

# Romans (2:1-5)

## *The Verdict on Judging*

PART 5 - JULY 11, 2004

### CONDEMNING CONDEMNATION

For the past two sessions, Paul has been hammering away at:

- A. Godlessness (living without concern for God).
- B. Wickedness (living without concern for man).

In his quest to convince his readers that everyone is in need of a savior, Paul has listed sin after sin after sin (1:21-32) But not everyone in his audience will hang their head in sober self-examination. Some will nod along in critical accusation.

So, today (with an incredible pulling-the-rug-out type twist) Paul turns his attention to a *third* type of unholy behavior: the condemning of those who are wicked and/or Godless.

Paul would've been addressing two groups of Roman believers:

1. Sophisticated Gentile philosophers who scoffed at the superstitious idolatry of the less *cultured*.
2. Educated Jewish traditionalists who scorned the religious ignorance of the less *spiritual*.

In other words Paul is about to say, "If you think you weren't included in that list of sins ... you weren't exactly listening!"

You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance? But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. - Romans 2:1-5 NIV

Before we examine these verses, we need to understand the two separate definitions of the word: judge/judging/judgment.

- Judgment means discernment - evaluating right from wrong; analyzing good from bad; recognizing healthy from unhealthy.
- Judgment means condemnation – disrespecting, condescending, and concluding that someone has less worth than you.

Guess which one Paul means! Paul is not telling us to close our eyes to evil, but to close our heart to hypocritical hatred. But let's face it; condemning others is fun! It puffs up our pride; it makes us feel all superior and sophisticated. And *nothing* holds attention like slanderous scuttlebutt!

- Most gossip is condemnation as entertainment

## WHY NOT CONDEMN?

Q: So, Why Not Condemn Others?

A: Well, Paul just gave us six very good reasons.

You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself ... – Romans 2:1 NIV

REASON NUMBER 1: We ultimately condemn *ourselves*

Paul says, “Show me a cruel, critical tongue and I’ll show you an angry, prideful, or bitter heart. One reveals the other. But, show me an encouraging, gentle tongue and I’ll show you a tender, loving heart.

- My own tongue will either condemn or commend me before God

Strange, we tend to judge the harshest in others what we dislike most in ourselves. Therefore, what I condemn most often ... is me! Paul knew this; he goes on to point out that we tend to excuse in ourselves the very thing we accuse in others.

... because you who pass judgment do the same things. – Romans 2:1 NIV

REASON NUMBER 2: We do the very deeds we denounce

Q: Why is it so easy to be indignant at other people's sins and so indulgent of our own?

A: Because, focusing on the sins of others enables us to avoid examining our own.

This allows us to keep both our sins *and* a false sense of self-respect ... which happens to be the very essence of hypocrisy.

### REASON NUMBER 3: We measure by an inaccurate gauge

Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. - Romans 2:2 NIV

God will base His judgments on absolute truth. We tend to base ours on one of three not-so-accurate standards:

- A. Outward appearances
- B. External standards
- C. One side of the story

All of which are forbidden by scripture.

Remember the joke about the guy riding in a taxi and he reaches up and taps the driver's shoulder. The driver screams, runs his cab onto a sidewalk, and yells, "Don't ever do that!" The passenger says, "All I did was tap you!" and he storms off. The driver looks at himself in the mirror and says: "I don't know if I can get use to this ... after 20 years driving the hearse."

- We deal in partial truths and outward appearances.

### REASON NUMBER 4: We're blind to our own faults

So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? - Romans 2:3 NIV

Q: Do you know how we excuse our sin?

- A. We relabel it (I'm not unreliable I'm flexible; I'm not pessimistic I'm realistic; I'm not spreading rumors I'm concerned. She on the other hand, is an unreliable, pessimistic, gossip!)
- B. We reduce it (This won't hurt anyone. If this is the worst I'm guilty of, I'm doing ok.)
- C. We simply don't recall it (We often mistake a clear conscious for a poor memory!)

One of the most kick-in-the-head sobering statements of the O.T. is when the prophet Nathan confronts King David's sin. Only, Nathan pretends it's the sin of another man.

David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, "As surely as the Lord lives, the man who did this deserves to die! ... Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! - 2 Samuel 12:5-7 NIV

This is a shock we have in store as we judge and condemn others for the faults we're blind to.

Oh sure they're worse than us (they do the bad things more - the good things less) ... but then, God doesn't grade on a curve!

#### REASON NUMBER 5: We show contempt for God Himself

Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance? - Romans 2:4 NIV

Last week we talked about how the prodigal son's father was a representation of our Heavenly God. But, the prodigal's brother is a representation of the prideful, bitter, condemner.

- The prodigal was guilty of sins of the flesh.
- The brother was guilty of sins of the spirit.

He thought his Father's loving kindness (that had led his brother home) was being unfairly distributed.

He answered his father, "Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends." - Luke 15:29 NIV

- The self-righteous person thinks he deserves God's blessing

He doesn't realize that it's all grace, and if God gave us what we deserved we wouldn't even be here! God expects us to appreciate that we're getting far more than we deserve and to eagerly reciprocate it with celebration and joy.

#### REASON NUMBER 6: We store up wrath against ourselves

But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. - Romans 2:5 NIV

Scripture tells us that there's one of two things we can store up for ourselves in Heaven:

- A. Through hypocrisy we can store up wrath
- B. Through humility we can store up treasure (*Matthew 6:20*)

Word by condemning word tokens of wrath are compiled in Heaven waiting to be cashed in on the Day of Judgment.

- The goal is make today's deposit less than yesterday's.

And to store up by "speaking up" a wealth of words that edify, encourage, strengthen.