

Sonoraville Baptist Church
Sunday, January 22, 2012 – 6:00 PM
Rev. Steve Skates, Pastor

Romans Series

The Judgment of God - Romans 2:1-16

Several years ago, on a Nightline program, Ted Koppel was interviewing Jimmy Swaggert, and he was asked to give his opinion about what was happening to Jim Bakker and his PTL Empire. Swaggert was very judgmental, and called Jim Bakker a "cancer" in the body of Christ.

Well, as it turns out, it was just a matter of time when Jimmy Swaggert himself was caught for being engaged in indecent immoral behavior. In fact, it was revealed that he had been involved in such behavior even during the time when he called Jim Bakker a "cancer."

Why is it we can be so judgmental, when we are far from perfect ourselves? It seems that the old saying that "Those who live in glass houses ought not to throw stones" is hardly ever followed. The truth is, we're all prone to throw stones. We just hope the other guy's aim is not as accurate as ours. Either that or we're too naïve in thinking that our sins will not be found out.

But one day everything will be revealed. Jesus said, in **Luke 12:2 (HCSB)** "There is nothing covered that won't be uncovered, nothing hidden that won't be made known." The point is that God knows everything. So we should be careful when we judge someone else, because we may be condemning ourselves.

Tonight, we will be talking about the judgment of God. It's not an easy message to preach. We really don't like to hear about it, or even think about it, but we must because we are all sinful. There is no one is without sin.

Romans 2:1-2 (HCSB) says, "Therefore, anyone of you who judges is without excuse. For when you judge another, you condemn yourself, since you, the judge, do the same things. We know that God's judgment on those who do such things is based on the truth." It's as though Paul is reading the minds of his readers. They've read his remarks about the unrighteous sinners whom God has abandoned to their own lusts and depravity in the previous chapter, and they are sitting back and saying, "Amen brother! I'm so glad I'm not like them! I'm a good ole chariot-driving, tax-paying, apple pie loving, law abiding Roman citizen who is in love with my spouse and in love with the Lord. Let them scum-bags get what they deserve!" But Paul says, "Wait a minute dudes! Who put you in God's place of judgment?"

Now let's stop here and talk about judging others. Judging simply applying a standard to live by. It may be our own or it may be God's; but when we judge, we acknowledge that there is a standard is not being met. What Paul is saying is that the same standard we judge by must be applied to us as well. And the truth is; we don't live perfectly by any standard, even our own! So, Paul says, we are without excuse. In fact, no one will be able to stand before God on the great day of judgment and open their mouth to say anything in their own defense. Everyone will stand guilty as charged, and God's judgment will be just. And any false morality will be exposed for the hypocrisy that it is. So when we talk about God's judgment, the first thing we have to understand is:

1. God's Judgment Is Based on Truth (2-4)

Romans 2:2-4 (HCSB) "We know that God's judgment on those who do such things is based on the truth. Do you really think—anyone of you who judges those who do such things yet do the same—that you will escape God's judgment? 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?"

The truth is, God knows the truth about us. Specifically, He knows the sins we have committed and the circumstances surrounding those sins. He knows everything, including the very intentions of our hearts, As a result, God is able to judge based on the absolute truth about us. We will not be misrepresented to Him.

Paul is challenging believers to examine themselves based on the truth God knows about them. He is really saying that instead of judging others, we should look first to ourselves, because we are guilty of doing the same things that we judge other people for! We're the ones who should feel condemned for our own actions. We're not in charge of anyone except ourselves, so our first priority is to get our own house in order.

"But, that's not me," some might say. "I don't feel condemned." But according to verse 4, just because

you haven't felt the judgment of God, doesn't mean you're not guilty of sin. We all sin. **Rom. 3:23 (HCSB)** says that "*all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*" So, God doesn't approve of our sinful behavior or attitudes any more than He approves of the behaviors of a homosexual, a child molester, or a murderer.

What we don't realize is that many times, God is showing us His "*kindness,*" His "*restraint,*" and His "*patience*" (vs. 4), not because He approves, but because He is trying to give us time to repent and turn from our sin. (4b). To presume upon that kindness is to show contempt for what God is trying to do. This is the truth about us. And God's judgment will be based on truth. The second thing we understand about God's judgment is:

2. God's Judgment Is According to Behavior (5-8)

Romans 2:5-8 (HCSB) "*But because of your hardness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath, when God's righteous judgment is revealed. He will repay each one according to his works: eternal life to those who by patiently doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but wrath and indignation to those who are self-seeking and disobey the truth, but are obeying unrighteousness.*"

When God judges us, He's looking at our attitudes and our actions. It is not enough to **say** that we believe. We must also behave as we believe. It is not enough to believe in a standard. We've got to **live** by that standard. God's judgment will be according to our behavior.

Vs. 5 says that it's because of our hard and unrepentant hearts, we'll be judged. And if we're too stubborn to repent, then we will find ourselves in deep trouble. Indeed, we will be "*storing up wrath*" for ourselves.

This behavior problem is found everywhere in society, even in the church. You don't think so, I ask you to look at the commitment level of Christians in the church. Christians take their commitments so lightly these days. It's easy to **say**, "*I'll be there. I'll do that job. I'll teach that class, or man that position. You can count on me!*" And it works for awhile. But when it becomes inconvenient, or when someone doesn't get the recognition they think they deserve, faithfulness and consistency, and commitment goes out the door. And that is when many can be deemed AWOL and MIA.

Why is this? Maybe we don't stress commitment enough. Maybe we don't teach it enough. Maybe it's just plain old apathy. Whatever the reason, we've generated a generation of terrible commitment role models. And the problem is just going to get worse because their kids and grandkids are watching and taking note! They are learning that it's OK to substitute a worship service for a weekend in the mountains. It's OK to substitute a church commitment for a chance to sleep in. It's OK to put a ball game over Bible study, or a car race over religion.

It used to be that a person was only as good as his word. It used to be that if you said you would do something, you did it, or died trying. Nowadays people will bail out on a commitment at the drop of the hat - and they will drop the hat!

But listen, how we behave tells what we believe. And if what you say you believe does not impact how you behave, then you really don't believe what you think you do. James teaches us that faith without works is dead, which means it is "*not real*" or "*phony*" This is why vs. 6 (HCSB) says that God will "*repay each one according to his works.*" This is why God can fairly judge us on the basis of our behavior. Thirdly, we need to understand that:

3. God's Judgment Is Without Favoritism (9-15)

Continuing the thought that God will repay according to their works, Paul says in **Romans 2:9-15 (HCSB)** that God will repay: "*9 affliction and distress for every human being who does evil, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek; 10 but glory, honor, and peace for everyone who does good, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek. 11 There is no favoritism with God. 12 All those who sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all those who sinned under the law will be judged by the law. 13 For the hearers of the law are not righteous before God, but the doers of the law will be declared righteous. 14 So, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, instinctively do what the law demands, they are a law to themselves even though they do not have the law. 15 They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts. Their consciences testify in support of this, and their competing thoughts either accuse or excuse them.*"

The common thread throughout this passage is impartiality. It doesn't matter who you are, or what your background - whether you've been religious, or not religious, rich or poor, educated or uneducated - God is going to judge everyone impartially.

Paul says we'll all be judged fairly because, even by man's moral standard of right and wrong, he's still

guilty. Now we do have the standards of God in the Bible, but some might be ignorant of the Scriptures. Even so, we all have those same standards in our consciences. So there's no where one can go where people do not have some standard of morality. In every culture, people still know that it's wrong to steal, or kill, or lie. Even where there are lesser standards, everyone stands guilty by failing to live by even that. So we are all without excuse.

Now I don't know how God will judge us without partiality, but I just believe He's smart enough to sort it all out. No one will be able to accuse Him of playing favorites. He is totally impartial and His judgment will be absolutely just. Finally, we need to understand that:

4. God's Judgment Will Exclude Nothing (15b-16)

Romans 2:15b-16 (HCSB) "...*their competing thoughts either accuse or excuse them on the day when God judges what people have kept secret, according to my gospel through Christ Jesus.*"

When people stand before God in the judgment, there will be no secrets - nothing that will be hidden from Him.

Now this verse ought to scare a lot of people. The fact that everything done in secret - every bad word, every bad attitude, every sinful desire will be revealed; will make judgment day a horrible day for many!

But it doesn't have to be. In fact, this is something we should be glad to know. For example, I'm sure those poor souls on that cruise ship that ran aground, would have appreciated a little warning wouldn't they? Of course they would! They'd have like to have known in time to safely abandon ship.

Well, you would think that people would rather know that things are not OK, and have a chance to do something about it rather than to keep on believing that everything is all right and die in their sin wouldn't you?

Several years ago there was a popular book entitled *I'm OK, You're OK*. But the Bible says, in fact, that: "*I'm not OK, You're not OK, and no one is OK.*" Whether we like it or not, we're all sinners. We're all in the same boat.

But the good news is that when one comes to Christ in repentance and faith, He'll forgive that person of all their sins, even the secret sins, and will totally blot them out. He'll cast them into the deepest sea and forget about them - and never bring them up again. So the way to deal with the bad news is to trust in the good news. I like what James Boice said about this: "*The most important thing in life is to know that Jesus is able to save you from sin. The second most important thing is to know that you need it.*" We need to know this. But more importantly, we need to act on it and share it with others. We all are without excuse. But God has made a way to escape, and Jesus Christ is that way.