

“The Moral Man Without Excuse”

Romans 2:1-16

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I. Introduction

- A. A father complained about the amount of time his family spent in front of the television. His children watched cartoons and neglected schoolwork. His wife preferred soap operas to housework. His solution? “As soon as the baseball season’s over, I’m going to pull the plug.”
- B. In Chapter 1 of Romans, Paul painted a picture of the deplorable condition of the heathen world and their descent into idolatry and immorality; he knew there was a class of men (self-righteous, moralist, a “good person”) who would say “Amen” to his verdict of the guilty condemned heathen, and yet were doing the same things.
- C. So, Paul now calls the “moral man” (good person; self-righteous) into the courtroom to show him that he, too, is lost and guilty before God, and without excuse (Chapter 2:1-16)
 - 1. (We need to understand this.)
- D. Is the moral man a Gentile or Jew? (v. 1) “O man = Gentile;” (v. 17) Jew
 - 1. “Man – Greek = “anthropo”; “man-kind” (man and woman)
 - 2. Illustration: We all know people that reject any idea that they are sinners
 - a) I am a “good person”
 - b) Or, “I am not that bad”
- E. Whenever we point a finger at someone, we have three fingers pointing back at us!
- F. Now! The key word in this section is the word “judgest,” “judgment,” or “judge” (nine times in the text)
 - 1. Opens in Verse 1 – Man is on the throne of judgment
 - 2. Closes in Verse 16 – God is on the throne of judgment
- G. Four reasons the moral person is under condemnation:

II. Moral People are Condemned According to their own Judgment (v. 1)

- A. Paul is not saying it’s wrong to judge something as wrong
 - 1. People say, “don’t judge,” or “no absolute truth”
 - a) Illustration: Matthew 7 – Jesus said
- B. What is wrong with their judgment?
 - 1. It was hypocritical
 - a) Illustration – Speck in eye
 - 2. Why? Verse 1 – “For you that judge do the same things” (or just as bad)
 - a) Contrast Verse 1:32 and Verse 2:1
 - b) Old Testament illustration: David and Nathan – “You’re the man”
 - c) How can they be “moral” and do the same things (just as bad)?
 - 1) Sins of good standing
 - 2) Illustration: Verse 1:29 – “Covetousness”
 - 3) They don’t understand the nature and extent of sin
 - 4) Illustration - Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount: Don’t murder. “But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment” (Matthew 5:22).

- 6) Don't commit adultery. "But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matthew 5:28).
- 7) The self-righteous – Are blind to their own faults, and judgmental of others
- 8) Illustration: Luke 18 – "The Publican and the Pharisee;" John 8 – "Double standard;" Matthew 7:1-5 – "First judge yourself"
- 9) Like the heathen in Chapter 1:21 – "Knowing God, they glorified Him not as God"
- 10) "Ungodly;" "practice aestheticism" (v. 1:30)
- 11) It's a sin of omission

III. Moral People are Condemned According to the Truth (vv. 2-5)

- A. Psalm 96:13 – "He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth."
- B. We can be "sure" (v. 2). God's judgment is according to "The Truth" (not man's)
- C. Why would men go on sinning? (Three words)
 1. "Thinkest" (v. 3)
 - a) It's not my fault!
 - b) God won't judge me.
 2. "Despisest" (v. 4)
 - a) God is good; He won't judge
 - b) Illustration: God's goodness leading to repentance (3 Peter 3:9) – The Prodigal Son
 3. "Treasurest" (v. 5)
 - a) Illustration: Putting money in the bank
 - b) Contrast with Matthew 6:20 – "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven"
 - c) "The day" When? The Great White Throne (Revelation 20)
- D. Woodrow Kroll – After years of glossing over personal sin and guilt, the pride of moralists will not allow them to have a change of mind (Greek, metanoia), which is repentance (v. 5). Thus their pride and sinful hearts stockpile the wrath of God so that in the day of wrath, the day of God's righteous judgment, the Lord God will deal as justly with moral people as He does with the immoral ones.

IV. Moral People are Condemned According to their Works (vv. 6-10)

- A. It's "Universal"
 1. It's "every man"
 2. It's according to works
- B. Is Paul teaching we can be saved by doing good? (v. 7; v. 10)
 1. Answer: No! See verses 3:20 and 4:5
 2. What is Paul saying?
 - a) Same as James; our works show true, saving faith
 - 1) Illustration: A tree is known by its fruit
 - 2) Jew or Gentile (v. 10)
 - 3) The work of God (John 6:28-29)

V. Moral People are Condemned without Respect of Persons (vv. 11-16)

- A. “No partiality;” “No favorites”
- B. This would shock the Jews (no Jews in Hell) (v. 11)
 - 1. Illustration: People say: “My grandfather was a Preacher”
 - 2. “I am a member of a church”
 - 3. “I gave money to charity,” etc.
- C. Verses 12-15 (study it)
 - 1. Lesson - God will judge according to light
 - a) Illustration: Jesus said, “The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here” (Matthew 12:41).
 - b) “Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes” (Matthew 11:21).
 - c) Key – “No one has ever lived up to the light he or she has”
 - d) Verses 12-16 – The point is that there is a valid standard for the judgment of every person
- D. “In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel” (v. 16)
 - 1. There is coming a day when God will judge - “the day when God will judge”
 - 2. God’s judgment will include the hidden areas of our lives; “the secrets of men”
 - a) Hebrews 4:12 – “For the word of God is alive”
 - 3. This judgment will take place through Jesus Christ; “by Jesus Christ”
 - a) Illustration: Paul in Athens (Acts 17:31)
 - 4. God’s judgment is part of the gospel; “as my gospel declares”
 - a) The righteous judgment of God is an essential ingredient of the gospel (also a reason for trusting Jesus’ finished work on the cross)
 - 1) Illustration: The gospel only shines when seen against the dark background of sin
 - 2) As when displaying a diamond ring.
 - b) Woodrow Kroll – “Being moral is insufficient to be righteous. These are not synonymous concepts. Moral people may possess a heightened conscience and live in light of it, but God demands righteousness, not just morality. Since no one innately possesses such righteousness, God deals with the moral and the immoral in the same way. Both fall short of God’s glory (Rom. 3:23). While moralists may be better citizens, they are not better candidates for heaven. The human need for righteousness permeates both blatant sinners and moralists.”
 - c) Point: Morality and Righteousness are not the same! We must have Righteousness!
 - d) A day of judgment is coming! (Revelation 20)
 - 1) It’s a good idea to “settle out of court”
 - 2) John 3:16-18

VI. CONCLUSION

- A. John 3:16-18 – “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”