

Coming Judgment
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Romans 2:1-13

Opening: In our school days we all learned the concept of grading on a curve. Even if your score was bad, if most of the class scored worse than you, your grade came out okay. God does NOT grade on a curve. We won't stand before Him one day and hear Him say, *"You weren't as good as Billy Graham but at least not as bad as Hitler."* When it comes to His righteous standard, God shows no partiality. (2:11)

- Last week in Romans 1, Paul described humanity's sin problem in great detail.
- We said God's word shouldn't be a magnifying glass for the sins of others but a mirror for our own sins. We finished with verse one of chapter two warning us: "...in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things." Then, Jeremy's sermon was on Luke 6:37: "Judge not, and you will not be judged."ⁱ We got a "double dose" on not judging!
- As we turn to Romans 2, Paul makes it clear: "God shows no partiality" (v. 11).
- In other words, God doesn't grade on a curve.

The Point: God shows no favoritism – we all stand before Him on the same terms.

- Back to the mirror and the magnifying glass. In chapter one Paul "referred to sinful humanity as "they" and "them." "They are without excuse" (1:20). "...they did not honor Him" (1:21)." (1:22); "they exchanged the truth of God for a lie" (1:25). "God gave them over".ⁱⁱ The magnifying glass was on THEM.
- We turn the page to chapter two and THEY turns into YOU. "...you judge," "you presume...", "your hard heart." Now God has pointed the mirror to our sin.
- To paraphrase a quote from Pogo ⁱⁱⁱ: *"We have met the sinners and they are us."*

(ESV) —4 ...do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? **5** But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

- Verse 4: God's delay in judgment does not mean He overlooks sin; it gives us more chances to repent and turn to Him.
- Repeatedly rejecting Him leads to a hard heart, and an unrepentant heart ultimately faces God's judgment and eternal separation from Him.
- There is also a word for those of us who ARE saved. My sins were paid for by Christ, but I can become callous to them. God's kindness should lead me to repentance as I strive to grow more like Christ (sanctification). (Heb. 3:12-13)
- Back to no "grading on a curve." Look at verse six.

6 He will render to each one according to his works: **7** to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; **8** but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. **9** There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, **10** but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. **11** For God shows no partiality.

- First, Paul is NOT saying we earn salvation by good works. That would contradict other scripture. Paul is describing God's righteous standard of judgment.
- No one can live up to that standard (Romans 3:23 – "All have sinned.")
- God will not relax His standard based on how everyone else is doing.
- That is why we need a Savior—Jesus—to satisfy God's righteous judgment through His death and provide the righteousness we could never earn.
- God doesn't lower the standard; instead, Christ's perfection covers our failure.

12 For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. **13** For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified.

- It is not enough to KNOW what God says, we must DO it.
- Remember Jesus comparing the wise and foolish builders who built on the rock and the sand (Matt. 7:24-27)? The wise person HEARS and ACTS on God's word. John MacArthur writes, "*The doers of the Law...come to God in repentance and faith, realizing that His Law is impossible for them to keep apart from Him and that knowledge of it places them under greater obligation to obey it...after they have come to Him in faith, their obedient lives give evidence of their saving relationship to Him and of the fact that they will be justified.*"^{iv}
- Good works don't save us; they give evidence that we are saved.

So, What's the Takeaway?

- We naturally compare ourselves to others, especially when we sin. It likely brings us comfort to think, "Well, I'm not as bad as THEM!"
- God's judgment is impartial. His standard doesn't change based on how we compare with somebody else. He doesn't grade on a curve.
- Romans 2 turns God's Word back toward us like a mirror, showing us where we have fallen short. No one gets a "free pass" because of who we are, what we know, or how favorably we compare with others.
- The good news (as we said last week) is that God loves mankind so much that He gave us the perfect, powerful prescription for our sin problem: God's power + Christ's righteousness → received through faith = salvation we could never earn.
- For the person who hasn't trusted Christ in faith, don't mistake God's patience for His approval. His kindness has given you time and opportunity to come to Him in repentance and faith.
- For the Christ-follower, knowing but not doing what God's Word tells us can lead to a hard heart and strained fellowship with Him.

ⁱ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Lk 6:37). (2025). Crossway Bibles.

ⁱⁱ Swindoll, Charles R.. *Insights on Romans* (Swindoll's New Testament Insights) (pp. 31-32). Kindle Edition.

ⁱⁱⁱ Walt Kelly's Pogo famously observed, "We have met the enemy and he is us."

^{iv} MacArthur, John. F, *Romans 1-8* (The MacArthur New Testament commentary)