

“THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT OF GOD”

Text: Romans 2:1-16

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March 6, 2016.

INTRODCUTION: This message is on a serious but often neglected subject of Christian teaching. Most preachers routinely emphasize on the love of God and it is true. But the biblical God is also a God of righteousness. He extends his love to all the people in the world, but he also demands that we all will learn to know and obey his word, live our lives according to his word. The purpose of this sermon is not to scare anyone but to point out ways we need to live so we won't be judged by our loving and righteous God.

1) One thing no one likes to have: In everyday life, there are things we don't like or don't want to have; and one of them is judgment, be it from God or from men. The word “judgment” carries the intonation or inclination of wrong, shame and punishment. Although we know we all have done wrong and deserve judgment both from God and men, no one in his own heart likes to be put in the position of being judged. But living in a country ruled by law, we see many people were put in that position of being judged in courts of law, and made to pay for the wrong or crime they had committed. Most of us rejoice when we see justice serves good purposes on criminal.

2) One thing no one may escape from: I struggled for some time to decide on the title of this sermon, but the struggle came to an end when I saw the subtitle of today's text from NIV: God's righteous judgment. From our everyday life experience, we see judgments everywhere: from verdicts of the court to our everyday conversation on other people. Most of us may never have the power to render a judgment on another person in the court, but we all think we have the right to pass judgment on others, particularly those we don't like or disagree. Judgment by itself is neutral, either good or bad, but when judgment rendered by men and it is unjust or even evil, then justice isn't served the right way. So, this message is focused on the judgment rendered by God who is the supreme standard of justice, we need to face it and learn things from it.

Paul listed in this passage five kinds or groups of people God will judge righteously: When we learn about the righteous judgment of God, we may learn to live our lives in the way that helps us stay away from being judged by God. Here we see five groups of people God will judge. I hope and pray that we won't live our lives like those in these groups so we won't be judged by the righteous God.

GOD WILL JUDGE THE SELF-RIGHTEOUS: (2:1)

1) God will judge the pickers: “You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on others, for whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same thing.” (2:1) “Judge”, *krino*, to pick on. Paul was writing to the Jewish people at the end of the Old Testament era, in which the Jews were so good in picking on the sins of the Gentiles, or even some of their own who did not follow all the trivial details of their law system. These Jews had a built-in mentality to believe that they had the right to pick on others because they were the chosen people of God, had Abraham as their forefather, and the Mosaic law given to them by God himself. But in Romans 1:18-32, Paul listed all the sins of the world in general and of the Jews in particular, from their ancestors to their present time. The sin of self righteous is the worst of all sins because it blocks the sinner from acknowledging his sin and so he can repent his sin and receive forgiveness from God.

2) God will judge the hypocrites: In 2:1, God didn't just judge the Jews their sins, but He judged them on being hypocritical: While they picked on the sins of others, they did exactly the same thing: That is hypocritical in all aspects. Jesus pointed out seven ways the Pharisees, the best representatives of the Jews, and their hypocritical acts. Of course, all sinners deserve to be judged by God, but those who pretend to be better but do the same or worse, deserve to be judged more severely.

This, by extension, also apply to all God's children, we Christians. God will judge us as His children the same way as He judged the Jews. If we are hypocrites like the Pharisees, we need to repent sincerely and honestly or risk more harsh judgment from God.

GOD WILL JUDGE THOSE WHO DESPISE HIS TRUTH: “Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on the truth. So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same thing, do you think you will escape God's judgment?” (2:2-3)

1) The blasphemy in the Bible: “Truth” in the Bible, particularly in the New Testament, refers to the Law God had given to His people to help them live their lives differently from their neighbors. God gave the Israelis laws on religious matters as well as on civic matters. God wanted them to follow His law in their relationship with Him and with people around them. God also promised them blessings and protection if they obey His law. But from

reading of the OT, we see repeated violation of God's law by the Israelis and the punishment they suffered in the hands of their enemies. The blasphemy of the Israelis is from their despicable rebellion against the God who delivered them from the oppressive Egyptians and all other enemies. From the biblical history, we see the suffering of this people in the hands of their enemies in the past thousands of years. It was until they repented to God, they were allowed to come back to their homeland to restart their own nation. Many people wonder why Israel is still under siege since their founding as a nation in 1948. All you have to see is their rejection of Jesus as the Messiah and Savior for their nation and the world.

2) The blasphemy in modern society: The rampant acts of sin in our world and the willful rejection of God and His law among many people in our society, from the top government officials to the everyday atheist activists we see everyday, causes us to ponder why God didn't save our nation from terror attacks and the calamity of illness we see from time to time. People in power passed laws to protect those who violate the law God instituted for our own good, and punish those who obey God and his law. When man wants to be his own master, God will leave them alone to destroy themselves. (Rom 1:26-27) This isn't only true among those who do not called themselves children of God, it also happens among some of those who called themselves Christians and their leaders, pastors, theologians and denomination authorities. These people betray the truth of God in order to be part of the secular society. These are those God will judge on that day.

GOD WILL JUDGE THOSE WHO REFUSE TO REPENT: (2:4-5) “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.”

1) God's judgment on what they do: To hold contempt means to despise or look down on people or things that deserve proper respect. When someone do not pay due respect at the court of law, he will be held contempt of the court. Likewise, anyone who doesn't respect or treasure the kindness of God, will be held contempt of God and will be judged accordingly for what he has done. The Bible has so much to say about the kindness and tolerance of God toward sinners because “he doesn't want to see anyone perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9) Whoever rejects God's kindness will be

judged from what he has done in his life time.

2) God's judgment on what is in their heart: “Repent” is from *meta-noian*, it means to choose the right path or direction of life. To refuse to repent is to refuse to follow the right path or direction God lays out for His people. This word is mostly used on attitude, that means before people choose not to follow God's right path, they already have the mind set to walk on the opposite of God. These people are not just guilty on what they do or walk in their actions, but they are first guilty in their heart to go the wrong way. To these people, there is no repentance and therefore no forgiveness of sin, and their destiny is to be judged by God. Repentance includes three steps:

- a) First, acknowledge our sin before God, feel sorrowful on our sins.
- b) Then, seek and ask God to forgive our sins, to wash them clean.
- c) Finally make a sincere commitment to God that we won't sin again.

The best example is in the parable of the Prodigal Son: The forgiveness of his father came only after he acknowledged his sin, confessed it to God and his father, and came back home instead of continue to run away.

GOD WILL JUDGE ACCORDING TO WHAT WE DID: “God will render (his judgment) to everyone according to his deeds.” (2:6, KJV)

1) God's love and His righteousness: Some may argue that how can a loving God render judgment on anyone whom he loves? They ask where is God's love in His judgment. We need to see God in a panoramic perspective instead of a narrow view. Paul explained this perfectly in Hebrews 12:5-6, “You have forgotten the word of encouragement that addressed you as sons: My son, Do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you. Because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as son.” God's judgment and discipline is a perfect way to demonstrate his love to us, just as we love our children but we also render judgment and punishment on them. This part of the Scripture doesn't deal with the love of God and our salvation, it deals with the responsibility we have as God's beloved children. When we stray away from God's path of life, He will render his measure of discipline to bring us back and that is his love.

2) Our responsibility to obey God: Paul shows us our responsibility to God as children, “We all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one must receive what is due him for the things done while in the body whether good or bad.” (2 Corinth 5:10, KJV) This is the righteous side of God's character. It is also our responsibility as His children. When we accept God's grace and love, we also accept his righteous demands we all need to

follow. In the parable of The Talents in Matt 25:26-30, God demands our best efforts in using his trust of life, time and opportunities to bring in fruits of our faithful endeavor. God is righteous, he will render punishment or rewards according to the level of our faithful obedience of His will. This is about our correct attitude to revere God and our constant obedience to live out his will.

GOD WILL JUDGE OUR SECRETS: (2:11-16)

1) God doesn't show favoritism: From 2:7-11, Paul explained to us the nature of God's impartiality, both to the Jews and the Gentiles, either they live by the law or by their conscience. There isn't anything anyone may claim to live his life outside of God's command. Nothing we may think we are special may spare us from God's judgment. Each one of us must face God to deal with our sins that day. Nothing we may have or any position we may occupied may spare us from facing God to answer to Him.

2) God knows our every secret: “This will take place on the day when God will judge man's secret through Jesus Christ.” (2:16) What we need to know is God knows it all. We may hide from men, but we can never hide from God who we are and what we had done. We need to be honest to ourselves, and change the course of our lives so we may not be judged by God. This also reminds us we don't have to compare our lives to anyone else. How others live their lives and what they may face that day isn't our business. Each one of us is responsible on our own salvation, judgment or rewards.

PURPOSES OF THIS MESSAGE:

1) Obey God's law and be blessed: The purpose of God giving his people law to live even before they entered into the Promised Land was recorded in Deut 8:1, “Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase , and may enter and possess the land that the Lord has promised on oath to your forefathers.” God didn't give the law to take away the freedom of his people. He didn't give law to restrict our life, he didn't do it to put us under heavy yoke or to suffer. Keep reading the rest of Deut 8, and you will know the purpose God set rules for our life is to bless us, to keep us safe and to be qualified to receive his blessing. In fact, earlier in Exodus, God declared his promise of blessing in the Ten Commandments saying, “But I will show love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.” (Ex 20:6) We have everything to gain, and nothing to lose if we are humble to obey God's law in our life.

2) There is a way to come clean: If you and I are humble and honest, we all

have to confess that we don't always obey the law of God in our lives. That is why God provides us a way to come clean of all of our sins, so we can be placed among those God has promised to bless. In 1 John 1:9, the Bible says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." This is the path of love and grace God sent to all of us to come clean before him: Confess our sins, feel sorrowful, decide in our heart not to sin any more, and we will receive forgiveness of all of our sins that qualified us to receive God's blessing on us and many