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Romans 2 outlines God's principles of judgment. The first three verses summarize the last section of chapter 1, that no one has excuse not to believe God and accept His free gift of salvation to man.

Last time we discussed the moralist of Romans 2 who judges another based on his own moral standards. He sees sin as a matter of degree, and excuses himself on the basis that his conduct is better than many others.

However, God's standard of righteousness is not based on what men think, but rather on who God is. He is holy and perfect, and His standards must measure up to His flawless character. He can and will accept no less.

God's answer to the moralist is that he faces the same judgment and condemnation as the one he judges inferior. The question is not how good we are in our own eyes. The fact is that none of us measure up to God's standard. If one had to jump over a 100-foot chasm to save himself, it would not matter if he could jump only five or ten feet, or the world record of almost 30 feet! He would still fall short and die.

Just because God does not bring swift judgment on people does not mean that He is pleased with them. He is good, kind, and longsuffering that men may come to repentance, change their ways, and turn away from evil and to God (v.4).

God offers us the free gift of His righteousness through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. To accept it, we must first recognize our own lack of righteousness. A person will not receive a Savior if he doesn't believe he needs one.

Verse 5 speaks of the righteous judgment of God. Verse 6 tells us that every one will be judged according to his deeds (what we do matters), and verse 11 reminds us that God shows no partiality. There will be no favoritism.

Furthermore, verse 12 suggests that God's judgment will be based on the light they have received and how they have followed it. Verse 16 makes clear that all will be judged based on the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Bible is very clear about man not being saved by his conduct or works. There are at least 150 references in Scripture to the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith, and "not by works, lest anyone should boast" (Ephesians 2:8). There will be no boasting about self before God. He will rightfully receive all the glory.

However, it would be absolutely wrong to suggest that good works are not important! As James says in his epistle, "faith without works is dead". Our conduct is an outward indicator of whether or not the Spirit of God has done a work in our heart.

As suggested before, God does not play favorites. He does not judge some to be more holy because of outward appearances. Man sees the outward appearance, but God sees the heart (1 Samuel 16:7).

In John 3, Christ explains to Nicodemus that unless a man is "born again", he will not see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus had a high position in the religious circles of Israel, as did the scribes and Pharisees to which Christ said, "you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life". On the other hand, the NT shows numerous instances where outcasts of society do come to Christ.

God will judge all people without partiality, and all will be judged according to the gospel of Christ, which Paul clearly states in the first four verses of 1 Corinthians 15. It is basically this: Christ died in our place for our sins, but God raised Him from the dead on the third day according to the Scriptures.

The salvation Christ provided for us is ours if we put our faith and trust in Him and receive what He is offering. All are judged on this basis. We can accept Him, and He accepts us, or deny Him for who He is and be denied. God gives us the choice.

As God addresses religious people in Romans 2, He stresses that while they may pride themselves on what they do, they are still lost if they are without Christ.

The last few verses of Romans 2 address the Jewish practice of circumcision that was required by the law. Here it is clarified that true circumcision is a matter of the heart; the literal cutting of the flesh under the ceremonial law was an earthly picture of the spiritual reality of "surgery" on the old, unregenerate nature.

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- 1) Are we guilty of comparing ourselves to others rather than to God's perfect standard of righteousness?
- 2) God does not show favoritism or partiality. Do we?

Romans 2

God's Righteous Judgment

²Therefore you have no excuse, every one of you who passes judgment on someone else. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you who judge practice the same things.

²But we know that the judgment of God against those who practice such things is based on truth.

³So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment?

⁴Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, kindness, and longsuffering patience, not knowing that the goodness of God is meant to lead you to repentance?

⁵But because of your hard, stubborn, impenitent heart you are storing up wrath against yourself on the day of God's wrath when His righteous judgment will be revealed.

⁶God "will render to everyone according to his works".

⁷He will give eternal life to those who persist in doing good, seeking God's glory, honor, and immortality.

⁸But for those who are self-seeking and reject the truth and follow evil, obeying unrighteousness, there will be indignation and wrath.

⁹There will be trouble and anguish in the soul of every man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek.

¹⁰But there will be glory, honor, and peace to everyone who does what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹¹For there is no partiality with God.

¹²For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law.

¹³For it is not those who hear the law that are righteous in God's sight, but it is those that obey the law that will be justified.

¹⁴Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, instinctively do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law.

¹⁵They show that the requirements of the law are written in their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts are alternately accusing or else defending them.

¹⁶This will take place in the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.

The Jews Guilty as the Gentiles

¹⁷But if you bear the name Jew, and rely on the law, and boast about your relationship with God, ¹⁸and know His will, and approve of what is superior because you are instructed by the law, ¹⁹and if you are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, ²⁰an instructor to the foolish, a teacher of the immature, because you have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth, ²¹then you who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal?

²²You who say, "Do not commit adultery," do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?

²³You who boast about keeping the law, you dishonor God by breaking the law.

²⁴For "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you," as it is written.

Circumcision of No Avail

²⁵For circumcision indeed has value if you keep the law, but if you break the law, you have become as though you had not been circumcised.

²⁶If those who are not circumcised keep the law's requirements, will they not be regarded as if they were circumcised?

²⁷The man who is not circumcised physically and yet obeys the law will condemn you who break the law even though you are circumcised physically and have the written Law.

²⁸For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical.

²⁹No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and his circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. His praise is not from men but from God.

Memory Verse for the Week

1 Samuel 16:7(b) - *For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.*