

Judgment is Based on Works
Romans Message #5
Romans 2:1 – 16
Sermon by Pastor Sylvia Chan

Last time we studied Romans 1:18 – 32, where we saw that when men in their ungodliness and unrighteousness suppress the truth of God, that will lead to God’s wrath against them. But men did not repent, they went deeper and deeper into sin, and they also approved those who practice sin. Therefore God gave them up to their sins. When people keep on sinning beyond a certain point, there is no more repentance for them. That is a warning to all of us.

Romans is a letter that Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Rome. In this letter, the word “you” refers to the Christians in the church, not to the non-Christians. Let’s keep in mind that Apostle Paul is speaking to Christians. Today we are going to study Romans 2.

In what you judge other people, you condemn yourself

^{NASB} **Romans 2:1 – 3** Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. ² And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things. ³ But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same *yourself*, that you will escape the judgment of God?

(Rom 2:1-3 NASB)

The first word “therefore” links this passage to the last part of Romans 1. What did Apostle Paul say at the end of Romans 1? Paul listed many serious sins that people have committed; and according to God’s decree, those who commit such sins deserve death. Since we know God’s decree, therefore we also deserve death if we commit sin.

But here Apostle Paul warns us that when we judge other people for their sin, yet we ourselves are doing the same thing, then we would also face God’s judgment, and we have no excuse.

The kindness of God leads you to repentance

^{NASB} **Romans 2:4 – 5** Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? ⁵ But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God (Rom 2:4-5 NASB)

Here in this passage Apostle Paul warns Christians not to think “lightly” of God’s kindness, tolerance and patience. Actually this word “lightly” is a very strong word, it is not light at all.

The original Greek word for “lightly” is “καταφρονέω” (kataphronéō). According to Greek-English dictionaries, this word “kataphronéō” means to look down on someone or something with contempt or aversion.

Here Paul was asking the Christians in the Roman church: “Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience”; it means that these Christians were actually looking down on, even despising, God’s kindness and tolerance and patience!

God in His kindness doesn’t want people to perish, so He tolerates them. He doesn’t punish them immediately when they sin, but gives them time to repent. But most people don’t appreciate this, instead they despise His kindness!

What Paul describes here is very true! Even I myself, before I got to know God, I attacked the Bible, I blasphemed the name of Yahweh God and against the Lord Jesus Christ. But Yahweh God in His kindness and tolerance did not punish me. He knew that it was out of my ignorance that I blasphemed His holy name and attacked the teaching of the Bible. He granted me grace upon grace to let me experience His loving kindness and His power more and more. Finally my eyes were opened, and I repented of my sins and committed my life to Him.

In all these years of preaching the word of God, I have encountered many non-Christians and even some Christians who despise God’s kindness and tolerance! And many of them turned to attack me. Maybe it was because I preached the word of God as it is from the Bible, without watering it down. Then the word of God exposed their sins and made them very uncomfortable, and that’s why they turned to hate me.

For example: Whenever I preach, I would usually tell people to repent of their sins and to commit their lives totally to Yahweh God, but people don’t want to hear about repentance and commitment, they don’t want to hear about their sins, so they attack me even though I had never intended to attack anyone. I would simply speak the word of God as it is from the Bible, but people hate me. I also like to preach that when the gospel reaches the ends of the earth, the Lord Jesus will come back to establish the kingdom of God on earth. He will judge all the people on earth and bring righteousness and peace on earth, but people don’t want to hear about judgment either, and some of them turned to attack me. It is exactly like what Paul describes here.

God will judge each person according to his deeds

^{NASB} **Romans 2:6 – 16** who will render to each person according to his deeds: ⁷ to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; ⁸ but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. ⁹ *There will be* tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, ¹⁰ but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹¹ For there is no partiality with God. ¹² For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law; for *it is* not the hearers of the Law *who* are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified. ¹⁴ For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, ¹⁵ in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, ¹⁶ on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus. (Rom 2:6-16 NASB)

Here in this passage the term “those under the Law” refers to the Jews. Yahweh God gave the Law to the Jews through Moses, they are people of the Law. The term “those without the Law” refers to the Gentiles; the term “Greek” refers to all the non-Jews because at that time the whole Roman Empire was dominated by Greek culture, everyone spoke Greek, that’s why all the non-Jews were called “Greek”.

Here Paul is talking about God’s future judgment; Yahweh God will give to each person according to what he has done in his life.

To those who consistently do good and seek glory, honor and immortality, God will grant them eternal life. But to those who are selfishly ambitious, who only want to satisfy their own desires, and who don’t follow the truth, this kind of people will be punished.

There is no favoritism with Yahweh God; He doesn’t favor certain people and disfavor other people. When the Gentiles sin, they will perish; when the Jews sin, they will be judged by the Law. At the end only those who obey the Law will be declared righteous.

Conclusion

Now let’s sum up everything; judgment is based on the works we do:

Romans 2: 1 – 16

- When we judge other people for their sin, yet we ourselves are doing the same thing, then we too will face the judgment of God.
- We should not show contempt towards the kindness of God, because His kindness leads us to repentance.
- God will judge each person according to his deeds.