they are gossips, slanderers; haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful; inventors of evil, disobedient to parents; foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God’s righteous decree,*”—that again takes us back to 18-20 —“*though they know God’s righteous decree, that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them, but give approval to those who practice them.*”

And what Paul is saying when you get to verses 2 and 3 is that they judge and practice the very same things. What are the things that they practice in verse 2? What are the things that they practice? What things? It’s the things that we find in verses 28-32. Now

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they may likely practice the things that we find previous to that—in other words, they exchange right relationships with God for unnatural ones, and so exchange right relationships with human beings for unnatural ones. All of those things are just kind of a given. The degree may vary, but they are there. But the things that we find in 28-32 fall out of that kind of pattern. And Paul is saying that these are the kinds of things—the kinds of things that we just read about—that you practice yourselves. Go ahead.

**Don:** Yes. I can't help—

**Jeff:** Not you, Don.

**Don:** Oh, I'm sorry.

**Jeff:** No, I'm just kidding. *(Laughter)*

**Don:** Oh, okay. I see this, for example, in all of the big to-do that was made the other day with the governor of New York, and oh, how terrible!, and all of the allegations against him. And yet those same people would probably be for gay marriage and abortion and everything else. But they're passing judgment on the governor. Not that he hasn't done horrible things, but you get the picture.

**Jeff:** Yes. I mean, what we see is a changing morality in our culture, right? The Biblical ethos, which ought to remain the same no matter what culture, no matter what age, is changing. And we see it changing in the different mores of the day, the different morality of the day. So what Don is simply pointing out is what we see so readily, that is, for instance that LGBTQ-plus rights are moral in our society; they are sacred. But for a man to do what Cuomo did, well that's wrong. Now that doesn't mean that those who champion those other rights aren't doing the same thing as Cuomo; in fact, maybe they are. And so they are passing an accusing finger.

But you really have them coming and going, because what they're really doing is that they are probably, or could be doing the same thing as Cuomo. But the fact that they're championing those kinds of rights in our culture and society is indicative of the pattern itself. Somebody else had his hand up.

**Ted:** But the problem with Cuomo is not sexual sin or failing; it's abuse of an oppressed class.

**Jeff:** Yes; that's right.

**Ted:** That is it. People say that they're accusing him of sexual sin. They're not accusing him of sexual sin.

**Jeff:** Correct.

**Ted:** It's mostly because of women being abused or harassed. If they agreed to it, it would not be a sin.

**Jeff:** Yes; that's right.

**Ted:** So many times that is the issue. So we get off track when we start attacking and saying they're hypocrites, because they aren't.

**Jeff:** Yes. It's sort of versatile; it fits the moment. You know what I mean?

**Ted:** Well, it changes. Isn't it strange that we're getting more alike?

**Ted:** Yes. But even in the situation itself, for some women I wonder how many of those women feel like this is a sexual issue, and other women feel like it's an oppressed

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**Ted:** Well, I think society makes the impression of women being harassed.

**Jeff:** Yes; I think you're right.

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**Ted:** Then it becomes a whole question of where you being oppressed, or were you in agreement with him?

**Jeff:** Yes.

**Ted:** I'm curious about the persons in chapter 1: “*Though they know God's righteous decree.*” He's talking to Gentiles about Gentiles, isn't he?

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Ted:** They know God's righteous decree, “*that those who practice such things deserve death.*” How does the Gentile know God's righteous decrees?

**Jeff:** Yes. So I think he's anticipating the argument that is to come. So what we're going to do is, we're dealing with the Jews now in 2:1-5. And then in 6-11 he's going to deal with and come back to all unrighteousness again. And then what he's going to do is, he's going to move out of that. And the Gentile is going to say to him, “Wait a minute! I understand how you can hold the Jew accountable. But how can I be held accountable?” And that's where I think that Paul picks up this part of the argument and says, “Let me just tell you how.” And just to kind of anticipate that he said, “This was written on your heart. So the Jews have it on stone; you have it on your heart.”

**Ted:** Natural law?

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Ted:** Is that what it is?

**Ted:** Yes, I think it is. And I think that's where C. S. Lewis has this. If you've read *The Abolition of Man*, at the end of that book he has an appendix where he basically goes through and tries to show that the morality of all the different tribes and nations of the world has pretty much of a symmetry to it. And I think that's what he's showing. He's obviously trying to show through natural law that everyone abides by and obeys it. You were going to say something; go ahead.

**Ted:** This is a big factor in Catholic thinking. They rely heavily on natural law.

**Jeff:** Right.

**Ted:** When they are arguing against homosexuality it's not so much that it's opposed to Scripture, but it's opposed to the ways that are obvious in nature.

**Jeff:** Yes. Which is why, when you think about it,-- I mean, it's funny. I think last year sometime I was listening to an R. C. Sproul lecture. And he brought up Sen. Biden. And he brought up Sen. Biden. Who was the Chief Justice who was really big on natural law?

**Don:** Scalia?

**Jeff:** It may be. But I think this guy was a newer justice that was being interviewed. Thomas? I think it was Thomas at the time who was being confirmed.

**Brave Man:** Back in '91?

**Paul Deffenbaugh:** Chief Justice Rehnquist?

**Jeff:** I'm thinking it was Thomas; I may be wrong. But anyway Sproul was saying that Biden got up on the floor and said, “nobody believes in natural law anymore.” And obviously for Sproul that was nigh heresy. (*Laughter*) And the interesting thing was that here is Sen. Biden who graduated from law school, right? (*Laughter*) And he would have failed Sproul's class because he denied natural law. So anyway, it's just kind of funny. Yes?

**Bishop Rodgers:** This unnatural behavior between people is contrary to what's written on the heart.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

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**Bishop:** It's contrary to what's written in the law.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Bishop:** It's contrary to the tradition of the church. (*Unclear*)

**Jeff:** Yes; that's right. It's a wonder he has to take three chapters in order to do this. (*Laughter*) You know, it really is; it's quite striking in that sense. Anybody else?

Okay. So the problem, though, goes even deeper for Paul. The problem actually goes beyond the fact that they are passing judgment while they are doing the same things. The problem is a problem of presumption.

Now when you think about presumption, it's an interesting word when you think about it. If you think about it from the aspect of the Latin, it means *to take before*. So for instance, you know, if Don has a cookie lying on the table and I walk over and take it, (yeah; he's laughing), (*Laughter*), and I walk over and take it, and he reaches for the cookie and he says, “Wait a minute. Who took my cookie?” And you know what he would do. He would say, “Jeff!” (*Laughter*) “You took my cookie!”

And I would say, “Well Don, I just presumed that you would offer it to me.” Right? (*Laughter*) I took it before the offer because I presumed, right? That's the idea.

But the interesting thing is that in the Greek it doesn't have that nuance. In the Greek it has the nuance *to think down about*. And you can see where the parallel is. If you take something before asking you naturally think down about someone. You don't even stop to ask them if you can have it, right? So there is a parallel between them.

But there's this idea of thinking down. They thought down. Now the question is, what did they presume on? What did they think down about? Well, they thought down about God's mercy.. They thought down about his kindness, His forbearance, His patience. They thought down about those kinds of things.

Now I think that we can readily understand kindness. When someone is kind there's a generosity of spirit that they have. But the ideas of forbearance and patience is something that I just want to point out for a minute here. This idea of forbearance is *not enforcing what's right*. And the idea of patience here in the text has this idea. It doesn't mean this specifically or strictly. But it has this idea of putting up with some unhappy circumstances.

Now I want you to think about that. Here are the Jews presuming on His kindness. You know, how would it be that God is not forcing His rights? Well, you know, all you have to do is think about the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, when God brought them into the Promised Land, He said to them, “Look. If you disobey My laws, then what I'm going to do is, I'm going to bring the curses of the covenant upon you.”

And remember what happened. Joshua led them into the Promised Land. And you know, at the end of the book of Joshua, Joshua goes, “I have no hope for you. I have no faith in you. You're going to blow this thing as soon as you get in.” And Judges indicates that they do blow it as soon as they get in.

And yet it's a long time. I mean, if the Exodus is in the 1400s and the first exile under Assyria is 722, it's a long time. God has extended a lot of grace. He has shown a lot of kindness, a lot of forbearance and a lot of patience. And they presumed upon it. And they continue as Jews to presume upon the mercy of God.

And you know, we do that very thing; you know how that goes. I once had a friend. He and his wife before they were married sat down and were talking with me. I think that



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it’s kind of an interesting scenario. They both would have professed faith at the time. They sat down in my living room and said, “I think we’re going to live together.”

And I said, “Really?” And they said, “Yeah. You act like you’re surprised.”

And I said, “Well, I am surprised. You guys are professing Christians. And now you say you’re going to live together.”

And they said, “Well, we’re going to get married eventually. But we just think that it’s a good idea for us to live together first, and then we can get married. And it doesn’t have to be a long time. But if that’s our intent—“

And I said, “Well, you know, it’s still wrong. No matter what your intent is, it’s still wrong.”

And this is what I love. They said, “Well, can’t we repent of it after we get married?”  
*(Laughter)*

**Bishop:** They probably could. *(Laughter)*

**Jeff:** And this passage immediately came to mind. You presume upon the mercy and the kindness of God. And I’m happy to say that they did not live together. They ended up getting married, and then promptly got divorced.

**Don:** Oh no!

**Jeff:** It’s a sad thing. But anyway, the point is that these people missed the purpose of God’s kindness. According to our text, what was the purpose of God’s kindness? Well, the purpose of God’s kindness was to lead them to repentance. In other words, all of these things—the kindness, the forbearance, the patience of God—all this was to drive them or lead them to repentance.

Now I want you to think about that. When you think about repentance, let’s just stop. It’s good to remind ourselves of these basic things. So how would you describe repentance to somebody who asks? If somebody asks you, “Well, I hear Christians talk about believe and repent. I think I have an idea about the belief, but I don’t have an idea about the repentance. What’s that?”

**Bishop:** Change.

**Jeff:** Change; turn around.

**Don Rimbey:** Make a U-turn.

**Jeff:** Make a U-turn. And what do you turn from?

**Bishop:** Away from sin to Christ.

**Jeff:** Yes; you turn away from sin to Christ. I love the way the Westminster Confession talks about this. It talks about recognizing the odious nature of sin. And so we turn from it to the mercy of God that we apprehend in Christ. And you know, that’s that U-turn; that’s the turnabout. But it explains why there’s a turnabout. The turnabout is because we see the sin that we are engaging in, and we find it to be odious. We find it to be a stench.

You see, our problem is—and I say our problem because it’s a universal problem—our problem is that very first thing, finding our sin to be odious, because too often we’re like Augustine who says, “Lord, save me, but not yet.” Save me from this sin but not quite yet, because I’m enjoying it just a little bit too much. And that’s the problem.

And so what we have to do is this. We can’t manufacture a hatred for sin. That hatred for sin has to be given to us.

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Now how is it given to us? Well, the two ideas work hand in hand almost simultaneously, if you think about it. I begin to hate my sin when I apprehend the mercy of God revealed in Christ Jesus.

Why is that? Well, my hatred for sin in part comes from the realization that Christ went to the cross for that sin. And so the apprehension of the mercy of God recognizes that the odiousness of my sins is what put Christ there. And so that’s the idea when we think about repentance. We turn away from something we hate to something we love, because the thing that we hate put the Person that we love on a cross. That’s the idea.

So this kindness of God was supposed to lead them to repentance. Now they didn’t repent. And so naturally the question is well, what’s the outcome? And the outcome is that there is no escape for them. And this is a striking verse; look at it. I just want you to see it. There is no escape for them because they presume upon these things. But then verse 5: *“But because of your hard and impenitent”* (or unrepentant) *“heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath, when God’s judgment will be revealed.”* So you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath if our fail to repent. And that’s just one of those verses that you could just linger over a long time.

John Gerstner used to ask the question. What’s the best place in all the world? And what’s the worst place in all the world? And his answer was right here. And his explanation for that answer was that if you are outside of Christ, the worst place to be is a place where you’re accruing day by day, moment by moment, second by second, the wrath of God against you on the day of wrath. But the best of all places to be, if you’re a believer, is to be accruing blessing and benefit and reward for what you are doing in this present life. And so that just always struck me to be one of those things that—I mean, you know, it’s one of those things.

You know, when we read the Scriptures we find so much encouragement. There is a great deal of encouragement to us. Jesus constantly tells us not to fear, and so on. And those things are right and good, and we embrace them.

But this is a place in the Scriptures where the curtain is sort of pulled back. And we’re told that the person who does not repent, who doesn’t recognize the mercy of God extended to him, this person is storing up for himself wrath on the day of wrath. And that’s a frightful thing when you think about it. Stop and ponder it for a few seconds.

**Ted:** That’s true for all of us.

**Jeff:** It is, for Jew and Gentile alike.

**Ted:** That’s true for all of us. I presume upon God’s mercy.

**Jeff:** Yeah, I know. But here’s the great thing about it. You know, it’s sort of like the Romans 7 thing, right? In the first part of Romans 7 it’s like this. Our sin is a sleeping bear. And outside of Christ we’re in the cage, right? And all that we can hope in is the law. And the law comes to the cage door. Our sin is sleeping. And the law takes a cup and rings it on the bars and says, “Hey!” And we go, “Stop!” The bear goes “Roarrrr!” And then the bear just starts ripping us apart, right? And then we say to the law who woke the bear up, “Help!” And it’s like “I can’t help you! I was never meant to help; I was never meant to save!” That sort of thing, right? And that’s the way every person outside of Christ is in his unrighteousness.

But you and I aren’t in that situation, right?, because in Christ we’re dead to the law in that sense because of Christ’s death. And so yes, we presume, and we do all kinds of other things. But we’re in Christ. And you know, that’s the whole difference, right? I do

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the things I don't want to do. “*O wretched man am I! Who will save me from this body of death?*” It's the Lord Jesus Christ who has saved me from this body of death—that sort of thing.

**Ted:** An analogy would be that Christ has taken us out of the cage.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Ted:** And left behind a dead body for the bear to ravage.

**Jeff:** Yeah. I love this as it appears in *Pilgrim's Progress*. I've told you guys this before. You know, I think it's Faithful who ends up hanging around with Adam. And Adam says, “Hey, I have a bunch of daughters here for you.” “Okay,” right?

And we see that here is John Bunyan giving us a window into Faithful's sexual temptation. And he leaves Wanton. And he says, “I'm not really sure whether I fully left her.” And as he's walking there's this guy pursuing him. He comes up from behind him and start beating the daylights out of him with his club. And it's Moses. And he's going, “Stop, stop!” And Moses says, “I don't know how to show mercy.” It's the bear in the cage illustration, right?

Then Christ walks by. And when Christ walks by Moses retreats, and he's saved. It's sort of a very good application; it's beautiful; it's a beautiful thing.

But again this is the Jew. I mean, it is about Jew and Gentile; it's true for all of us. But this is the Jew. They pass judgment for things they do, and they presume upon God's mercy.

So that leads us to think about God for a few minutes. And I want you to pay attention to verses 6-11. Notice that in this text that there is no direct address. In other words he's been talking to the Jew. And he has been previously talking to the Gentile. But there is no direct address in these verses.

Again, notice verse 9. He's talking to everyone, and he names them this time. “*There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil—the Jew first and also the Greek.*” He's talking to everybody.

Now that prompts the question. What does God require? And the answer should be on the tip of our lips by now, especially when we think about 1:16-17, when we think about 1:18. What is it that God requires? God requires righteousness. Not a little bit of righteousness, not a consistent righteousness, but a perfect righteousness, right? And that's what we've seen throughout Scripture, whether it's James 2 or Matthew 5:48.

**Transcriber's Note:** Matthew 5:48, ESV. “*you therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*”

**Jeff:** The point is that if you are going to have a righteousness that will save you it has to be a perfect righteousness. It can't be a little righteousness, it can't be a consistent righteousness. It has to be a perfect righteousness. Why? Because God is righteous, and God requires righteousness. It's as simple as that. That's the equation: God is righteous and He requires righteousness.

And God is an impartial judge. He is able to recognize what it is that He requires. He's an impartial Judge. He isn't led astray.

You know how this is, right? This is why in our world that people recuse themselves from making judgments about other things. They recuse themselves because they're acknowledging that there could be a bias. And God is not biased; God is impartial. He's a just Judge.

And He's also fair. You know, He's fair because He can see beyond the periphery.

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You know, here's the problem with us. I think we have to acknowledge it. The problem with us is that we think too much about the externals. I mean, that's the talk, right? You talk about the oppressed class of women. You talk about girls today. What's the problem with girls? The problem with girls is that they are caught up in external image. They're caught up in their weight, in their looks, and all of these things. And you get some of these stars who every once in a while get a righteous bug about them and say, "I'm gonna take a picture of myself and show how fat I am, and I'm proud of it!" That kind of thing, right? And then the next thing you know they're on a Slim Fast diet, slimming down. It's crazy because it's all about the external, and whatever bug somebody has at any given time, right?

And we think that the external is what really matters. And the Scriptures tell us that the internal person of the heart is what matters. Our problem is, we think that we can exemplify the internal person of the heart through a tattoo, through some kind of hair dress, through the clothes we wear. And I've got news for you. There may be a hint of what's inside of you by those things. But you certainly can't represent who you are with those superficial things.

Why? Because virtue and character and those kinds of things are best represented in the doing of things. And those are the ways you represent who you are internally.

And if you're a wicked, despicable person, we'll all know it, because you'll represent yourself not in your dress, but you'll represent yourself in your deeds; you'll represent yourself in your behaviors. And the idea is that our problem is an external one.

But that's not God's problem. Look at what it says about God in verse 16, jumping ahead just a little bit. "*On that day, when according to my gospel God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.*" God judges the secrets of the heart. He can see beyond the externals right into the internal.

You know, it's just from here that we need to learn from Luther. You know, we all look at Luther back in the days before his conversion. And we all think to ourselves, wow! He really had a problem; he had a hang-up about the righteousness of God. And he did. And it's great to see his conversion.

But you know what? If we go back and look at this passage in light of those things Luther said, Luther was right. This is a Judge. And Luther understood that this was a Judge.

Let me give you a couple of quotes. He says this. He says, "*When I was a monk I wearied myself greatly for almost fifteen years with daily sacrifices, tortured myself with fasting and vigils, prayer and other religious works. I earnestly thought to acquire righteousness by my works.*"

And then this. "*My situation was that although an impeccable monk, I stood before God as a sinner troubled in conscience. And I had no confidence that my merit could assuage Him. Therefore I did not love a just and angry God, but rather hated and murmured against Him.*"

And see, Luther has the idea. "*I was an impeccable monk, as impeccable as any monk could be,*" whatever that is. But he understood that his impeccability was not a perfect impeccability, because as impeccable as he was he stood before a righteous and holy God. And that righteous and holy God judged him to be a sinner. That's the idea. And that's what comes out of verses 6-11 here. Yes, Don?

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**Don:** So you would say, Jeff, that this is hypothetical rather than practical? Because there are some people who would say that yes, this is hypothetical. God requires perfection and nobody is able to do good. “Nobody is good; no, not one,” etc. And yet only the Christian can really do good. And so there are people who would say that the ones who seek glory, honor and peace, and everyone who does good, he’s talking about Christians there.

**Jeff:** Yes, I think so, because I think I think that what he’s doing is that he has it in mind that if you’re in Christ you not only have faith, but you have a changed life. So the changed life gives evidence of the faith that one has.

**Don:** Right.

**Jeff:** And I think that’s the idea. In fact—

**Ted:** John has an objection.

**Jeff:** Oh, yes.

**Bishop:** I think he’s talking about what we ought to be but aren’t.

**Jeff:** Well, I could go in that direction because it’s the flip side of the matter; yes.

**Don:** So it’s yes and yes. (*Laughter*)

**Jeff:** I think this is interesting. It kind of gets to what we’re talking about here. This is not about those who presume on His patience, but those who are patient but should be patient—those who either are or should be. And in their patience they ought to be seeking these things that you just mentioned—“*glory, honor and immortality.*” And so this is what they ought to be, or this is what a Christian will look like. But not those who disobey the truth—and here it is’ notice this!—“*obey unrighteousness.*” Notice how he keeps driving us back to the unrighteousness and suppressing the unrighteousness, suppressing the righteousness in unrighteousness. That’s the idea.

Let me say one more thing, and then I’ll let you go. I just want you to notice this idea of self-seeking that’s here. Before the New Testament use of it it’s used only in Aristotle. And it’s used to describe someone hired to promote a party spirit. And isn’t it interesting that regardless of who it might be—the Jew or the Gentile—there’s a sense in which they are self-seeking. They are seeking their own party spirit, whether it’s a Jew or a Gentile.

And that sets things up against what we are told in verse 11. And that is that God is a Judge who shows no partiality. God is a Judge not prone to parties. He is One who is not pandered to. He is a Judge who is righteous and judges righteously. It kind of leaves you on a—Yes?

**Bishop:** I was just thinking that part of the partiality was their appeals to be children of Abraham, and they had the temple. These are externals in one sense.

**Jeff:** Yeah.

**Bishop:** They are sort of presuming on that basis.

**Jeff:** Yes, and they are presuming. And he’s going to actually get to that in a couple of different spots. You know, it’s sort of like this. Ironically I left my ring off today. But I was going to say that it’s sort of like a wedding ring, right? I may have my wedding ring on and treat my wife badly, and presume that upon my wedding vows.

And it’s the same thing with circumcision. I’ve got circumcision, though I’ve disobeyed God at every turn, presuming upon His kindness. I have been circumcised. That’s the idea, right?

And we have to remember that we’re sort of being left at a down turn. But we need to remember that we’re sort of in the midst of this argument. We’re in the midst of this

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imaginary dialogue between Paul and the Jews and the Gentiles as he works with them, and works them into the corner of helping them to see that they are fundamentally unrighteous and need the righteousness that God reveals in Jesus Christ.

And so we'll pick it up actually in two weeks. We've got a couple of special guests coming over the next two weeks. I believe we have Caleb coming next week. And we have Clay coming the week after that. These guys are going to lead you.

**Ted:** Double C. *(Laughter)*

**Jeff:** I'm excited to hear the recordings of those. But please support these guys with your presence. Tell others, and hopefully they'll come out and support our friends here.

So let's pray. Father, thank You for the day, for the time You've given us. Bless us as we think about Your word, and bless it to us. And Lord, not only bless it to our thinking, but bless it to our doing, that others might behold and that others might reap the benefit of our having been in the Word this morning. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

**Brave Men:** Amen. *(Applause)*