

***Romans***  
***Message 26***  
***The Morality Cults 03 and Repentance***  
***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:**

The Declaration of Independence of the United States of America contains these words which may be familiar to you. “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness....”

If those words were being written in our day they might be prefaced with something like this, “We hold the principle that there does exist Self-Evident Truth,” because that idea has to a great degree been lost in our time, even among people who identify themselves as Christian.

It is not infrequently that we hear people say, in response to an affirmation of scripture, “Well, the way I see that is.....” But the reality is that the “way we see” a thing is irrelevant unless we are actually seeing the principle or truth being affirmed in exactly the same way as the writer intended and that the Spirit that was guiding him inspired it.

Truth, real truth, is not subject to interpretation. It is what it is and all of the writers of scripture understood it that way.

If you do not like it, if it makes you angry, if it disagrees with what you have always been taught, if it condemns you to Hell... it is still True and not subject to change.

There is a word here that Paul used which must be understood in the way he held it and the way he intended it. It was a concept which existed in his mind as he wrote these words down and if we fail to understand that word and that concept we can never hope to comprehend what it was that he was saying.... Repentance.

The same is true, by the way for every other concept of Scripture.

- Justification
- Faith
- Sanctification
- Atonement
- The Fullness of the Holy Spirit
- Deity
- Forgiveness of Sins
- Mercy
- Justice
- Wrath
- etc. , etc.

The reason I am saying that is that we live in a world in which so many people have seemingly lost all touch with reality and seem to think that any word we find in scripture can be redefined and modified to whatever suits us and retain all of the authority of God behind it and such is simply neither logical nor true.

We are incredibly blessed and fortunate that there have been men who have come to grasp great eternal realities and then have set them down in written form.

Those *ideas* become, as it were, frozen in time. They are great monuments of Truth which will not change nor evolve into anything else... ever.

The Founding Documents of our country such as the one just referenced are such monuments. They are a collection of conclusions concerning the Just and Right Way a country should operate. It has been the opinion of many great men across the centuries that those ideas are likewise frozen in time and are simply to be followed rather than altered and shifted with the changing winds of expediency or political opinion.

Both politics and religion in our day are showing us a variety of attitudes concerning the Great Monuments of Truth (not *to Truth* but *of Truth*) and most of them are very alarming.

On the one hand there are those of us who see those Monuments and anchor our minds and souls to them. We take it that our whole hope of life and eternity lies in the complete embracing of Eternal Truth (not our country's founding documents but the Word of God). We labor to comprehend in every way the absolute and full meaning of Truth and then to conform our lives to it.

But we live among people who do not at all see things that way. The notion of Eternal and Unchangeable Truth bothers them and the notion of binding themselves to it in any absolute way disturbs them greatly. Their idea is that Truth is never absolute but is always in flux, subject to change and continually changing. In their minds, then, man's task is to be constantly changing with the changing Truth. But then the problem becomes a question, "Who is the Arbiter? Who determines what Truth is at any moment? And, then, how do we trust the Arbiter?"

The solution, seemingly, is that everyone becomes his own Arbiter and Truth stops have any validity or reality. We are reminded of a time in the history of Israel after Joshua died.

Judg 17:6

6 In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes. KJV

As the text explains if you care to read it, this was a lawless time when raw power determined what was done and what was 'right.'

It has ever and always been a recipe for disaster. And it is proving to be so again in our time.

So, the term which Paul lays before us in our study today is one of those eternal Monuments of Truth.... Repentance.

Historically, one of the first encounters recorded in scripture occurred in the ancient book of Job. You remember that story, right? Job was a child of God who lived faithfully before God and was a testimony of Righteousness and Spirituality. The Lord brought him to the attention of Satan who was then granted permission to create suffering in his life so as to undo his commitment to God. And Job's suffering was indeed great, losing all that he had including his children and finally his health. Sitting in misery with painful sores all over his body he was then subjected to the rejection of his wife and the endless nonsense of his friends and they undertook to explain to him how that he had done something wicked to cause all of this. He longed for death but it would not come.

But as the book closes and the conclusions are revealed Job has an encounter with God in which God revealed Himself to Job partly through a series of questions He posed to Job and partly through direct Divine Revelation. This is found in chapters 40 and 41.

Then, Job responded.

Job 42:1-6

- 1 Then Job answered the LORD, and said,
- 2 I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.
- 3 Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.
- 4 Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.
- 5 I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.

6        Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes. KJV

This is one of those Truth Monuments which stands for all of time and space. This very decent and godly man to whom God drew near saw himself and despised what he saw.

Such is the Reality that was established for every person who would ever after truly know and experience Communion with God. This reality will not go away nor will it change even in the New Covenant.

It is as True today as it was 4000 years ago.

And... there is a sidebar to this Monument.

- No one ever repents unless God initiates an encounter and draws near to him. Look again at v.5.

These Eternal Principles are for the most part either ignored or outright denied in our day.

But we see them played out in every encounter in scripture between God and a man whom He has awakened to his sin.

Paul had such an encounter himself, remember?

Acts 9:1-6

- 1        And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,
- 2        And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.
- 3        And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:
- 4        And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?
- 5        And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.
- 6        And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. KJV

But it was 3 days before the Lord sent anyone to speak to him.

- During that time he remained totally blind and refused to eat or drink.
- We are told that he spent the time in prayer.
- But can you imagine what the time must have been like for him?

- He was blind and could not possibly know if he would ever see again.
- Everything he had been believing had just been shattered into dust.
- Everything he had been doing recently had been proven to be profoundly wicked -

things he had believed were godly and true.

I do not think it is possible to believe that he did not recall and relive every one of his encounters with Christians going back to Stephen.

Acts 7:54-8:3

- 54 When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth.
- 55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,
- 56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.
- 57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord,
- 58 And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.
- 59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.
- 60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Acts 8

- 1 And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.
- 2 And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him.
- 3 As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison. KJV

Acts 9:1-2

- 1 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest,
- 2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

Acts 26:9-12 (before Agrippa)

- 9 I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.
- 10 Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them.
- 11 And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.
- 12 Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, KJV

Every person he had mistreated, every one he had thrown into prison, every one whose property he had taken... and those he had killed... including Stephen... undoubtedly came to his mind and he confronted the awful reality that he had been the one doing wrong and that everything he had done against any of these saints had been taken as a personal affront by the Living God.

It is amazing how Repentance changes the memories. Things we once thought on with a smile become screaming accusers whose testimony our minds can barely tolerate... and some of them accuse us, rightly, of things which tear our hearts and rip our pride into shreds.

### ***This Is Repentance***

This concept is that Monument of Truth that refuses to move and cannot be re-shaped into something more pleasing to us.

And this is undoubtedly where Paul's mind went when he thought on the word. This is what he meant when he spoke or wrote down the word.

It is remarkable to compare the stories of Job and Paul.

- Job was a man whom God defended as "perfect and upright, one that feareth God and escheweth evil" Job 1:8
- Paul was one who God saw as a personal tormentor of His Son, "why persecutest thou me?" Acts 9:4

Yet, both of them ended up in exactly the same place through Repentance.  
"I abhor myself"

The point I am attempting to make is this, ***Repentance is a defined, eternal reality***

It will never change its essence or its definition as long as God and humans exist.

Those who experience it:

- Will lose all hope of saving themselves or of even helping with their own salvation. The repentant are so convinced of their rottenness that they will stand forever amazed that God had mercy on them.
- Will absolutely agree that they deserve nothing but the Lake of Fire for their sins. They will not rationalize their own wickedness so as to make it seem small.
- Will lose all pretense and pride.
- Will stop making excuses for their sins.
- Will agree with God concerning what sin is.
- Will long to be right with God. It will become their most profound motivation. They will desire to be as right with God as a human can possibly be.
- Will accept God's Word alone as their source and authority for Truth.
- Will despise that element within themselves that love sin and prompts them to it.
- Will agonize to put all sin away from them.
- Will willingly accept that salvation is all of Grace and none the Work of man.

- Will gladly embrace Jesus Christ as King and His Words as Law.

The Truly Repentant will ultimately realize that most of the religious people they know have never repented of their sins in the same way that Paul understood and intended the Word and the Principle.

***Again, This Thing of Repentance is an Eternal Reality and is not subject to human re-definition.***

However much men try, and however much they lie about the matter, Job and Paul remain as testimonies to what Repentance is.

Oh yes, and then there are the words of Jesus, “Except ye repent ye shall perish” Luke 13:3,5.

This picture of Repentance we have painted is that one Paul had in mind when he said, “the goodness of God leadeth the to Repentance.” Rom 2:4

Martin Lloyd Jones had some interesting comments concerning the first part of the phrase, “not knowing” and suggested that the lack of knowledge is deliberate, that what is obviously true is consciously twisted by those who refuse its implications.

Consider the foolish conclusions which have been drawn fro God’s goodness, His patience and His forbearance.

- God does not mind that we sin. In fact, He programmed us this way so if it is wrong, it is His fault. No kidding, people actually argue this.
- There is no judgment, no need to repent. God does not actually punish people. He is loving.

2 Peter 3:3-7

- 3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,
- 4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.
- 5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:
- 6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:
- 7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. KJV

- God is pleased with all of us.
- There is no God, this is all just one big cosmic accident.  
Yet, the organization and design of life us such that many, many scientists have forsaken the evolutionary model for the Creation model.

The Bible, the Church and those who founded the Church all testify of the Grace of God they found in Repentance.

It is a profound error in judgment to think that Repentance is unnecessary because God has not yet visited you with Judgment.

People are literally playing a game of Russian roulette with their lives as they essentially dare God to judge them for their sins.

But what about you?

Have you repented of your sins?

Or have you merely done a little religious dance and have hung all of your hope for time and eternity upon it?

I cannot give you repentance. I can only tell you that it is necessary for salvation.

God alone is the giver of this enormous Grace.

2 Tim 2:24-26

24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,

25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

26 And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will. KJV

It is the hope of the servant of the Lord that He would grant repentance to those who do not have it. This is why he instructs them in meekness and gentleness, why he strives to truly and patiently teach.

God gives Repentance. Has He given it to you?

This is the only recovery from the snare of the devil.