

Living Faith Bible Fellowship
How Will We Be Judged?

Romans 2:6-11

May 29, 2011

Scripture

Introduction: Manhattan College drill team robbed by BU unfair judge...

- There is something about bias and preferential treatment that greatly offends us!
 - Coaches who have their own children on their teams and clearly favor them
 - Parents who react to the successes of one child with excitement and exaggerate the failures of another child, causing the latter child to be discouraged. Arnold Schwarzenegger was such a marginalized child.
 - We see this at work even in education
 - Some complain that affirmative action admits people into schools ahead of others who are better qualified, and so this really makes them upset
 - Others complain that an individual like George W. Bush was clearly not qualified to gain entrance into an Ivy League school over those whose fathers were not as influential as his, so this really makes them upset
 - Whatever the circumstance, we are **offended**, our sense of fairness and of right and wrong is crossed when we observe **partiality** and **preferential treatment**, and the higher the stakes the **more offended** we are **when we see partiality**. For example, in the film **The Titanic**, when **the rich passengers**, including men and women, were given access to lifeboats while **poor passengers** were being locked below deck to sink with the ship we shook our heads.

- So then, here is the question: Is God a **fair judge**? Well, since God is good and his character is supreme, we must know that God is **just** and **fair**, so the answer would have to be **yes**, God is a fair judge!
 - In fact, Paul makes this explicitly clear in verse 11
 - Ok, we know God does **not** give preference to the rich or beautiful or anything worldly, but why is Paul saying this here? Paul is saying that God is not partial to whom? Why is Paul saying this? Who is he saying this to? Let's answer this question simply right now...

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- Paul is addressing the **religious people** who **know what is right** and are **trusting** in **their knowledge** of the **right** as the **basis** for their being **judged** right. Literally, he is addressing Jewish people in the church who are **confident** in their **knowledge** of the **Law** and believe their **knowledge and confidence** indicates they are right before God. So, Paul is simply saying to them, **no**, your religious **knowledge** and even your religious **practice**, does **not** make you right before God, what is more God does not judge us based on our knowledge or our religion, he will judge us more strictly because of our knowledge, but not based on it.

Please follow me closely on this one today, because I want to speak to three things, and I think they are among the more important things I have ever shared with you, and I am going to be simple and to the point:

- a) **First**, we are judged **according to our works**
- b) **Second**, because we are judged according to our works, **we need Jesus**...so we can be **judged righteously and fairly**
- c) Last, our **godly aim** should be, **good works**

I. **We Are Judged According to Our Works**

- Look at v.6 it is the key principle verse here...
 - What does God give and how does it relate to what we do?
 - **We do:**
 - *by persistence in doing good, seek glory honor and immortality...*
 - in other words, **these are those who make heaven and God's kingdom a priority**, they "seek first his kingdom and its righteousness"
 - **How?**

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- By **religious participation?** NO! By **church membership?** NO! By using their many gifts in the church? NO! By **persistence** in doing good...
- Simply, by a life profile of **obedient** and **loving service!**
 - Let's be clear, there is no doing good without obedience.
 - Let's be equally clear, there is **no obedience without love!** If we think **it's as simple as doing a task**, we've missed it! It's **a loving task done with a loving motive.**
 - My life should be marked by this...
- Recalling the life and service of Anna Pearl Smith...
- **God gives...**
 - Eternal life...now there is no ambiguity about this. Our eternal destiny is tied to this
- But let's quickly look at the flip side
 - v.8, self-seeking, truth rejecters, and followers of evil, get **wrath** and **anger...**
 - Recall our recent treatment of God's wrath being revealed, we don't talk about it much, but the Bible does; God is angry with those who do evil and they will experience his wrath.
- Here comes the obvious question, **well what about faith and grace?** That's the right question to ask, but before we answer that one, let's nail this principle home, of being judged according to our works, by looking at a few other scriptural verses to reinforce this.
 - So, Paul is considered the apostle of grace, does this claim fit elsewhere in his teaching? Let's see...
 - **2 Corinthians 5:10**...some will say, this is the judgment seat of Christ, believers will not be condemned here. Well, I will agree with that and will

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not argue with you, but the principle remains: I will be judged before Christ for everything **I do, both good and bad**...Christian, don't think your good profession will insulate you from the accountability of your sin...not talking about your imperfections, but your willing, injurious, insensitive, selfish sin will be judged!

- **Galatians 5:19-21**...
 - I warn you, Galatian Christian church member, God will judge this behavior
- But, what about Jesus, who taught love and acceptance and tolerance, so the world emphasizes, did he teach this principle?
 - **Matthew 16:27**...OK, there is the principle, but please flesh this out for us Lord...
 - **Matthew 25:31-46**...paraphrase and recount
 - The basis of righteous judgment, **loving service**
 - The basis of unrighteous judgment, the **absence** of loving service
 - **Matthew 7:21-24**
 - *Not everyone who says...Lord, Lord...in other words **right confession is insufficient**...*
 - *But **only** he who **does the will** of the Father...*
 - *Many...will **recount their recollection of their works**, and they were greatly impressed with what they did, so they thought for Jesus...but Jesus will *plainly* 'I never knew you. Away from me, you **evildoers**.'*

So, we can say with boldness, confidence and fear, **we are judged by what we do**...

And our right response is, I might be ruined, I don't think my works are good enough! And then you remember hearing that all of our righteousness is as filthy rags. Moreover, honestly, I don't love as I should, I don't serve as I should, my actions are full of selfish motives, what do I do?

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This takes us to our second point...

2. Because we are judged by works, we need Jesus...so that we can be judged righteously and fairly...

- First of all, Paul is writing a letter here, and he is going somewhere in this letter and he's making an argument...though we are often tempted to pull verses out of the context of what Paul is saying as he tries to make his point. We often approach the Bible this way and we should not, and when we do, we misunderstand...or misinterpret what it says. Let me give you an example of a misinterpretation outside the Bible:
 - Martin King's **Letter from a Birmingham Jail**, here's a small excerpt: ***It is unfortunate that demonstrations are taking place in Birmingham...***...this sounds like King is speaking **against** the demonstrations that got him arrested but he is in fact arguing **for** the demonstrations in this letter, even reading the rest of the sentence makes that clear.
 - Likewise, if I lift verses 6 – 8 of Romans 2 out of the letter, I may be tempted to say something like, "Paul is saying that for those who don't know the gospel, they will be saved by their works with the light they have. And then there is an appeal to verse 14..."
 - Paul is **not** saying that the Gentiles who do **not** have the Law have **sufficiency in their works to save**...any more than the Jews who have the Law will have sufficiency in their works? Why? Not because the **Law is too low** or even that **conscience is too low**, the problem is that **we don't do** what the Law says and what conscience says with persistent consistency! We need help...or we die...
 - Here is the structure of Paul's explanation in Romans 2 – 3 [see slide 1]
 - Now, does this give God license to be unfair? In other words, does Christianity become the scandal of sanctioned hypocrisy? In other words, are evil doers granted

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heaven because of belief though their lives are by all honest observers sinful. The answer is no, God does sanction hypocrisy, but instead empowers spiritual integrity and creates in his people the conditions of right judgment, even though they lack the sufficiency of his full standard.

- First, if sinfulness was sanctioned by grace, all the passages we read would simply ring false
- Second, Ephesians 2:8-10 **[turn in my Bible]** helps us with this
 - v.8-9, works don't save, grace does through faith
 - v.10, yet because, we are God's workmanship, we are made in Christ to do good works
 - The nature of salvation necessitates good works [persistent, loving service] because it is a work of God, not our wills...God is not honoring our decision in salvation, he is giving us a new nature in salvation and the presence of His Spirit to make this happen.
 - I love Revelation 19:8-9, *Fine linen, bright and clean, was given [the bride of Christ] to wear. (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints)*
- Today we often confuse the **insufficiency of our works** for salvation **for the lack of necessity of our works**; saints, works are required. They are **insufficient to save us**, but **necessary to mark us**. This is the undeniable witness of scripture. Listen, God is God; he always judges by works, sin has not caused God to lower his standard; he's not judging on a curve, so he gives us full credit with Christ's righteousness and then begins to practically conform us to his righteousness by his Spirit. We never hit it perfectly, but we should not miss it scandalously.

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3. Then, Our Godly Aim Should be Good Works

- So, what does this mean, what are we saying? That all those who are saved will be do good works? Yes, but not just that. I am saying that your salvation and that your faith is so intertwined with what you do, that your godly aim should be good works. Look at Philippians 2:12-13 [**turn to it in my Bible**]
 - What is in view here is **obedience**, i.e. **loving service**, not **mere tasks** tagged by us for Jesus
 - Not **for** your salvation, but **out of** or as a **by-product** of your salvation...
 - Why?
 - God works in us to **will [desire, aim]** and to **do [complete, consummate]** his good pleasure
 - The pursuit of loving service, should be the aim of every genuine believer, and when so, God is behind that aim and **will fulfill it in our living**

Conclusion