

## BIBLE STUDY: ROMANS #2

Scripture of Lesson: Romans 2: 1~29

### 1. God's righteous judgment

Why is God's judgment righteous? Psalmist wrote in Ps. 72:2, "*He will judge Your people with righteousness, And Your poor with justice.*" God, as the creator of all universe and of the human being, retains the right to be the final judge of all things. He is the ultimate judge of all humans because He created them in His image and gave them free will to live according to their desires. That is the first and the most important reason why God's judgment is righteous. Jesus spoke the parable of the workers at a vineyard and countered the criticism that the owner of the vineyard was not right in dispensing wages to the hired workers as follows:

*But he answered one of them and said, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? Take what is yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man the same as to you. Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or is your eye evil because I am good?' [Matt 20: 13~15]*

Unbelievers have been critical of God as unfair and partial. Yet they fail to recognize His prerogative as the creator of all things, heavens and the earth including us humans. When extraordinary events befall on them, they often bemoan of their misfortune and blame God for letting it fall on them. Let us remember that God is our creator and Lord. We ought to give due honor and respect to God and recognize that He is the ultimate judge of all our actions and ways.

The second reason why God's judgment is righteous is that He withholds His wrath until the final Day of Judgment and makes His patience, grace and mercy available to men and women in the meantime. Our life here on the earth is a window of time to take advantage of His grace and mercy. His truth has been revealed through His creation, our conscience, the gospel of Christ and His scripture. All resources are available to us to come to Him and find reconciliation with Him. Yet if we consistently refuse to take His invitation to His grace and mercy, only His wrath will be our fate on the final day. Since He is giving us ample opportunity to accept His invitation, His judgment after your chances have expired is only righteous. V. 6 says *He will render to every man according to His deeds*. V. 9 speaks of what will befall on those who have refused such a call of invitation. They are deemed 'evil' to God's eyes. On the other hand, God rewards amply those who accept His call of invitation, come to be reconciled as His children through Christ and do good during their life. Glory, honor and peace will be their portion [v. 10].

The third reason that God's judgment is righteous is that He is impartial [v. 11]. His invitation to the gospel is open to all races, economic strata, educational status or social backgrounds. As Jesus' life exemplifies God is particularly sympathetic to those who suffer misfortunes and are down trodden in the present world, like Lazarus compared to the rich man at whose gate the beggar sat begging. Here in this chapter apostle Paul points out that God's favor with the Jewish people was no longer the case. Both His blessings and wrath apply equally to both the Jew and the Gentile, the former with the Mosaic Law and the latter without. He clarifies that if a Jew sins within the law, he would be judged in accordance with the law. If, however, a Gentile follows

the guiding of his conscience, it becomes his law. Thus, God, who sees the hidden thoughts and things of all men, will reward each man according to his deeds on the final day. [v. 16]

*Discussion topic: What presuppositions do we have about God's righteousness? Why is it difficult for us humans to accept the absolute supremacy of God, especially with regards to our personal domain?*

## **2. Human judgment compared against God's judgment**

How do humans judge as compared against God's judgment? V. 1 says those who judge do the things they judge others. In other words, they are hypocrites. We are often duplicitous in our words and actions. We are quick to judge others and yet very slow in meting out the same judgment on ourselves. That is why Jesus taught the people, *"Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."* [Matt 7: 1~2] Paul declares that hypocritical people will not avoid God's judgment. [v. 3]

Whereas God is patient and long-suffering, we humans are often impatient and unfair to others. We expect unattainable targets and expect results within unreasonably short time durations. The Egyptian task masters took away straw and expected the Israelite slaves to yield the same amount of bricks in previous quality. Today the rich get richer and the poor poorer and we say the poor deserve to be poor. We pour billions of dollars into unneeded wars and yet forsake the plights of the inner city poor people. We are immune to the misfortunes of the socially downcast people and the wandering immigrants who flee from the utter chaos and atrocities of their home lands.

Many people believe that God is not actively judging the world. They think His judgment may come at the end of the world but there is no apparent evidence of His judgment in the world today. That is not true. Psalm 72 says, *"God judges the righteous and is angry with the wicked every day."* [Ps. 7:11] Yet in His great mercy God is withholding His punishment until the last times. God withheld His wrath towards Sodom and Gomorrah until the fullness of their wickedness could no longer be tolerated. He sent His angels to save a few who were believers before He destroyed the two cities. That is God's righteousness which was shown even to the wicked people of those cities. Christians should be aware of God's indignation towards the current filthiness of this world and learn to keep themselves holy and separated from it so that we are found to be included in God's grace when the day of His wrath comes.

*"For the Lord is our Judge, The Lord is our Lawgiver, The Lord is our King; He will save us" [Isiah 33:22]*

When Christ returns to this world, He will come in His glory with the angels. Unlike the first time He will come to claim the kingship of the whole world and sit on the throne of His glory.

*"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory." [Matt 25: 31]*

The hearts of those Christians who hunger and thirst for God's righteousness ache whenever they encounter unjust treatments of people or wrong standards of justice applied to the people, society or nation. When Christ is enthroned as the king of the world, however, our hearts will be satisfied and rejoice because

the judgments of our Lord will be just and sure. No longer will the poor be mistreated because of their poverty and low estate. No longer will the powerful of this world be able to oppress the righteous souls unjustly.

On the last day of final judgment, however, we will all be judged according to our deeds [v. 6, 16]. And there are resources available to us to prepare for this final judgment. First is our conscience [v. 15]. Secondly, we have the law and the Scripture that provide us guidelines [v. 13]. Thirdly, we have the example of Jesus Christ as our “way, truth and life [John 14:6].” His example is a shining light and lamp to our feet to guide us into God’s truth and principles. Lastly, we have the help of the Holy Spirit, who knows the mind of God and searches the innermost depths of our hearts. When we apply these resources to our daily lives wisely and diligently, our spiritual riches will abound and our lives will be a shining example to others as Christ’s life is. And we need not fear God’s judgment but we look forward to hearing Him say, “Well done, my beloved servants!”

*Discussion topic: We are accustomed to ‘deadlines’ in our social and business activities. Why do most people live as if there is no deadline to their personal lives here on the earth? How do we as Christians live in consciousness of the deadline coming in the future?*

### **3. Jews and Gentiles stand together as guilt before God: v. 17~24**

Bible tells us that God was so disappointed with the evil in the world before the great flood of Noah that He decided to destroy all humans except Noah and his family through a global flood. Let us have no doubt that the great flood did occur in Noah’s time. There is a number of evidences to prove its historicity. We will cover this topic on another occasion.

God gave an opportunity to Noah’s descendants to honor Him and to worship Him as the true God through the flood. God made a pledge never to destroy all flesh through a flood. And God blessed Noah and his sons:

*So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. [Genesis 9: 1-2]*

According to the Jewish Talmud, God gave seven commandments to Noah and his family to keep as follows:

- 1) not to commit idolatry
- 2) not to commit blasphemy
- 3) not to commit murder
- 4) not to have forbidden sexual relations
- 5) not to commit theft
- 6) not to eat flesh cut from a living animal
- 7) to establish courts of justice to punish violators of the other six laws.

These commandments apply to all nations, not just to the Jews. God gave Ten Commandments to the people of Israel through Moses so that they become holy people to God in this corrupt world. Additional commandments over and above the Noahic Commandments apply uniquely to the Jewish people because they

are God's chosen people. Therefore, it is wrong to impose the Ten Commandments or the Mosaic Law to the Gentile Christians.

Here, Paul is admonishing the Judaist Christians who try to impose compliance to the Mosaic Law to the Gentile Christians by emphasizing that both Jews and Gentiles are equally sinners before God and need God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ to obtain salvation. Because the Jews have been educated and trained in the law of God, they are more responsible before God. That does not mean the Jewish Christians are more righteous before God because righteousness before God cannot be obtained by works.

*Discussion topic: Discuss the difference between the Noahic Commandment and the Ten Commandment.*

#### **4. Mosaic law and circumcision: v. 25~29**

In Genesis 17: 24-27 God told Abraham to be circumcised as a sign of God's chosen, covenanted people. So Abraham had not only himself but all males under his authority undergo circumcision. Since then circumcision has become an outward sign of the Jewish people as God's chosen people. Paul, however, emphasizes that the inward circumcision of cutting off old sinful life from us is far more important than the outward sign of circumcision [v. 29].

Do we take pride in some outward characteristic that stands out before others? Are we boastful of our family tradition such as what our ancestors did in the history or what famous school we graduated from? There are such people. Some people are proud that their parents were Christians before they were ever conceived. They brag about this as if by being born into a professing Christian family, they themselves were born free of sin and already justified.

*Discussion topic: Is circumcision still a valid outward sign of God's chosen people to the Jewish people? If not, what signs do they have for the same purpose?*

#### **Takeaway:**

1. Our life should be truthful and guided by God's precepts while we live on earth.
2. Let Christ be our judge daily so that we could stand before Him without shame or remorse.

Tell others about the wonderful help of God available to prepare God's righteous judgment