

***Romans***  
***Message 25***  
***The Morality Cults 02***  
***Rom 2:1-11***

- 1 Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.
- 2 But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.
- 3 And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?
- 4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?
- 5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;
- 6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds:
- 7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:
- 8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,
- 9 Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;
- 10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:
- 11 For there is no respect of persons with God. KJV

**Introduction:**

In the first chapter we looked at Paul's expose` of the descent of humanity into paganism and insanity from a once-held position of knowing God.

Remember?

Rom 1:18-21

- 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;
- 19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.
- 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:
- 21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Then, as we followed Paul's reasoning we saw him turn from a discussion of the blatantly and perversely wicked to those who pretended not so to be and we talked about the religious frauds

that men invent to cover the fact that they have not repented of wickedness from their innermost soul. They invented morality cults and even corrupted the True Religion which God had given at Sinai into one of those cults.

So, Paul has determined to spend a goodly amount of time on this particular problem, proving that these are as wicked as the profoundly pagan and in just as much trouble with God for sin.

Their sin is not open and ‘in your face’ like that of those in chapter one but, instead, are hidden and covered or rationalized and excused. But sin is sin and that is Paul’s point all the way through chapter three.

“But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.” 2:1

And in the “such things” Paul included both the profound wickedness of the pagans and the hidden wickedness of the Morality Cults.

---

But, before we proceed further let us look at the structure of this section of Paul’s letter that is generally contained in chapter two.

He began the chapter speaking to an unspecified group whom he addressed as “O man.” It is obvious that he believed them to be at least partially in agreement with his condemnation of those who practice wickedness and, like him, believe that the sins of those wicked people place them under the judgment of God.

But, they are not in full agreement with Paul who is a man of absolute spiritual integrity and believes that repentance must be thorough and goes far deeper than outward behavior. For him it is a matter which must delve into the deepest recesses of the human soul and uproot all rebellion against God. These in this “O man” group all have made decisions to hold onto and refuse to repent of certain sins which in reality are of the same sort and same seriousness as those they criticize and judge.

So, Paul has taken aim at all of the morality cults and has shown the foolishness of having a long list of rules that one keeps while at the same time holding on to certain “darling sins” (not on the list) and then thinking that this fraudulent morality is going to pass muster with God.

3       And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?

But then Paul’s attention took a turn aside, a sort of parenthesis. He returned in 2:17 to the issue of morality cults, specifically the Jews, and carried the discussion of this hypocrisy further down through v.24.

But there was a point he wanted to make sure, to nail down a profound reality. ***The hypocritical Morality Cult Member has no more hope of escaping the judgment of God than the vilest of pagans.***

This is an idea that is almost impossible for most moral (religious) people to grasp.

“I am not wicked like those other people - drunkards, thieves, murderers, addicts, fornicators and the like. I keep the Law of God far better than they do.”

Now this far we would need to agree. What they are saying is true. It is the conclusion they draw that is the problem.

3 And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?

They *do* believe that they will escape the judgment of God.

But Paul is affirming that their “I am better than them” claims are yet insufficient to save them.

So Paul’s parenthesis deals with the reality that membership in a morality cult will lead one just as certainly to the condemnation of God as active participation in the vilest forms of paganism.

-----  
I am going to stop here for a bit because this is the profound reality of our day as we pointed out last week and we really need to get a good handle on this fact.

There are going to be many people rejected at the Great Judgment of God who were esteemed very moral and very religious, they will even make that claim before God.

Matt 7:21-27

- 21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.
- 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?
- 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.
- 24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:
- 25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.
- 26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:
- 27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it. KJV

These are very religious people, very religious ‘Christian’ people, and yet they are to be rejected by the Lord Jesus on the Day of Judgment.

Among this group are preachers and exorcists as well as charity workers... all with a certainty that they will be and should be received by the Lord.

They condemned the wicked pagans just like Paul did. They affirmed at least an outward morality that was the same as True Believers.

They “heard” the words of Christ else they could not have preached them and could not have considered themselves His servants with a guarantee of heaven.

There are two things which distinguish them from Genuine Christians: “I never knew you,” and “whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them.” Jesus contrasted their behavior with those of His saints, “every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not.”

The morality cults, those which go by the name ‘Christian,’ hear the words of Christ all of them time. They carry Bibles with His Words in them. Their church officials read the words of Christ to them, sometimes every week. But they do not “do” them.

They do not repent of their sins. They do not love God with their whole heart. They do not love God’s children. They do not “abide” in Christ. They do not “reckon” themselves a dead indeed to sin and live to God. They simply maintain a moral facade and pretend to be children of God even sometimes deceiving themselves on the matter.

I do not want to be one of these people nor do I want you to be one of them.

Have you fully embraced the reality that even though you may be more moral than many - maybe even a better person than you once were - if Repentance has not done its’ full work in your soul you may perish in your sins and be lost?

Please listen carefully to the case that Paul made concerning these people.

- 3 And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?
- 4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

The person whom Paul is describing, the moralist who keeps many of the moral laws, even the laws of God, but harbors and allows sin in his soul, refusing to repent of it.... that person who never really comes to a confrontation with Real Repentance... actually *despises* the Goodness of God that has been manifested toward him/her.

We should look at this word “despise” before we go further. It is rendered in various ways by the translators.

“Think lightly of” - NAS

“Presume upon” - RSV

“Show contempt for” - NIV

“Think so little of” - Williams

KATAPHRONES

phroneo - to dispose or incline the mind  
kata - against

It is a difficult words to define but “think lightly or so little of” seems to maybe be the best understanding.

It is spoken in the context of having received a great gift or favor, a kindness, and refusing to respond appropriately. (Remember when your parents insisted that you say “thank you?”)

Let us look carefully into v.4. God has been good to all of us.

Acts 17:25 ...he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; KJV

He has not judged any of us as yet with the harshness we deserve but rather has been forbearing and longsuffering, visiting us, for the most part, with many kindnesses.

Reason and Morality dictate that the recipients of great kindness ought to be grateful and concerned to return the Great Giver with a profound measure of gratitude.

God has not only given us kindness and longsuffering but has given His Son to save us from His Own Judgment.

John 3:16

16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. KJV

And Paul was making the case that His Goodness should lead us to Repentance.

Now some imagine a problem here, as if God is “trying” to bring some to Repentance but they will not come. This suggests a God Who is not Omnipotent, a God Who “leads” people but they will not follow.

If that is true then we have a real theological problem and all of our Revelation is in question.

MLJones goes so far as to suggest that God “wishes” things that He does not “will” which is an unbelievably difficult things to imagine.

But Paul is not talking about the Saving, Calling Work of God at all here it seems to me. These people to whom he was referring were unconverted people and his approach here is to reason with them and show them the Just-ness of God’s dealing with them.

It is the Logic of it all that “leads” them to Repentance. Reason and Good Manners demand that one who has received great Goodness should take care to honor the Giver.

But some may ask “how so?” What does Repentance have to do with any of this?

Remember that when Jesus was baptized the Father spoke from heaven affirming the Son which means that we should hold Him in high regard.

Matt 3:13-17

13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. KJV

This Giver of Life and Breath and All Things, this longsuffering and forbearing Deity, has sent and confirmed His Son. Again, Logic and Reason demand that we give Him and serious hearing.

And, what did the Son say?

Matt 4:17

17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. KJV

The Goodness of God by the Reason and Logic which He has instilled in us, calls us to hear His Son and Obey what He has proclaimed. Any careful examination of the Goodness of God affirms that.

And, it should also be obvious that this Repentance would bring us to a different place than the Moralism which Paul was describing.

Repentance, as we have often said, leaves one broken and humble, not arrogant and critical.

To refuse to respond to God's Goodness in this way is dangerous, foolish and wicked.

5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

To fail to repent - to determine to hink lightly and wrongly concerning the goodness of God - is to be impenitent, 'hard' (literally 'calloused') toward God and His Kindness.

Not only that but it is to open up a savings account and to begin to make regular deposits of God's Wrath and Judgment against our own selves. Of course, actually, it is God Who opens the account and makes the deposits.

This is really not an account you want opened in your name.

Imagine it - You, the one whom God is bearing with and showing longsuffering, even while you refuse to take seriously His Goodness, for each infraction against Him creating a new deposit in

your name with will be taken out and cashen in on the Great Day of His Wrath!

Not at all a pretty picture.

And there is literally not doubt that this day will come.

6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

The Process will be perfectly Just and Infinitely Fair. Every person will be given exactly what is due him... without exception.

**But** - it will not be a day of Mercy. The time of mercy will end **before** the Time of Judgment begins.

He is Longsuffering and Merciful today but He will not be then.

How does the believer escape? His sins have been credited to Jesus Christ and He paid for them. The Righteousness of Christ has been written to his account. He will get exactly what is coming to him just as the unbeliever does. The difference is that what is coming to him is reward for the wondrous works of Christ.

2 Cor 5:21

21 For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. KJV

“That is unfair”... I can hear it now. But everyone will be reminded that they, too, were invited to come.

Rev 22:17

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. KJV