

Good morning OIC. We continue to work through Paul's Letter to the Roman Church in the first Century. A fitting title for this part of the Letter might be ...

God Is The Judge

2 You may think you can condemn such people, but you are just as bad, and you have no excuse! When you say they are wicked and should be punished, you are condemning yourself, for you who judge others do these very same things.

Such people refers back to the sinners who God gave over to their corrupt nature, and their sinful depravity became evident to the whole world, that is *pagan religions* in the world. As written in Romans 1 /KJV: **24** *Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: 25 who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.* Paul knew the *sting for himself* to self righteous people hearing “*for you who judge others do these very same things.*” He may have recalled that moment when Holy Spirit *stung* his heart, as a Law-keeping Pharisee, with conviction as a *murderer of Stephen*. That same Spirit of God had him seeing the risen Saviour with the gifts of repentance and faith in the Messiah, the LORD. We can be sure Paul was praying that any stinging in his speech would precede Holy Spirit doing the same for his audience.

Paul now starts to focus on the sin of *self-righteousness*. He is addressing a Jew who imagines he keeps the Law for his righteous standing with God. His audience of many Jewish people, included believers in Messiah Yeshua. Now this Jew is an imagined person, a preaching style which Paul uses to address likely arguments in this and later chapters of Romans. This writing style is called *diatribe*, making a point by an imagined questioner. In this case to focus on one who has absorbed what was said up to this point in Romans 1, and who is in hearty agreement with the judgment of Gentile wickedness.

I have chosen the following conclusion from Romans for a **takeaway** concept for mediation, and prayer.

1) Heartily agreeing with the righteousness of God in judging others can cover up how we still deserve His judging us.

Paul knew that serious Jews would never be outwardly *pagan* as Romans 1; but, now he gets to the inner man. He was the *perfect Pharisee*, keeping the rules faultlessly. He relates this in his personal testimony before King Agrippa in (Acts 26.4-5) Then, when he met Jesus on the road to Damascus, we can safely assume Holy Spirit immediately convicted him of the murder of Stephen even as Paul was seeing and hearing Jesus calling him to Himself. Therefore Paul knew how one could keep the *rules of the Law* outwardly, with hate and murder in his heart. His personal experience of his own self-righteousness likely made his argument here more harsh; but, utterly truthful. The Jewish believers in Rome needed to get their comfort from *their sins being forgiven*, not from any comparison with outwardly corrupted sinners who show *pagan behaviors*. This is also true for you and me!

R v. 2-4 Now, it seems more definite that Paul is confronting an *imagined* Jew, not yet born again by confessing Jesus as LORD. However, the beautiful thing of God's breathed Scriptures, is that it tends to reach us *where we live*, our personal sins and needs: for either a yet unsaved Jew or , to a *morally behaving sinner*, or maybe even a *Self-righteous or immature Christian*. Newly Born Again Christians often have what we call *baggage or sinful habits* that God has not yet dealt with.

v.2 God 's just punishment;

v.3 God should judge you Jews since your *thought life* includes the *pagan sins*. Only being washed in the Blood of Jesus cleanses us from sinful thoughts. Remember how Jesus taught this reality of the *inner man* in Matthew 15:

17 Do you not yet understand that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated?

18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. 19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. Dear saints at OIC! Realize , without fear, that our hearts after being born-again continue to have such sinful thoughts. We must pray about our thought-life, asking the Holy Spirit, to be our Helper, for pure thoughts ,and against the impure. Yet, this is another reason to look forward to

Heaven. It is only when we leave these corruptible bodies that we leave forever the evil still residing in our hearts. BUT, knowing that Jesus' Blood has already bought our forgiveness, we need not fear! Paul is addressing someone who was not **humble about his own battle against sin inside his heart.**

THUS:

v.4 Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can't you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin?

This means turning from the sin of self-righteousness as a Jew or Gentile, before or after receiving Christ. Paul's imagined target in *diatribe* was a *self-righteous Jew*. The *WORD* of God here clearly applies to any self-proclaimed 'moral' person. The Jew feels secure by his attempt to keep the Law of Moses. But, righteousness by the Law requires perfection, which no Jew except Jesus achieved. The moral person sees his own *good works* and thinks these are sufficient for right standing with God.

R.v5 It is clear now that Paul has been imagining a self-righteous Jew, as he had been, stubborn and refusing to turn from sin to Messiah Yeshua, which, Paul declares often, how he was thankful that he did. Thus this imagined Jew was without Christ. **For Paul calls out to accountability these sinful people, as God will judge all who are without Christ on the Day of Judgment. As I shared Romans 5.9 last Sunday, we can REJOICE BECAUSE WE BELIEVE!!!**

9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

I still hold to my application of these Scriptures in Romans 2 ALSO for born-again Christians, Jew or Gentile. God will give us Christians appropriate discipline, or "painful life experiences from our Heavenly Father" to rid us Believers of self-righteousness.

Hebrews 12.11 tells us ---

No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way. So a loving Heavenly Father will convince us of sins of self-righteousness to bring us into peaceful living and Jesus' true impact on the world around us.

Now, what we believe produces what we do---good or evil.

R. 6-10 ...Paul would never hint on a salvation from works; but, he never forgot Jesus' teaching: you will know them by their fruits. In Matthew 7.16 He said :You can identify them by

their fruit, that is, by the way they act. Can you pick grapes from thorn-bushes, or figs from thistles? This applies to a professing Christians' lifestyle, not necessarily every action, for we all are in the process of being conformed into Jesus' image.

v.7 He will give eternal life to those who keep on doing good, seeking after the glory and honor and immortality that God offers.

Rewards are not salvation by works. This is simply **Romans 1.17** *faith to faith* living, brought to its logical conclusion. Living by *faith in Jesus* will cause us to keep on doing good. Our desire to *persevere in the faith* is seeking after our final chapter: seeing Jesus. That is seeking after *glory---honor---immortality*, the Gift of God.

NOTE on v 8-10.... The format here contrasts the Believer in verses #7 & 10, who obeys the Gospel by believing it, with the Unbeliever in verses #8 & 9 who refuses to Believe, thus disobeys, Jesus' Gospel.

The good works that believers perform do not bring them salvation, but they attest to the salvation they have received by faith as the Bible states in Paul's Letter to the **Ephesians, 2: 8** *God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God.*

On the other side of the ledger is a pattern of evil defined in terms of self-seeking and rejection of the truth, leading to divine wrath in terms of trouble and distress. The statement "*who reject the truth and follow evil*" echoes **Romans 1.18**. Destiny does not depend on whether one is Jew or Gentile. The Jew is mentioned first simply because of God's prior dealing with that nation in history. Mention of the two divisions of humankind, that is *for the Jew first and also for the Gentile.*, to receive rewards or condemnations, leads naturally to the pronouncement of Paul's third principle: God's judgment is impartial; as **v.11** declares he "*does not show favoritism*" **The Jews, mentioned first as His chosen nation, (EBC) will be judged by God in this same way as the Gentles, faith to faith in Christian living. The final judgment of Jew and Gentile individuals is related totally to each one's personal relationship with God through Jesus.**

R. v.12-13

Paul, as all good teachers, is never ashamed to repeat his major points. He presents reasonable and intelligent arguments against this *imaginary Jew*. So he introduces the same words of condemnation

to men who reject the Good News of God's Son, but introduces a new word for emphasis, *destroyed*. The Biblical term to be *destroyed* or to perish means eternal death, or eternal separation from God, not death on earth. For Gentiles, ignorance is no excuse regarding God's Law. They are hearing Jesus' Good News even as Paul speaks. For the Jews, knowing God's Law means nothing if you don't keep it in *perfect obedience*.

As here at O.I.C. most of us from many nations of the world, are not Jewish by earlier religion. Some of us are *Born Again Jews*, Praise God's Glorious Name. As a Born Again Gentile myself, the Holy Spirit taught me years ago to replace the word "Law" with "Word" as we sang a song at Park Street Church in Boston, Massachusetts USA titled *How I Love Thy Law, O Lord*. from Psalm 119. The attitude was clearly as in Psalm 119: 72 *The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver*. However, Jesus knew how my discipline as an engineer and computer programmer, might kill the Love in His Word, from both the Older & Newer Testaments. However Christians must consider the WORD of God, all the Bible and Jesus' commandments, just as vital as the word "Law" implies. So, I decided to make this a TAKE-AWAY from my personal experience with Christ. The clear reasons for condemnation in vv. 12-13, as neither these Jews nor Gentiles believed God's WORD in the Good News of Jesus, is saying that:

2) God's WORD to us is personal and consistently given in LOVE. There is a danger to interpret God's Word as LAW without LOVE to sinners, Jew or Gentile. Paul declares only God's Love given in Jesus' Gospel, that is believing it, brings any of us, Jew or Gentile, to safety with God.

PSALM 119:

65 Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O LORD,
according unto thy word.

66 Teach me good judgment and knowledge:
for I have believed thy commandments.

67 Before I was afflicted I went astray:
but now have I kept thy word.

68 Thou *art* good, and doest good;
teach me thy **statutes** (WORD).

We will see later in Romans, and actually all the New Testament, how it is God's WORD that keeps

us close to Jesus, not His Ten Commandments or Law, without His Love.

TAKEAWAYS FOR MEDITATION & PRAYER

- 1) **Hearty agreement with the righteousness of God judging others can cover up how we still deserve His judging us.**
- 2) **God's WORD to us is personal and consistently given in LOVE. There is a danger to either preach to sinners or to live, as Christians, the LAW, differentiating from The WORD, God's Love Letter. Paul declares that only God's Love given in Jesus' Gospel brings us to safety with God.**

My closing prayer will be the words from a hymn, *Search Me O God*. Let's pray this together, church:

Search me O God

and Know my heart I pray

Try me O Saviour

Know my thoughts I pray

See if there be

Any wicked way in me

Cleanse me from every sin

And set me Free

God bless you church! Go in the Freedom of fellowship with Jesus and with Each other.

Pastor Bruce

REFERENCES

(AKJV) Authorized King James Version reproduced by permission of Cambridge University Press, the Crown's patentee in the UK.

(EBC) Expositor's Bible Commentary (Abridged Edition): New Testament Copyright 2004.

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