

**The Judgment of God**  
Romans 2:1-5  
Preached by Mark Patterson  
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## **Introduction**

If you have already looked at your bulletin will have noticed that the message for this morning is The Judgment of God and the text we will be looking at is Romans 2:1-5.

It seems like we in America, in our civil society, we have got a skewed view of God. You see back in the days of the puritans they had a more balanced view of God. What I mean is that if you pick up their books on their sermons they preached about the love of God, His mercy, His compassion, but equally they preached on God's wrath, His holiness, and His judgment of sin. How often do we hear sermons today with titles like Jonathans Edwards

- "Sinners in the hand of an angry God"
- "The justice of God in the damnation of sinners"

We need to get back to this correct and biblical view of God. We need to understand that He hates sin and will judge sinners.

Before we start working our way through our passage this morning I feel it is important to set the context of what Paul is talking about and what his purpose is in writing the epistle.

In 1:14-17 Paul states that he is "under obligation" to preach the gospel and that he is also "eager to preach" the gospel. Then in verses 16 & 17 he states that he is "not ashamed" of the gospel and that he knows that it is the power of God for salvation for all people, both Jew and Greek or Gentile. Paul goes on to state that only in the gospel is the righteousness of God revealed.

So what Paul is going to talk about and unfold in the epistle is the gospel of God and how people can be made right with God.

Notice the very next verse – 1:18. Paul states that

"the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them."

Do you see where the gospel starts? It starts with the wrath of God, it starts with an understanding of sin and the fact that God hates your sin and will judge it. Oh how we often miss that very point in our preaching of the gospel today. We want to start with the

cross and tell people that Jesus died for them and for their sin, but people need to first understand that they are sinners and that God is righteous and holy and hates their sin and will pour out His wrath upon them if they don't embrace the gospel. People need to understand their true diagnosis before they will partake of the remedy?

Through the rest of chapter 1 Paul shows how the Gentile is enslaved to sin and without excuse. That they are under the judgment of God.

Paul continues this theme of the judgment of God in chapter 2 and turns his attention to the Jews and shows that they too are under sin and accountable to God. He tears down everything that they have been placing their hope in.

- He first shows that they are not better than the Gentiles, even though they think they are,
- then he shows that just because they have the Law that it does not save them,
- then he shows that circumcision doesn't save them either.

These were all things the Jews were banking on to get them to heaven, they thought since they were the chosen people of God and were not Gentiles that they would be all right and God would welcome them into heaven. They thought that since God had given them the Law and the sign of circumcision that they would also be welcomed into heaven, but Paul shows that these only condemn them and don't make them righteous.

Paul sums it all up in Romans 3:9-18 and states that all are under sin, all are guilty of sin, all are condemned and guilty before God.

*“What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin;*

*As it is written,*

*‘There is none righteous, not even one;*

*There is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God;*

*All have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is not even one.*

*Their throat is an open grave, with their tongues they keep deceiving,*

*The poison of asps is under their lips,*

*Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness;*

*Their feet are swift to shed blood,*

*Destruction and misery are in their paths,*

*And the path of peace they have not known.*

*There is no fear of God before their eyes.’*

*Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God; because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.”*

So in the first 3 chapters of Romans Paul is showing that all persons, whoever they are, or whatever they have done are under God's righteous judgment.

As I have already stated this is where the gospel starts, you must understand that you are totally lost, enslaved to sin and guilty before God.

Well, now that we have an understanding of the context let's take a close look at Romans 2:1-5.

## Lesson

### Verse 1

*"Therefore you have no excuse"*

In the first chapter Paul kept referring to the people he was talking about as "them" or "they" now in chapter two he has changed gears and it stating "you" or "your."

He is being very specific, very direct and very personal.

Look at verses 1, 3, 4 & 5.

#### Verse 1

"Therefore **you** have no excuse, everyone of **you** who passes judgment, for in that which **you** judge another, **you** condemn **yourself**; for **you** who judge practice the same things."

#### Verse 3

"But do **you** suppose this, O man, when **you** pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same **yourself**, that **you** will escape the judgment of God?"

#### Verse 4

"Or do **you** think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads **you** to repentance?"

#### Verse 5

"But because of **your** stubbornness and unrepentant heart **you** are storing up wrath for **yourself** in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God."

So who is Paul talking to? Who is the "you" that he is addressing?

There is debate about this, but I personally think he is talking to the Jews. Let me show you why I think this.

1. Even though we are only looking at the first 5 verses this morning, the paragraph actually goes through verse 11. If you notice in verse 6 Paul states "Who will render to each person according to his deeds." This is a quote from Psalm 62:12 and Proverbs 24:12. If Paul were still talking to the Gentiles I don't think he would appeal to the OT. He is going back to the OT to remind them, the Jews, how God judges.

2. In verse 2 Paul states “we know”. What does he mean by this? Well Paul was Jewish and I think he’s stating “we Jews” know about God’s judgment. And indeed they would know about God’s judgment from the OT scripture.
3. As I said early, Paul made a switch in chapter 2 and started talking to them directly and stating “you”, in verse 17 he nails it down and states who the “you” is. “But if you bear the name Jew.”
4. In 2:1-3 Paul’s main thrust is that they are without excuse and will not escape God’s judgment; because they are practicing the same sins they are condemning in others. If you look further in the chapter, in verses 17-24 you see that he explains this even more specifically.
  - a. Verse 21: “You who preach that one shall not steal, do you steal?”
  - b. Verse 22: “You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery?”
  - c. Verse 22: You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?

Well now that we know who Paul is talking to let’s see what he has to say to them.

*“You have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.”*

Paul is saying they are without defense, they are without excuse.

You see it’s like the Jews were listening all through chapter one and hearing how the Gentiles were sinners and under God’s judgment. Paul got very specific at the end of chapter one and stated that the Gentiles were:

- Filled with all unrighteousness
- Wicked
- Full of Envy
- Murderers
- Deceitful
- Gossipers
- Slanderers
- Etc.

And it’s as if the Jews were hearing all this and saying “Ah yes, those wicked Gentiles they deserve the wrath and judgment of God. Look at what they are doing – they deserve God’s righteous judgment and they shall not escape it. But we are better, we are Jews.”

But Paul stops them in their tracks and says, wait a minute. That is true, the Gentiles are committing all these things and deserve the judgment of God, but don’t think that you are in a different category, don’t think that you are without excuse. You see their sins very clearly, but you fail to see that you are guilty of the exact same things.

Our Lord dealt with this same thinking in the Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew 7:1-5 Jesus said it's very easy for you to take notice of others sins, but very hard for you to see and acknowledge your own sin.

So you see here Paul was not stating that their problem was judging other, but rather that they are without excuse, because in their judgment they are acknowledging sin and how it deserves God's judgment, but failing to see that they are just as guilty. Because they are committing the same sins.

## Verse 2

*"And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things."*

Or better translated:

"We know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things."

As I said earlier, Paul is saying that "we Jews" know about God's judgment. We know that it is according to truth against those who practice such things. This is what is clearly outlined in the OT and we know it. But they had failed in remembering that it is based on what they were doing.

In other words - what Paul is pointing out is the fact that because the judgment of God is always according to truth, then God never has any varying standards. He doesn't look at people based on:

- Money - if they are rich or poor
- Jew or Gentile
- American or German
- White or Black
- Old or young

No – God's judgment is always according to truth, based on the truth, and His standards don't change.

Look with me at a few OT passages that point out very clearly that God's judgment is according to truth and it is based righteousness. Each passage is found in the book of Psalm

- Psalm 9:7-8
- Psalm 96:13
- Psalm 98:9

The Jews so easily forgot that simple point that God's judgment is according to truth, that it is based on righteousness.

Have we as a church forgotten that in America? I believe we have. Not only have we forgotten that His judgment is according to truth, but we don't even like to think of God as a judge. Oh how we like to talk of God's mercy and of His love and His compassion, but to be honest with you – we can never have a full or Biblical understanding of His love, mercy, or compassion, if we don't first understand that He is a judge and a God of wrath.

Now let's bring this home to us who are in this room today.

- Are you just like these Jews?
- Are you finding it very easy to see other people's sins, but totally neglecting your own sin?
- Let's be totally honest with ourselves this morning. Let's clear the fog off the mirror and take a good look at ourselves. Remember these Jews were very religious, they knew the truth, but they were not pleasing to the Lord, they were not saved. And that could be you today. You are acting religious, you know the truth, but you are not saved. You have not seeing the sinfulness of your sin.
- Do you condemn adultery in others? But are sleeping with another person who you are not married to? Are you lusting after someone? Jesus made it very clear in the Gospel of Matthew that lust is the same as adultery.
- Do you condemn the sin of gossip, but yet speak behind other peoples back?
- Do you hate people who are deceptive, but will use deceit to your own advantage? Have you spoken half truths to make you look good or get what you want?

If you have been in church and read the Word of God you know that God will judge those who do such things. You cannot play with God – you cannot do things in secret. You may hide things from other people and look good on the outside, but you cannot hide for the Almighty.

I warn you - Beware of playing with the Lord and putting on a façade. You are without excuse and God's judgment will rightly fall upon you if you persist in your sin and do not repent.

### **Verse 3**

*“But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God?”*

The word “suppose” means to calculate, to count, to reckon.

The word “escape” means to flee from, to seek safety in flight

What is being said here is that they are falsely calculating their own sinfulness and their own guilt. They are thinking they will find safety away from God’s judgment.

What Paul is doing is exposing their false sense of security and warped thinking. The Jews thought that it would be alright for them in the end - that somehow they would escape the judgment of God. They thought they could find safety, but in reality they will not be able to escape the judgment of God, they will not be able to find safety anywhere, it is unavoidable.

Paul here says, if you are practicing the same things yourself that you will not and cannot escape the judgment of the Almighty God.

I like what Donald Grey Barnhouse wrote about this verse. He tries to give a forceful paraphrase of it:

“Do you really figure that you have doped out an angle that will let you go up against God and get away with it? You don’t have a chance. There is no escape. Do you understand? No escape – ever. And this means you – the respectable person, sitting in judgment upon another fellow creature, and remaining unrepentant yourself.”

It could be that they were thinking that because of their relationship with God as a nation, and since they were given the oracles of God and were His chosen people that they could escape His radar and therefore would escape His judgment. But nothing is further from the truth. They will not escape the judgment of God.

And friend neither will you escape the judgment of God unless you repent too. Don’t think that you are outside of God’s radar – that He doesn’t take account of you. He knows you and His judgment will be according to truth and no matter what you think or do, you cannot and will not escape His judgment, you will find no safety, unless you repent of your sin.

#### **Verse 4**

*“Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?”*

The word to “think lightly” means to think little of or despise something.

What were they guilty of thinking lightly of, what were they despising?

It was the goodness of God, the tolerance of God, and the patience of God.

- Kindness refers to the benefits God gives
- Tolerance refers to the judgment He withholds
- Patience has to do with both Kindness and Tolerance and it is the duration of both.

The OT speaks often about the Lords kindness and patience and the Jews would have known that. They knew based on their history that God has been awful kind and patient with them as a nation, but they misunderstood that kindness and patience as thinking that they were okay and God was overlooking their sins.

Look with me at Psalm 86:15

“But You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth.”

This is just one of many places that talks about God like this, and the Jews would be very familiar with this.

Exodus 34:6-7

“Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, ‘The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.’”

The people that Paul is talking about in Romans would give their hearty “Amen” to the first half of that passage, but Oh how they forgot and ignored the second half.

Oh what a terrible misunderstanding! God’s kindness, His tolerance, His patience should have lead them to repentance. They should have seen their sin and His kindness and fallen on their faces before Him and repented of their sins, but instead they persisted in their sin. They thought very little of their sin and very little of His kindness.

Solomon stated it very well in Ecclesiastes 8:10-13.

God was being patient but they were not getting the point and they still did not fear Him. And the result is that it will not go well with them in the end.

My friend I believe this is happening with people in this very room. God has been very kind to you and provided many things for you – a family, job, house, health, and many, many, more things. He has been patient with you and tolerant and you have misunderstood it all. You persist in your sin to this very day - either openly or in secret. But instead of repenting of your sin, you are growing comfortable in it. You might even be thinking that you will repent one day and that you will start living for the Lord. But oh my friend how foolish. Don’t presume upon God – He is the very One who is giving you

your breath today. He is the one who is causing your heart to beat this very second. You don't know when He is going to say "Enough" and take your very life.

God is being kind, tolerate and patient with you so that you will repent, but be sure of this, His kindness will run out, He will only be tolerant with you and your sin for a time, His patience will run out and then you will see Him as a God of wrath and indignation and will be under that for all eternity.

### Verse 5

*"But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God."*

He says that they have persisted in their

- stubbornness that means they are hard hearted against God.
- He goes on to say that they remain unrepentant. In other words they have not change their view of God or themselves, they have not turned their back on sin and embraced the Lord.

So this will be what awaits them.

They are thinking they are better than the Gentile, they are banking on God's goodness, His kindness, and they feel they will escape His judgment, and find safety, but Oh how foolish they have been.

Paul says that instead of storing up treasures for themselves in heaven they are actually storing up wrath for themselves.

Storing up means it is increasing, it is heaping up, it is being stored up. This wrath will be poured out upon them one day. The reality is that they are going to receive greater judgment because they knew better.

Yes, there are degrees of punishment. Some will receive greater judgment than others and the more you know and reject the more severe you will be judged.

This is exactly what Jesus taught in Matthew 11:20-24.

Paul goes on to say there is a judgment day – a day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

Let me read to you a few verses about this.

Acts 17:30-31

“Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.”

Zephaniah 1:14-18

Friend if you are sitting here with a stubborn heart and unrepentant this is what awaits you. And there is no escaping it, there is no excuse for remaining in your sin.

**Conclusion**

We all have sinned, we all have rebelled against God, but He has made a way for us to escape that wrath. And there is only one way to escape it and that is by embracing Christ and putting your faith in Him.

You see He took that wrath and judgment upon Him on the cross. He was judged in your place.

Isaiah 53:5, 6, 10

2 Corinthians 5:21

Jesus bore your sin, He bore God's wrath in your place. Will you embrace Him today? Will you repent of your sin and follow Him?

Do you think little of your sins like the Jews we read about today?

Do you see other people's sins, but fail to see your own sinfulness?

Do you think that you will escape the wrath of God?

Do you have a false hope in God's kindness and patience with you?

I plead with you to repent so that you will be the recipient of the righteous judgment of God.