

Day 19

Live in harmony with one another: be sympathetic , love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. 1 Peter 3:8

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The Wednesday Lunch & Social Club

The Bishop of Basingstoke, David Williams & Archdeacon, Richard Brand

Crosslinks - International Mission Agency, www.crosslinks.org

Holiday Club week and preparation

The letter to the Romans was written when Paul was in Corinth in 57-58AD, on his third journey (see map). Lots more detail on this at <http://matthewmcgee.org/paultime.html>.



Romans Study 4 (19-Oct-2016) : Romans 2:1-16 “??”

Opening Question:

This term we're looking at the NT book "Romans"

Recap what we have learned so far about Romans

- Paul is writing to the church in Rome, while staying at Corinth on his 3rd journey
- He's very keen to visit Rome because he's heard such good things about the church there
- He wants them to feel encouraged about the way their reputation has spread
- He knows they need more teaching, which is what this letter contains
- Last time Paul talked about God's wrath: people have no excuse for rejecting God, and those that do will suffer God's wrath - they'll be left to their own devices and their consciences will be dulled

One thing to bear in mind here is that the church in Rome is in need of teaching, and the letter is providing teaching by explaining the "story" of God's salvation. Last week we saw that there is bad news for man when we move away from God's plan. This week, Paul expands on this to flesh out the picture he's going to draw.

Paul has clearly and convincingly shown that the HEATHEN man is lost and without excuse before God (Romans 1:17-32). Now in the first part of chapter 2 he will show that the MORAL man is lost and without excuse. Later in chapter 2 and in chapter 3 he will show that the RELIGIOUS man (the Jew) is lost and without excuse.

First, I want to look at how this passage begins.

Read Romans 2:1

You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things

Q: Note the "You, therefore, have no excuse" in the first sentence. What does the "therefore" tell us?

A: Emphasises that this follows on from chapter 1.

Q: In what way does this follow on from chapter 1? What did was the last bit of chapter 1 telling us?

A: was telling us about the rebellion against God that results in His wrath.

Q: So who are the people that Paul was talking about in chapter 1?

A: All of mankind, not just the people we might "look down on" as sinners and reprobates. We're no better. So Paul's saying, to the readers of the letter, who might have read chapter 1 and congratulated themselves on being "better", that they're in the same position with respect to God's wrath

Read Romans 2:1-5

Romans 2

1 You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. 2 Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. 3 So when you, a mere human being, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? 4 Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realising that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance? 5 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.

Q: Is there any passage in the gospels/saying of Jesus that this reminds you of?

A: *What I thought of was Matthew 7:1-3 “Judge not lest ye be judged”*

Q: So does this mean as Christians should never make judgements about other people's spiritual condition?

A: ??

Q: Well, maybe it depends. What about later on in Matthew 7:15-20? (someone read this)

Looks like it must be correct in some cases for us to exercise judgement about what people say.

Q: So how do we reconcile Paul and Matt 7:1-3 say, "Judge not lest ye be judged", with Matt 7:16 says "by their fruits you shall know them"?

A: *Romans 2, Matt 7:1-3 are talking about hypocritical judgement, where we refuse to recognise our own sin but are eager to point out where others fall short. But this doesn't mean we shouldn't be aware godlessness when we see it manifest in false preachers. We know about "the fruits of the spirit" and so can judge people's words against their actions and behaviour, in order to keep safe from false preachers.*

Read Romans 2:6-11

6 God “will repay each person according to what they have done.” 7 To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honour and immortality, he will give eternal life. 8 But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. 9 There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; 10 but glory, honour and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. 11 For God does not show favouritism.

(In verse 6 Paul is quoting Psalm 62:12 and Proverbs 24:12.)

Q: Is Paul saying here that God rewards people according to their works?

A: *In a way...*

Q: If someone persistently seeks glory, honour and immortality, would that person gain eternal life?

A: Yes

Q: And if someone is self-seeking, rejects the truth, and does evil, will that person be condemned?

A: Yes

Q: So, is Paul saying here that God rewards people according to their works?

A: *I think Paul is painting a picture here to show that people could be saved by behaving in a certain way, and be condemned by behaving in a different way*

Q: Is the standard God uses different for different people?

A: *Same standard, whether you're Jew or Gentile (remember, lots of people in the audience would be Jewish)*

Q: How do we know what God's standard is?

A: *If we're Jews or Christians, we have the word of God to tell us, i.e. the law, the ten commandments, as laid out in the OT. But not everyone has the law.*

Read Romans 2:12-16

12 All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. 13 For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. 14 (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law. 15 They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them.) 16 This will take place on the day when God judges people's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.

Q: In verse 12, what is Paul getting at when he talks about those who are “apart from the law” and those who are “under the law”

A: *People who have knowledge of God and his standards, vs. people who don't.*

Q: Which people are “under the law”? And which are “apart from the law”

A: *Jews have the OT with commandments, so they have direct revelatory knowledge of what the law is, what God's standard is. Gentiles don't have this direct knowledge*

Q: What is the significance of v13 “For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous.”

A: *There may be a temptation for Jews, the “chosen people”, who have heard the law, to believe that they are safe. Paul is emphasising that this is not enough: obeying the law is what counts*

And we can see in v14 that Paul emphasises salvation is not simply for the Jews.

Q: How can the Gentiles, who don't know what the law is, and may not have heard of God, be saved, according to Paul?

A: *Because, as we saw earlier in the letter, they have knowledge of God's standards through their conscience - even though they don't have the letter of the law available, they still have an idea of what's right and wrong.*

Q: So both Jews and Gentiles can be saved by honouring the law, either directly or indirectly. Does that sound right?

A: *should do*

Q: What's the problem with this teaching?

A: *None of us can be obedient enough to satisfy God's requirements!*

This is the point that Paul is working towards and will be confronting later on in the letter. For the moment, Paul is making the point that obedience to the law is one way to be saved, and that this way is open to both Jews and Gentiles, even though Gentiles don't know exactly what the law is. But the flip-side of that is that any disobedience results in condemnation, for both Jew and Gentile.

As we work through the letter it should become more clear that even if obedience to the law can result in salvation, it's too difficult!

Takeaway:

- *Hypocritical judgment is wrong, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't exercise judgement when we come across people who profess to speak God's word*
- *Salvation **can** be gained through “works”, and also can be lost*
- *It makes no difference whether you're Jew or Gentile, there's no special advantage in knowing the law when it comes to working for your salvation*