

GOD'S RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT

Romans 2:1-8

A Bible College student once went in to the Dean's office to complain about the grading on a test. "It's not fair," the student complained. "Jim and I both got 'zeroes' on question five. The question was, 'What verse in the Bible begins with "For God so loved the world..."' I said John 3:17 and Jim said Revelation 22:7. I was only one verse off and Jim wasn't even in the same book! I ought to get more points than he did!"

The student thought he should get more points because he was closer to the correct answer. And, closeness does count in some things. If you drive a car 199 miles on ten gallons of gas, you can fairly say that you're getting 20 miles per gallon.

But closeness does not count in other things, and it does not count in salvation! Suppose I lose a \$5,000 diamond ring over in that corner. And suppose we divide into two groups to look for the ring. The first group will go downtown and search the Sears tower to try to find the ring, and the second group will come over here and search under the piano for the ring. Which group is going to find the ring? ... Neither group! The ring is over in that corner. It is not in the Sears tower, and it is not under this piano. The piano group may be a lot closer, but closer is not good enough! The ring is over in that corner. No matter how hard we look for it over here, we are not going to find it!

The next time you eat an orange, take a moment to look at it before you eat it. Notice how the skin of the orange has small bumps all over it. See if you can tell just by touching it which bumps are bigger than the others. If the entire Earth were reduced to the size of an orange, even Mt. Everest would seem infinitesimal compared to the normal bumps on an orange. In fact, the Earth would feel more like a smooth billiard ball than like a bumpy orange. If you can't tell the difference between the bumps on an orange, how are you ever going to tell the difference between the bumps on a billiard ball?

This is how God sees men and women who have not believed in Christ. They are like the "bumps" on a billiard ball. There is no difference. No matter how they may strive to be "good"; no matter how much better than the average man they may seem to us here below; they are all the same to God: dead and damned!

Suppose for a moment that the requirement for getting to heaven was having the ability to swim from San Francisco to

Tokyo. I would start out, make it maybe a mile, become exhausted and drown. The greatest swimmer in the world might start out, make it 100 miles, become exhausted and drown. If God were sitting in Tokyo and waiting, He would never see anybody make it to Tokyo! Not unless He himself came to San Francisco and took us and carried us across the sea himself.

Romans 2:1 says, "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things."

There is no excuse for anyone who has ever criticized another for anything. Have you ever criticized anyone for anything? Then you have no excuse before God because your criticism arises from the fact that you have a conscience, which now recognizes a sin in another because it is aware of the existence of sin in yourself. None of us have ever lived up to the light of our consciences. No person has ever criticized another for lying without having, sometime or other, been guilty of shading the truth themselves.

Some people imagine that they are good enough to judge others. They think that "human" righteousness is good, that it is satisfactory, and that because it is satisfactory to men, God should also be satisfied with that righteousness. But God declares that it is not satisfactory; it is not good; it is not even righteousness! God calls it rebellion, rejection of Himself, filthy rags, and evil!

Those who think they are "Good People" and therefore don't need God are deceiving themselves. The world may call them great and good, but God calls them evil and damned, and it is God's opinion that counts!

There is no excuse! Grace: Yes! Forgiveness: Yes! But no excuse. You can't make excuses to God! God doesn't accept excuses! He demands perfection! And if you are not perfect, you have no excuse. In Leviticus 11:44, God commands, "For I am the Lord your God; consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy...." And in Matthew 5:48, Jesus commanded, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

Our passage this morning declares man's sinfulness and the principles of God's judgment in such terms that the result is absolute condemnation, without the remotest shadow of hope, for any person who tries to approach God with any

brand of "human" righteousness.

Romans 2:2 says, "But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things."

I used to live in Santa Cruz, California. Santa Cruz has a boardwalk down by the beach. My favorite part of the boardwalk was always the "Fun House". They tore it down a few years ago, but when it was there, you could still get in for a quarter and stay all day if you wanted to. The "Fun House" had a lot of crazy mirrors which made tall people look short, thin people look fat, and all sorts of other distortions.

We enjoy such distortions. But human beings also delight in more dangerous distortions. The human imagination makes the individual see himself in some sort of comparison with others, and always in a light that is more favorable than the truth would justify. The coming of God's judgment will destroy such distortions! Isaiah 28:17 says, "...the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies and the waters shall overflow the hiding place."

Romans 2:3 says, "And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?"

There is no escape! This verse is the definite revelation from God that we are going to face the truth! We can face it now and be saved through Christ, or we can face it after death and be damned to the Lake of Fire. Believe me: there is no other alternative. In the parable of the pounds in Luke 19:22, Jesus declared that the Lord would say, "...Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee...".

Romans 2:4 and 5 say:

4. "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"

5. "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God:"

If we despise the riches of God's goodness, if we despise his patience, we are building up for ourselves a hoard: a hoard of the Wrath of God! And God will be a

faithful banker and will keep our hoard safe in the vault and will deliver it in full measure on the day of judgment: the day of God's wrath.

Every person who has ever lived, every person who is alive now, and every person who will ever live in the future will someday come face-to-face with God! Either it will be "Face-to-face with Christ my Savior" as the great hymn of comfort reads, or it will be face-to-face with the Lord as judge.

Any who would dare to boast that they are not guilty of the great fleshly sins such as murder or robbery fail to realize that despising the goodness of God is a sin that far transcends any act that might be called a crime under human law.

Romans 2:6-8 continue the thought on God's judgment:

6. "Who will render to every man according to his deeds:"

7. "To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life."

8. "But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath."

God's judgement will also be according to works. This does not mean that salvation is by works! Salvation is by grace through faith. Doing good is a result of salvation: not vice-versa. Romans 4:5 specifically contradicts any teaching that you must do good works in order get into heaven. That verse reads, "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

The good that the christian does is not the cause of his going to Heaven, but is rather the proof of the existence with him of the life which God has given him through Christ.

You have probably heard the old accusation, "You can prove anything by the Bible." Those who say this are saying that the Bible is so full of contradictions and inconsistencies that you can find some passage to support anything. This is a lie! It is nonsense!

I can just as easily say that I can prove anything by

the Dictionary. I get out my good old "American Collegiate" and I turn to the second letter of the alphabet and find b-l-a-c-k, "black". Then I go to the ninth letter and find i-s, "is". Finally I go to the twenty-third letter and find w-h-i-t-e, "white". There! I've proved it! "Black is white!" I have the authority of the American Collegiate Dictionary: I found it there!

By now, of course, you are jumping up and down and furiously shouting at me that I have blatantly and outrageously violated the method and principles that underly dictionaries. You tell me that they are to be used only within the limits of their purpose. It is not permissible to make a mockery of the Dictionary by distorting its usage and violating its principles!

Beloved, it is the same with God's Word, the Bible. It is not possible to prove just anything by the Bible! I challenge you to try to prove that God loves sin. Try to prove from the Bible that the unbeliever has even the slimmest chance of escaping the judgment of God. You cannot prove such things from the Word of God! The Bible is the story of man's complete ruin in sin and God's perfect remedy in Christ!

If you have found God's remedy; if you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, then Romans 8:1 says to you, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus..."

But if you have not put your trust in Jesus, then Acts 16:31 says to you, "...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved..." Do it now! You may never have another chance!

Hallelujah! Amen!

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