

XI. Romans in Biblical Perspective

The Gospel of God

“From the Present Wrath of God to the Eternal Wrath of God

Amplifying the Grace of God – Part 2”

Romans 2:1–11

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This section of God’s Word we come to is dealing with the judgment of God. Romans 2:1–5 says [1] *Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things. [2] We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things. [3] Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God? [4] Or do you presume on the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? [5] But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.*

The grass withers, the flower fades, God’s Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

Whenever I talk about the Gospel and its power one of my favorite illustrations on this is when I was 16 years old. At that age my dad gave me a car he bought at an auction for \$75 that was a pink retired interceptor and everyone who saw it laughed but they didn’t laugh at my 392 57 Ford, two four barrel engine that sucked them up off the road. My dad and mom that year I got this car, for the first time in their married life had a vacation together alone without kids. One of the reasons they got me this car was not only was it my birthday but I was going to be the one who provided transportation for myself and my three sisters while they were gone. My dad sat me down to tell me what I was responsible for while they were away which was to take my sisters to and from school as well as myself, to do the chores left for me to do and my grandmother would stay with us at night. My parents were going to be gone five days.

Although my dad told me I could not leave school once I got there before I went to school I decided to go pick up some of my friends, after dropping my sisters off at school and show them what my 57 Ford could do. This meant that that I was going to be late for school and that I was in a hurry. As I was pulling out of an intersection, being in a hurry, I looked left then right but then didn’t look back left and ended up slicing open like a can opener down the side a brand new 64 convertible galaxy and totaled it. The only thing that really happened to my car was losing my headlight. I jumped out and the driver was okay as my two good friends jumped out and took off running to school. The police came, gave me a ticket and my summons as they told me I would appear in court. I was more concerned about the court I would appear in front of when my dad got home in about five days.

When my dad got home I confessed to what I had done and then my dad said ‘Here is what is going to happen.’ He opened the summons and said ‘here is your case, your number, your charge, your indictment and this is the day we go to court. I will be going with you and you are growing up so when we get there you will be the one standing in front of the judge, not me, because you are the one responsible for this, you did it and the judge will tell you what he will do in light of what you did.’ When we got there it didn’t help me to know that the judge we were appearing in front of was known as ‘bullet Bob.’ As I stood in front of him, he asked me if I was

Harry Reeder's boy and I said 'yes' and then he said 'what in the world is a son of Harry Reeder doing in front of me?' This didn't sound like it was going to go well and then he asked me what I did so I explained what happened. He then said 'Aren't you glad the man you hit is still living?' I said 'yes sir.' Then he said 'I think you're dad and mom are glad you are living too.' I said 'yes sir.' Right before the judge gave me the penalty, my dad stood up beside me and said to the judge, 'Judge, I think my son is going to be a very good driver, he just needs some experience.' Then the judge said to me 'You're dad thinks you're going to be a good driver and do you think we can keep you alive long enough for you to be a good driver?' I said 'yes sir.' The judge then took my license for two months and told me to go driving with my dad to learn what I hadn't learned yet and then come back and see him.

I tell you this story because I think that is what Paul is doing in this passage in Romans for you and me. We have found out in our study of Romans who Paul is, what is on his heart and he is about to write this exposition of the Gospel of God and then he did this wonderful thing about being eager to preach it and that he is not ashamed of it. Then he unpeeled for us a little bit of the grace of God revealed from heaven through the Son of God to save sinners by the grace of God through the power of God and the righteousness of God. We see this in Romans 1:16-17 which says *[16] For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. [17] For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."*

Paul is not anywhere near through talking to us about the breadth, height, length, depth and width of the Gospel of God. We will soon be diving into Romans 4, 5, 6, 7, and then singing a Gospel hallelujah for all of Romans 8. It is an extraordinary exposition of the Gospel but he is not going there first. He left this grace of God revealed as he moved immediately to the wrath of God revealed against the Jew, the Gentile and all of humanity. He is working the indictment against all of humanity and the reason he is doing this is the Gospel of God is that Jesus saves all who confess their sins and put their trust in Him as they turn from their sins. He doesn't save us from poverty or the brokenness of this world or to the success in life. He saves us from the power, penalty and persuasion of our sins and from the practice of our sins. He will save us from the presence of sins. He doesn't save us from the consequences of sin throughout the world directly but this is why we come to Jesus. You don't come to Jesus because you need connections in your business or a social group or a pretty good spouse. All of those things are dealt with in the Gospel life but that's not the Gospel.

Paul knows you will never come to Him to be saved from your sins until you know you are a sinner, you're helpless (dead in your sins), you're hopeless (no one here can save you), and there is a Day of Judgement and accountability for what we have done. This is why Paul is taking time to do this. Paul is giving you a Biblically defined Gospel, not a world defined gospel. Therefore, Paul is taking the time to explain things we know we should ask but we're not asking and he is going to make sure you hear them because you can't declare your trust in Christ through the Good News if you haven't believed what God has said with the bad news. I need a Savior – something greater than my sin. In the Day of Judgment I only have one hope and that is the One whom I stand before. If I have come to Him before that Day then I will spend eternity with Him. He came first to bear judgment but when He comes again He will bring judgment.

In other words, so that you will make an appointment to come to Christ as Savior Paul is trying to tell us as sinners we have two appointments because of our sin. Hebrews 9:27 says *[27] And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment.* If we are not

here when Christ returns then you will have two appointments. I don't know where those two appointments go on my calendar but God has told me they are Divinely ordained and inescapable appointments. The first appointment will be my death and it will either be to glory or to condemnation. When I die I will appear before a judgment seat that will reveal either a life that was changed by grace or a life that rejected grace that lived upon and for myself.

I have to preach the truth in love to you and that's why I'm grateful to preach through Scripture. God has given us His Word for a reason and we need to understand its content in the context it was written. Paul is about to give multiple chapters to the explanation of the Gospel in Romans but here is what he is showing. The Gospel is going to the Jew and Gentile so in Romans 1:18–32 Paul shows us that all pagan Gentiles are indicted before God. There is none that is innocent. Then Paul knows there are people saying 'amen' to that so in Romans 2 he confronts religious Gentiles that judge and convict others are also under God's judgment. So all the Gentiles have been placed before the bar of God's justice and the verdict is guilty.

Beginning in Romans 2:12 Paul will start marching the Jewish people before the bar of God's justice and the verdict will also be guilty. Paul will get to the final judgment in Romans 3:23 which says *[23] for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*. In the midst of this indictment process by Paul, who is bringing the charges against us so we will flee to Christ and flee the wrath to come, he gives us this little ellipsis in Romans 2:6–11 to let us know what happens at the judgment day. Paul will answer three questions that we need to ask but aren't asking and here is the first one.

Who will be there at the Judgment Day? I want to look at a couple of passages here. II Corinthians 5:6–10 says *[6] So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, [7] for we walk by faith, not by sight. [8] Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. [9] So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please Him.* (Why do we make it our aim to please the Lord? There are multiple reasons but here he gives us one in the next verse.) *[10] For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.*

We will all appear before the Judgment Seat of God and the book of Revelation says that lost and faithful angels will even be there. Satan will be there. All of God's created beings will be there. There is no way around someone not appearing on that day. I know you are probably thinking 'pastor we're not saved by works' based on how this passage ends and that is correct. The judgment of works will reveal the condition of the heart. We are and can do good if we are saved. At the Judgment Seat if people have done good it's only by God's grace and what they do reveals God's redeeming grace in their life. We all stand there before Him accountable to Him. Now I want to look at I Peter 2.

I Peter 2:11–12 says *[11] Beloved, (those who are Christians) I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. [12] Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation* (Divine visitation, Divine judgment).

How can unbelievers be forced to glorify God for the way I live my life if I'm not there on that day and my life isn't unfolded before them? Clearly, unbelievers are there and believers are there. He has them there for a purpose. The Old and New Testament declares this Day of Judgment and the New Testament affirms with John, James, Peter and Paul. James 3:1 says *[1] Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be*

judged with greater strictness. So why would he say that if believers won't be there at the judgment? As a pastor, I'm a teacher and I not only will appear at the judgment but I'll get a stricter one on that Day in terms of what I did with my stewardship of my teaching/preaching ministry. I will have to give an account of it.

I Corinthians 3:12–15 says [12] *Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— [13] each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. [14] If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. [15] If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.*

Where do they get this? They get it from Jesus. Jesus says He will divide the sheep from the goats – sheep are believers, goats are unbelievers. You will give an account for all your words on that Day. Jesus says in Matthew 16:27–28, [27] *For the Son of Man is going to come with His angels in the glory of His Father, and then **He will repay each person according to what he has done.** [28] Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.* So now let's go back to our text for this study in Romans 2. All will be at the Judgment Seat.

So, what is going to happen at the Day of Judgment? Romans 2:6–11 says [6] *He will render to each one according to his works: [7] to those who by patience (perseverance) in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, He will give eternal life; [8] but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. [9] There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, [10] but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. [11] For God shows no partiality.*

There is only one judgment. There are not multiple judgments. The judgment will be multi-faceted and will have multiple purposes but there is only one Divine judgment. There will be the saved and the lost at this judgment and according to Romans 2 there is one group that when their life is examined it will be known by Romans 2:7, profiled by perseverance, not perfection and their life has manifested the reality of their salvation. Their life is marked by three things. One, they seek to say and do what is honorable. If the church of Jesus Christ all sought by word, thought and action that which is honorable it would be amazing how different things would be. Two, they seek the glory of God. The chief end of man by creation, redemption and providence is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. When they have children they are there for God to give them to God. Thirdly, they do all this in immortality, to last eternally for God, for the souls of men and women. I have a message to live and share with those I come into contact with for their souls are eternal. One who is saved as they have these marking will receive a verdict of eternal life. Their life didn't save them but their life revealed their salvation.

There is another verdict in this Romans 2 text and that is one of God's wrath. These are profiled in Romans 2:8–9. They are self-seeking, persevere self, rely on self and are absorbed with self. They don't deny themselves. They don't obey the truth but obey self-centeredness, unrighteousness. They pursue rebellion against God. If your life is characterized by this and reveals it, they you will have the wrath of the Lamb poured upon you and the place you will go is called hell. On the way to it, you will cry out for mountains to avalanche upon yourself rather than the wrath of the Lamb.

So why are authentic Christians at the Judgment Seat? One is to let us know who the authentic Christians are. Not everyone who says 'Lord, Lord...' will enter the Kingdom of heaven (Matthew 7:21). Jesus says in Matthew 7:22–23, [22] *On that day many will say to Me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and cast out demons in Your name, and do many mighty works in Your name?'* [23] *And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness.'* Do the works of your life reveal a heart relationship with Jesus? Just because you are a member of a Bible preaching church does not mean you will get a pass on the day of judgment nor receive eternal life. He will call us to the tribunal and on that day our life and our works can't save us but it will reveal whether we are saved or not.

There is no such thing for a person to have a changed record if there is not the evidence of a changed heart. If there is a root there will be fruit – some 30, some 60, some 100 fold. They won't be perfect but there will be a change. II Corinthians 5:17 says [17] *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.* This person is not perfected yet for that will come in the new heavens and the new earth, but they are a new creation and no longer does the power and practice of sin rule in them. There is still sin in them but it will be revealed in the Day of Judgment by our works whether we had a new heart, which will then be inseparably tied to the fact we have a new record and there is our perfection – the work of Christ for us.

That Day is a day of clarification. Who are His? It is a Day to rectify. On that Day as our lives with all of its imperfections are poured out, God's grace that is greater than our sin will be manifested to some degree or another and they will have to glorify God – not because of us but because of what God did in us. To know that I'm going to give an account for every thought, word and deed in my life, I know I'm saved by grace with no condemning judgment that awaits me because of Jesus, the Judge, dying for me and I came to Him, but when I get there, I do not want to bring displeasure. I want to bring a smile to my Father and that's the anticipation of it.

On the one hand, this is a Governor on my life. I don't have a secret life although I may think I have a secret life, but what is done in my life will be revealed in that Day. So God, let me live transparently before You. Thank You for Your patience with me but Your patience is not designed to lead me to carelessness but to lead me to carefulness and repentance. On that Day the secrets of the heart will be revealed and the works will reveal the heart. The heart will reveal the reality that we're saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.

On that Day we're going to be like the little kid that comes home from school who is learning to draw. They come home with a picture they have drawn of mommy and daddy and says to their parents 'Look!' Do you think when that child presents that drawing to his mom and dad that they will be ashamed of it? No, it's not a perfect drawing but it's a way to declare who you love. I don't know of a mom or dad who would dare to compare their child's drawing to a Rembrandt, because they will just be thrilled to death to get the picture their child drew of them no matter what it looks like. I say this reverently; that God rejoices in our baby steps, our young man strides and our old man consistency in Christ. He will get all the glory for our many times, inept but intentional loving commitment to honor, glorify the eternal God of glory and majesty even with our faults for it's a day of doxology as God will be praised for the glory of His grace.

On that Day you will be able to sing Amazing Grace like you have never sung it before. Grace is amazing because it's greater than our sin. I don't know your heart or your sin but you know your heart and your sin but you don't even know all of your heart and your sin. On that Day you may now think it's amazing that you have been saved by grace for we have no idea of

the height, the breadth, the depth and length of God's love and grace for us, like we will know on that Day. With the angels who long to look, we will sing praise to the God of glory and grace.

Here is the takeaway. There will be one Judgment with two people groups – the saved and the lost. There will be two profiles – the evil heart will be revealed through the judgment of works that will have a profile of being self-seeking, embracing of sin, disobedient to truth and the disregarding of truth. The profile of the believer with the believing heart will be profiled through perseverance, patience, persistence, not perfection, and a changed life – now not self but glory of God, now not self and rebellion but honor to God and the anticipation of eternity with God. There are two destinations. For the children of wrath they will go to hell and for the children of grace they will go to the new heavens and the new earth. That judgment will also provide a judgment of stewardship as to our roles and responsibilities in heaven.

What is the one thing required of a steward? It is to be found faithful. On that Day, the believer's judgment will not only glorify God, but shut the mouths of unbelievers and will not only reveal our heart but it will declare our new record in Christ that we are forgiven because the evidence of faith has been manifested. Then we will get our assignments to God's glory through our stewardship and it will be delivered through all eternity. The question is what are you doing with what God is giving you?

God has allowed me to know some incredible men and women in my life so what have I done with that? Look at all the Lord's Days that God has given you – what have you done with them? Look at the privilege I have had to preach to, teach to, pastor and shepherd God's people. Look at all the books He has allowed me to have and read. Look at the wife, children and grandchildren He has given me. To be a good steward it can't be about me – it has to be about glory, honor and the eternal praise of God. This is not a profile summation – eternity, honor, glory, perseverance – of the works you must do to be saved but it is a profile summation of the works that are done by those who are saved.

No one who is forgiven of their sins by grace will show up at the Judgment Seat unchanged by grace. What about a deathbed conversion? I only know of one deathbed conversion in the Bible and it was the thief on the cross. He was probably guilty of murder and theft. He was mocking Jesus and probably spitting on Jesus but sometime in the next six hours, hearing God's Word, seeing God work and watching the Son of God, that thief went from a mocker to a confessor. He went from his sarcasm to his conviction. God be merciful to me, a sinner! Jesus, You're my only Hope, for I'm helpless and hopeless – remember me. Then the man who mocked began to worship and then he became an evangelist calling everyone else. He acknowledged that he was on his cross rightly but Jesus was on His cross wrongly but He is here for me and I want Him to be merciful to me. That will be revealed on the Day of Judgment – the thief's changed life, not a perfect life but a changed one.

There was a movie out recently that said 'what you do echoes into eternity' and I've heard preachers use that statement in which I understand why they use it, because what you do really counts – your marriage, your parenting, your ministry, your Lord's Day, the prioritizing of preaching and reading of God's Word. If you understand the Judgment Seat and how God uses this to authenticate and declare to the world the evidences that His grace was greater than our sin, then you realize what we do as believers doesn't just echo into eternity, it is amplified by the Divine loud speaker for eternity. It is a glorious declaration – Christ the God of glory!

All of humanity will be in front of the judgment bar, except One and that's the One sitting there – Jesus. I Corinthians 15:21 says [21] *For as by a man came death, by a Man has come also the resurrection of the dead.* Who gives us a changed life that gives us a changed

heart that gives us a changed record? It is Jesus and He has already appeared before the Judgment Seat for you and me that when we appear there it will be for Him, because of Him and unto Him. To Him be the glory forever and ever!

I'll never forget when Bullet Bob, the judge, was looking at me and I knew I was undone. I heard the chair shift and up came my dad. I have a hard time putting this into illustration that makes full sense but here's what I know; the same One who is the inflexible Judge to bring judgment, is the same One who stands beside me as my defense lawyer because He bore my judgment to change my record, my heart and manifest it on that day, not with a perfect but a changed life. How do you want to stand there, with which people – with those who bear the marks of His grace covered by His righteousness and blood or with those who bear the marks that call for His wrath? Come to the blood of the Lamb today so that you will not be under the wrath of the Lamb on that Day and on that Day manifest glory to the Lamb with the new life we have in Christ. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the time we could be together in Your Word. God this is so crucial and I know everyone reading this is going to stand that Day before You but there is only one way they can stand in that Day and then the anticipation that while we did not do all that we wanted to do for we'll never be a profitable servant but on that Day the Lord will affirm His work of grace in the lives of servants who have done well, seeking glory, honor and immortality through the patience of Jesus and through perseverance of love, in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Power Point

Three Questions

- Who will be at the Day of Judgment?
- What happens at the Day of Judgment?
- Why are authentic Christians at the Day of Judgment?

Life Takeaway

Two Peoples – Two Profiles – Two Destinations – One Judgment