

Romans 2

The Judgment of God

As we continue the Bible study in Romans today, we will be looking at Romans chapter 2. Now because of my training with Brother Kaung, I think the most important thing you can do is read the Word of God. Read it over and over again, and do not be so quick to rush to commentaries. That was his second advice to me. Form your own thoughts by the Holy Spirit as you read it over and over again. It will begin to make connections and sense, and then maybe later it is okay to read the commentaries because they are a great help. But the first thing he told me is read, read, read. So we will read it again even as we begin, even if it takes our time. Beginning in verse 32 of chapter 1, we will read these strong words.

“Who knowing the righteous judgment (that is a phrase I want you to capture this morning.) of God, that they who do such things are worthy of death, not only practice them, but have fellow delight in those who do them.”

Romans 2:1-29: “Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, everyone who judgest, for in that which thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself, for thou that judgest doest the same things. But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth upon those who do such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, who judgest those that do such things, and practisest them thyself, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads thee to repentance? but, according to thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up to thyself wrath, in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who shall render to each according to his works: to them who in patient continuance of good works, seek for glory and honour and incorruptibility, life eternal. But to those that are contentious, and are disobedient to the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there shall be wrath and indignation, tribulation and distress, on every soul of man that works evil, both of Jew first, and of Greek; but glory and honour and peace to everyone that works good, both to Jew first and to Greek: for there is no acceptance of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law shall perish also without law; and as many as have sinned under law shall be judged by law, for not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when those of the nations, which have no law, practise by nature the things of the law, these, having no law, are a law to themselves; who shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts accusing or else excusing themselves between themselves; in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, according to my glad tidings, by Jesus Christ. But if thou art named a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast in God, and knowest the will, and discerningly approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; and hast confidence that thou thyself art a leader of the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and of truth in the law: thou then that teachest another, dost thou not teach thyself? Thou that preachest not to steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou who boastest in law, dost

thou by transgression of the law dishonour God? For the name of God is blasphemed on your account among the nations, according as it is written. For circumcision indeed profits if thou keep the law; but if thou be a law-transgressor, thy circumcision is become uncircumcision. If therefore the uncircumcision keep the requirements of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be reckoned for circumcision, and uncircumcision by nature, fulfilling the law, judge thee, who, with letter and circumcision, art a law-transgressor? For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, neither that circumcision which is outward in flesh; but he is a Jew who is so inwardly; and circumcision, of the heart, in spirit, not in letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

Lord, we always have to confess when we come to Your Word that we need the Holy Spirit to interpret it to us. This is not in our purview; it is only God who can make His Word alive, and we tell You, Lord, what Peter said that fateful day when so many of your own turned back and left You, "You alone have the words of eternal life. To whom shall we go?" We do not come to anyone else this morning, not to man, not to books, not to different helps; we come to You and to Your Word, and we ask You, Lord, by the Holy Spirit to illumine Your Word that we may understand these things that are upon Your heart, and they may come into us and be that inward reality, and we may live out what is in Your Word according to Your life. This we can only do through Jesus' name. We ask You to speak to us. In Your precious name. Amen.

As you know, we have been taking up the book of Romans together as an assembly. The brothers have asked me if I would consider sharing some of the things I have been sharing with Pakistan, and I agreed to do it. Of course, with Pakistan I have the same amount of time, but there are translations, so maybe you will get a little bit more. I am equally and more so excited about brothers who have taken up particular points out of Romans. And three brothers have shared on faith, three brothers have zoned in in a particular way to a particular thing and brought it to us which can expand our knowledge of the book of Romans. I suppose in the next weeks and months you will see more of this, and we delight to be able to study His Word together.

Now a few things as we begin the second chapter of Romans. I believe this book is absolutely important to the Christian life. You cannot live the Christian life without a clear understanding and a clear experience of the book of Romans. It is God-breathed and God-inspired. You will remember that I said, "It is a spiritual masterpiece." Nothing goes into the condition of man so clearly in the whole Bible and the solution of God for man in the whole Bible, as the book of Romans. It is a true spiritual, surgical masterpiece in which God unveils to us things that He does not unveil through any other book in the Bible. It is a comprehensive consideration of mankind, and it is a comprehensive unveiling of God's solution for mankind. I think these are the reasons we should think about the book of Romans.

There was a fellow by the name of Samuel Taylor Coleridge. He was an English Divine, and he was a poet and a philosopher. He said of the book of Romans, "It is the most profound work in existence." How compelling is that statement! How full is that statement! How much we should pay attention to what the Lord has for us!

When we began in the first chapter in verses 18-32, we looked at the condition of man. It is a breath-taking analysis of the corrupt condition of man. How they turned their back and chose not to have God even in their memory! Then those repeated phrases, "God gave them up." How

deep that thought is! You know, that part in verses 18-32 primarily deals with the nations, the Gentiles. Primarily, chapter 2 deals with the Jews because of the end, but the early part deals with both Jews and Greeks. What we must see is that man is totally corrupt. Now I know some of you would rather me be preaching on the love of God or on the grace of God. You would feel far more encouraged and probably not as slumped down in your chairs. But what we need to see is the righteous judgment of God. If you see in the Lord's right, the righteous judgment of God, you will understand the phenomenal expanse of the love of God. Not only that, you will begin to understand the fulness and the depth of the grace of God. Therefore, by that we need to look into the condition of man. There is no mistake that the apostle Paul spent so much time, almost three chapters, in this great book to deal with the condition of man. If you do not see your condition, and if I do not see my condition, we will never be able to live in the fulness that has been provided for us in Christ Jesus. Now is that introduction somewhat clear?

The second thing I said that I want you to remember is the context of the first and second chapter, and in fact the book of Romans, is that it is the divine courtroom. This is the righteous Judge judging righteously. This is the divine courtroom, and we can see what the Lord says of man, and what the sentence is on man. Then ultimately, by the glory of God, we will see the grand solution that He only does for man. That is the book of Romans in a nutshell.

In chapter 1:20, it speaks about a man's condition: "so as to render them inexcusable." That was the word. When you begin in chapter 2:1, that cry comes out again from the Holy One through the Apostle Paul: "Therefore, Thou art inexcusable, O man." That is a heart cry of God. "O man!" You remember when the Lord Jesus was coming into Jerusalem for that last week, and He said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered you under My wings as a chicken gathers her chicks, but you would not" (see Luke 13:34). I wonder when we hear the judgment of God if we say to the Lord who is calling us by His mercy, "I would not." This is a cry: "O man, hear your condition! O man, hear what you are really like, and enter into my secret and discover that full provision that has been made for you in Christ Jesus." This I believe is the message of these early chapters of the book of Romans.

So we are dealing today with a judgment of God. You have to understand the judgment of God. Now you might say, "If you are dealing with chapter 2, why did you begin with verse 32 of chapter 1? That is a fair question. When you study the Word, do not get so hung up on chapter divisions and verse divisions. They are a help, a wonderful help, but they are not divine. There are people in history who laid down their lives, one of them being the Archbishop of Canterbury. He divided the whole Bible into chapters, both Old and New Testaments. Can you imagine doing that? How marvelous that is! Thankfully, we have chapters because this brother in the Lord laid down his life and divided the whole of the Bible. Then there was a Jewish Rabbi after him who divided the whole of the New Testament and Old Testament into verses. Can you imagine! Isn't that wonderful? That was his life's work. Then there was a man who divided the whole of the New Testament into verses, and now you can say, "John 3:16." Can you imagine if you just had page after page and paragraph after paragraph of endless words? How could you study the Word of God? When we come to the study of the Word of God, be thankful for those who went before us and gave up their lives and did this terrific work, and we are now the benefactors of that tedious work.

The Righteous Judgment of God

At the end of chapter 1 and in chapter 2 we will be looking at the righteous judgment of God. First of all, in chapter 1:32 and the first five verses, we see the righteous judgment of God. The second thing we see in verses 6-16 is the basis of God's judgment. What does He base His judgment on? It might be far different than what you base your judgment on, and there might be something for you to see in this. We see in verses 17-27 the judgment of the Jews, and then we come to the all important last two verses of chapter 2, and we discover the secret of the outwardness and inwardness. So to me that was the way the Lord after all these years has led me to segment chapter 2 of the book of Romans.

The phrase in chapter 1:32 is the full version of that phrase, "The righteous judgment of God." The phrase in verse 2 is "the judgment of God." The phrase in verse 3 is "the judgment of God." The phrase in verse 5 is the righteous judgment of God. Now let me ask you: Do you think maybe this is the subject of this chapter? I always tell people to notice things that are repeated when you study the Word of God. And if you meditate on those phrases and those words, you will begin to discover God's thought in passages. So it is clear in the first five verses and my inclusion of chapter 1:32 that we are dealing with the righteous judgment of God. We see man's condition, we see the divine verdict, and without this chapter we are unable to understand our so great salvation and this gospel of God as it says in Roman 1:16.

The original Greek word "righteous" means "a just sentence." When we deal with the judgment of God, we shy away. As a matter of fact, I will go this far, the world does not like to talk about the judgment of God, and they particularly do not want to hear us Christians talking to them about the judgment of God. It is not strange to me. I understand it. Every atheist, every agnostic, every unbeliever that does not even believe the Bible knows Matthew 7:1 by heart. As soon as you begin to talk to them about the Lord they say, "Judge not, that ye may not be judged." It is amazing to me. They do not even believe the Bible, and yet the first words out of their mouth is "Judge not."

Well, this is not about our judgment; this is about a far greater judgment. This is the judgment of God, and not only is it the judgment of God, but it is the righteous judgment of God. What does that mean? It means that His judgment is right; His judgment is true. His judgment, if borrowed from the British, is 'spot on.' Our judgment is often off course. So I think we need to understand the importance of this word to the Apostle Paul and the importance of this phrase.

First of all, the righteous judgment of God means a just sentence. I would be the first to tell you that often when I think about the judgment of God, I think it is unjust; it is unfair. I remember when I was in business, when I worked for a living, I remember we once had a seminar on sexual harassment, and the lawyers came and told us about all the pitfalls of sexual harassment. At the end of it, I said to this astute lawyer, "This is unfair." And he looked at me and said, "My grandfather told me the fair left in October." I have never forgotten that. The truth is that God's judgment is fair; it is absolutely just. Not only is it just; it is righteous; He did the right thing. You may think, "God, You are too hard on me. Would you lighten up a little bit?" But He will not. If He can show you your true condition, He can reveal to you the marvelous salvation that is in Christ

Jesus, the unspeakable glory of His mercy that has been extended to you and to me, not only to the undeserving but to the completely corrupt.

This is chapter 2 of the book of Romans. This righteous judgment of God is a decision for or against. Now you can guess where it is going. It is a tribunal; it is a court. I will say it again, if you do not understand this context you will not understand Romans. In the divine court the just Judge judges, and His judgment is right. That is the whole book when you look at it.

If you look at other words that occur in the book of Romans, you will find “judgment” three times, four times if you include chapter 1:32, judge twice, judges four times, and just one time. Over and over there is a clear theme. But in the end, all of these judgments are right, all of these judgments are just, all of these judgments are equitable.

Now I want to stop for a moment with that word. I am almost done with this word equity. The world has gone crazy with this word “equity.” You hear it at every turn. They have forgotten equality. What is equitable? You know, equitable just means “fair and impartial.” Only God is equitable.

I am going to tell you another little secret about business. I fought as much as I could fight, and I am thankful that I am retired. I fought that we would not get diversity and inclusion statements written up by all the young partners. I would submit this so we are equitable. I have a story for you; man is never equitable. Those who have been discriminated in the past against, and they have been terribly, when they get power, they will become the ones who discriminate, and they will not be equitable. Only God is fair; only God is impartial. He judges with a righteous judgment.

There is a story in the Bible about the widow and the unjust judge in Luke 18:1-8. You are probably familiar with it, for it is a lesson on prayer. The Lord said in verse 6: “And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge says. (Remember, this is about an unjust judge.) And the unjust judge said in verse 5 about this widow who continued to come to him and appeal to him because the widow was annoying him. That is the right word, “annoys me.” “I will avenge her that she may not perpetually come and completely harass me.” Now this does not sound like someone I want to know very well. He gives in because she will not give up. She continued to press this unjust judge. The lesson is not that when the Lord is talking here that this judge is like God. I think Christians say, “This is comparison.” This is not comparison; this is “contrast.” When the Lord spoke in verse 7-8, He said, “And shall not God at all avenge His elect, who cry to Him day and night, and he bears long with them?” What a difference between the righteous judge and the unjust judge. What a contrast there is!

Consider David who fell because he numbered the people, and it was a great sin before God. Now, you might ask yourself, why was that a great sin before God? It is because God never wants us to count on our own strength. He never intended for us to count on our own resources. He thought coming to the living God where all the resources that are provided; we would have everything we need. But David thought it smart, and he counted and numbered the people. That was human strength. That was human wisdom, and God judged David. He repented, thank God for that! He said, “Let me fall under the hand of God and not under the hand of man.” He meant,

“Let me be judged under the hand of the perfect and righteous Judge, and never be judged under the hand of unrighteous man.” That was his conclusion.

Brothers and sisters, be thankful when you come to this chapter that you realize you are under the judgment of the righteous judge not the unjust judge who just wants you to stop bothering him, and leave him alone. “Do not keep coming to me, hassling me day after day with your menial request.” Can you imagine if God were like that? That is Luke 18. Thank God we have a Lord who is completely just, and He does everything according to His righteousness, and everything the unjust judge does is according to his selfish judgment.

What is important in chapter 2 is understanding that we are not talking about man’s judgment. Man’s judgment is flawed. Look at verse 2 this is man’s judgment instead of God.

Romans 2:1: “Therefore thou art inexcusable O man, everyone who judges, for in that in which thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.”

Now we do not like that, do we? But this is truth. Those of us that so quickly judge our brothers and sisters and so quickly expose ones are the very ones that, in fact, do the same thing. We are guilty of our own judgment. That is what the Apostle Paul wrote.

Then comes that heart cry in verse 3: “And thinkest thou this, O man, who judgest those who do such things and practisest them thyself, that thou shall escape the judgment of God?”

Do you really think we can escape the judgment of God? Now this word “practices” and the word in chapter 1:32, “you practice the same things” means “completely corrupt.”

Now I have a bad habit, and I would admit my sins before you. Every once in a while I catch myself, and I am still doing it, even though I told myself, “Stop doing it!” And I say to people I meet in the world, the neighbors, and others, “He is a good man,” or “she is a good woman.” After I read chapter 2 of Romans, I am not sure I can say that anymore. I am sorry if that offends you to the core, but there is no such thing as a good man or a good woman in this world. According to God’s just viewpoint, according to His righteous viewpoint, according to His divine viewpoint, no one is good. Notice in the next chapter it says, “no, not one” (v. 13). That is the verdict. *That is the verdict*. That is the divine verdict. The guilty cannot be the judge. We would just judge in our own light which is not light. We cannot escape God’s judgment. We discover that God’s judgment is according to truth (v. 2). It is the only truth.

We also have a saying that has become pretty popular. I despise it by the way. Where we say, “This is *my* truth.” What does that mean? Anything can be your truth, but is it God’s truth? My truth—what a reckless saying. “Well, it is *my* truth.” That is the problem. It says, “according to God’s truth.” What a difference! That is righteous judgment. The next person that says to me, “This is my truth,” I think I will yell at them and lose my righteousness. Stewart says, “Don’t do that, brother.” You are right, that would probably be wrong. It would not be according to the righteous judgment of God. But that has become a popular thing.

His judgment is according to his truth, infallible truth, righteous truth, truth that cannot be questioned. You remember, Paul told Pilate when he stood before him, condemned by this unjust

world, "I come to be a witness of the truth, and those who hear me know." And Pilate did not have a clue. He said, "What is truth?" The Lord so dishonored this power of the world of Rome that he did not even answer him. Truth comes from one place and one place alone; that is the secret of God's judgment. May the Lord help us.

God's Mercy

But now I want to share with you some very good news. Understand that embedded in this discussion of the righteous judgment of God is the mercy of God.

Look at Romans 2:4; what a wonderful verse this is: "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads thee to repentance?"

How wonderful! Even in the midst of so righteous judgment, even in the midst of so clear judgment based on the truth, even in the midst of what is dead right, if I can use that word, God shows mercy to those who will receive it. He says, "Do you not know it is the goodness of God that leads you to repentance?" When God opened your eyes, when you believed in the Lord Jesus, your salvation was a tremendous miracle, an unspeakable miracle. Something happened to you that does not happen to most of the world. Your eyes were opened, and in a moment you saw the goodness of God. It led you to repentance, and you bowed the knee to the Lord of heaven and earth. And you said to Him, at least in your heart, "Your judgment is right, and your mercy is unspeakable." Did you know that? It is the goodness of God that leads you to repentance.

Those dear brothers and sisters in Pakistan all gave to Jack and me their brief testimonies the first day we shared with them. And they all said, "We repented." How good that is! And it registered with me. The Lord opened their eyes; it was the goodness of God that opened their eyes, and in the midst of justice, a just righteous judgment, they saw something. Their eyes being opened, they repented, and they have enjoyed salvation ever since. Do you get it? Thank God!

When you look in the Bible, even in the most dark stories, there are moments of mercy that tell us what our God is like. He has every right to judge us; we are totally corrupt. There is not a good man among us; there is not a good woman among us, and yet in that judgment He extends His goodness to us. And we believe, we repent, and we discover the mercy of God in judgment. That is one thing I want you to see and wish you would see.

The Wrath of God

There is another road we can take or you might say, "There is another avenue we can take." I am afraid many of us take it. Look at verse 5: "But according to thy hardness and impenitent heart, (notice the surgical precision of these words that Paul uses.) treasurest up to thyself wrath, in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God."

Brothers and sisters, have you experienced the goodness of God? Have you bowed the knee in repentance to the Lord Jesus? Have you taken Him as your life and the solution for everything in your life? If you have, you have experienced a great miracle. Or are you resistant to the Lord, and you are treasuring up wrath for yourself? Can you imagine! Many of us treasure money. Many of us treasure homes and things we own, but the problem is that a people who do not see the

righteous judgment of God treasure up for themselves wrath, and in the day of the wrath of God, they get their inheritance. Can you imagine! I think this is the contrast that is tremendous when we look at it. It shows us that there are two roads for every human being. What road will you take?

Griffith Thomas said something that is so clear, I will never forget it. He said, "The blackest sin is not righteousness violated but mercy despised. How many times have we treasured up wrath? How many times have we turned on the mercy of God? How many times have we said, "No, to the hand of the goodness of God?" This is chapter 2 of Romans. This is the light in the judgment. May the Lord help us.

The Basis of Judgment

The third thing I would like us to look at is the basis of judgment. What does this righteous Judge base His judgment on? This is important because I think when you see it, you will understand how thorough, how right, how righteous, how just is His judgment.

In Romans 2:6 it says, "Who shall render to each according to his works:"

You may not have thought much of that statement, but if you think about it, that is the most fair statement you can imagine. God is not going to render to you according to what people say about you or do not say about you; God is going to render to you according to your works. Can there be anything more fair than that? There cannot be. Remember that is equity, that is fairness. This is our God. You will not be judged based on somebody else's works. I know you do not want to be judged based on my works, and I will tell you the truth, I do not want to be judged based on your works. But if I am judged based on my works, it is righteous judgment. I think even at the end when every knee bows and every tongue confesses, they will inarguably say, "This is right. You were just."

We have just been reading in Luke 16, and even the fellow who finds himself on the wrong side of Hades over that chasm, does not argue with his sentence. Did you notice that? He appeals to Father Abraham and says, "Just come over, dip your finger in the water, touch my tongue, and help me in my terror." That is what he said. Brother Abraham could not and would not. And then he says, "Father Abraham, I have five brothers; please send one from among the dead to my brothers and warn them so they will not come into this terror." And the Lord said, "Even if one should rise from the dead, (and Lazarus was raised from the dead,) they would not believe him." The Lord was raised from the dead. Did the whole world fall at His feet, believing? No one will question in that day the righteous judgment of God. No one will dare question it.

The Standard of Fairness

So number one He renders to each according to his works. It is based on what you did. It is not what you said; it is what you did. It is your works. You can say all kinds of things, but what you do is important. What we do in this life is important. This is abject fairness. There are two possibilities when you look at this in Romans 2.

In Romans 2:7 you will see the two possibilities. "To them who, in patient continuance of good works, seek for glory and honour and incorruptibility, life eternal." You say that is good. Sounds like the gospel, right?

Verse 8: "But to those that are contentious (well that is me for sure) and are disobedient to the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there shall be wrath and indignation and tribulation and distress on every soul of man that worketh evil, both of the Jew first and to Greek."

Now you think about this. This is the definition of fairness. God is fair. Get out of your mind what the world tells us when they try to silence us believers and say, "God is not fair to judge people." God is absolutely fair. There is no one more fair, and that is what Romans 2 teaches. This is the standard of fairness.

We look in verse 10: "But glory and honour and peace to every one that works good" (as we just read, both to Jew first and Greek.)

All that you have to do, and this is the secret, is to do good. You get it? Now here is the question. Can you do good? *Can you do good?* That is the question. It is impossible for us to do good. We cannot do good. It is impossible for us in our good works to please God. I always think of James when he explained the terror of the Old Testament. He said, "When it comes to the law, if you keep the whole law, and you fail in one point, you are guilty of all." Can you imagine! Do you think you have that kind of goodness? Have you ever failed? *Have you ever failed?* I would dare say you could count the times in a day, and there might be more than you expect. There is no good man, but in his counsel what Paul reveals is absolutely right. Those that do good, there is eternal life. That is not a contradiction. The secret is that they cannot in themselves. Those that do evil will be judged. Can there be a more fair standard? Do you understand that? I think that is absolutely true.

Not only is God fair, God is impartial. Now I do not want to offend anybody, so maybe I will just mention myself. I am not impartial; you know that. I have favorites. *I have favorites.* I think it was G. Cambell Morgan that said, "God has no favorites." But we are not impartial. Sometimes I see brothers and sisters in the assembly, I will not mention any names, and they have their favorites, and they are always talking to their favorites. God is completely impartial in His judgment. Can there be anything more equitable than that?

If you read Romans 2:11, you will begin to understand: "For there is no acceptance of persons with God." He is completely fair; He is completely impartial, and this is the basis of His judgment. That is righteous. I wish I could be completely fair and completely impartial, but at least by this time I am beginning to come to the conclusion that it is not possible with me, but it is possible with God. Thanks for that!

He goes on to talk about this impartiality in verse 12 and it says, "For as many have sinned without the law shall perish also without the law." That is very impartial, isn't it? If you do not have the law, you will not have to be judged by the law. That is the definition of impartiality.

Then it goes on to say, "For as many has sinned under the law shall be judged by law." In other words, those Jews that have the law, will be judged according to law. To those who do not

have it they will not be judged by it; those who do have it will be judged by; that is complete divine impartiality. You need to see that; it is the basis of God's judgment.

In verse 13 it says, "For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified."

Now I will have you know that verse 13 is a very controversial verse in Romans because some people say that it implies another way to be justified, but it is *not* implying that. It is a statement of fact, for the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law are justified. Now understand what that is saying. We cannot be justified any way except through the justification of faith in the Lord Jesus. That is the only way. The reason being, because you cannot be a doer of the law (as we spoke about in James). You may take a wack at this, we like to say, but on your third or fourth wack you might strike out. That is the secret of Romans 2.

This controversial verse, according to commentators, is not at all implying that you can be just before God in any way. It is not even implying it. It is saying, "If you did the whole law, if you kept the whole law, if you *could* keep the whole law, you might be able to be justified before God. That is all it is saying. The basis is completely impartial. And it seems that when you look at this, you begin to believe and think that somehow this is another way besides Christ. Brothers and sisters, Romans is absolutely clear on this. There is no other way but through Christ. There is no other way to go through the righteous judgment of God except in Christ. There is no other way to live for the Lord but through Christ. That is the whole letter of the book of Romans.

So when you look at this, you begin to understand God's basis is completely fair and completely impartial. There is one standard for judgment. When you look at verse 16 it says, "God shall judge the secrets of man, according to my glad tidings, by Jesus Christ."

I do not know if you notice what Paul inserted. He said, "According to my glad tidings." Now when he wrote about it in chapter 1:16, he said, "God's glad tidings." But now he says something that I think is of spectacular importance: "Of my glad tidings." There comes a day, brothers and sisters, when the glad tidings of the gospel of God, which is the power of God to salvation, becomes your glad tidings. If it does not become your glad tidings, you will never enter into the reality of the Christian life. Can you say like the Apostle Paul said, "In all confidence that you shall by the standard of fairness, the standard of impartiality be judged according to my glad tidings?" That is the secret in this.

There are four phrases that I want you to notice. Remember, I told you the importance of noticing repeated words.

In chapter 2:2 it says, "This impartial judgment of God is according to truth."

Verse 6: "It is according to man's works." You have to notice that. You will not be judged on any other standard.

Verse 10: It is according to absolute impartiality; God is no respecter of persons.

Verse 16: It is according to my glad tidings. This is the secret of Romans 2. This is the basis of His judgment.

The Judgment of the Jews

The last part of Romans 2 has to deal with the judgment of the Jews. I want to tell you that this is particularly brutal. You have to read this with understanding. There are three lists of five and I want you to try to discover those yourself, because the Jews seem to have had an advantage. The Jews seem to be special. Now I know there are those who say that the Jews are special. They had the law, which was not the problem; it was what they did with the law when you think of the righteous judgment of God. So the last part specifically deals with the judgment of the Jews. In chapter 1 we were specifically dealing with the judgment of the Gentiles.

Now just because the Jews had the law, they had the tabernacle, they had the temple, they had the Holy God appearing to them through Moses, they do not have any advantage. You would think it is unfair because look what they had, and look what we did not have. As a matter of fact unbelievers will say, "It is unfair that anyone that did not hear the gospel can somehow be judged. "How can God do that? And you call Him fair and impartial?" It is because when you look at the previous part, it talks about a law of the conscience. It talks about natural law. That law is in every man's heart and every woman's heart, and they do what is right according to what is written in their heart. I cannot tell you how many people have said to me, "What about that lost tribe in the Rainforest of Brazil? How can you hold them to the same judgment? It is simple. Paul said in his very, very clear word, "It is the law of conscience." Every man and woman has within them the law of conscience. You do not have to think the Jews are special because they had the law; I did not have any law, so how can God judge me? Doesn't that sound logical? Maybe for an engineer it sounds logical. How can God judge me? Because you had in you the law of conscience, and every Jew has in them the law of conscience. In addition every Jew has the law of God, and every Jew has all that God revealed to them, and when you read this ending part, you see what He says of the Jews. It speaks of the privileges.

"They rested in the law" (verse 17).

"They make their boast in God" (verse 17).

"They knowest the will of God" (verse 18).

"They approvest the things that are more excellent" (verse 18).

"They were instructed out of the law" (verse 18).

What privilege! People talk about certain ones of us who have privilege today. It appears that they had more privilege than the Gentiles. But no, they did not because of the law of conscience. But then it says that they even boasted in their privilege. It goes on to say in those five sayings, "Thou thyself are the leader of the blind" (verse 19). That is what they boasted in. "We are the leader of the blind."

Not only that, they said, "We are a light to those in darkness" (verse 19b).

Not only that, "We are an instructor of the foolish" (v. 20),

"Not only that, we are a teacher of babes" (v. 20b).

“Not only that, you have a form of knowledge and truth in the law” (v. 20c).

What privilege they had! But then God questioned them. I want you to read that last part when you go home. There are five questions by God, and they are searing cross-examinations. This is the divine court, and in the divine court the searing cross-examination says, “Is this true? Is this true of you?” You know, all lawyers, all prosecuting lawyers often use questions in their cross-examinations in the court. They say, “Mr. Jones, where were you on the night of May 14th? And Mr. Jones, especially where were you from 9-11 P. M. that evening?” And your answer may seal your fate.

There are five questions; five direct questions. “Thou that teaches another, dost thou teach thyself?” (21a)” “Thou that preaches not to steal, dost thou steal?” (v. 21-6). You remember what it says in Malachi in chapter 3:1-8: “Do you rob God?” They robbed God of tithes and offerings.

Again it says, “Thou that sayest man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery?” (v. 22). They were a nation of adulterers. Now if you think that is too hard on the Jews, I will not apologize because that is what God found in the Jews. Even though they had all these privileges and all these advantages, they ended up being a nation of adulterers.

He went on to say, “Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?” (v. 22b). The reason the Jews were sent into captivity was because they became idol worshipers like the nations. Do you think their judgment is just?

“Thou who boastest in the law, dost thou by your transgression become a law breaker.” (v. 23). Do you understand this? This is searing and searching cross-examination, and the end of it is that they were wholly guilty before God.

Outwardness or Inwardness

Then again we come to the mercy of God. In the last two verses we come to the mercy of God.

Verses 28-29: “For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, neither that circumcision which is outward in flesh; but he is a Jew who is so inwardly; and circumcision of the heart, in spirit, not in letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.”

Now do you know what this is saying? In the end, God is looking for inward reality. I will never forget what Brother Kaung used to say to us: “Do we have the inward reality?” The difference between Christianity in the New Testament and the Old Testament is inwardness and not outwardness. It said in these verses I read to you that you have the form of the law, you have the outward form. Your problem is outwardness.

Now brothers and sisters, when I think of believers, isn't many of our problems the same? Isn't it outwardness? The concluding salvo of Romans chapter 2 is, “Do you have outwardness or do you have inwardness?” You remember what it says in Jeremiah 31:32: “I will write my law in their hearts and in their minds. They shall know God. No one will have to teach them.” This is the secret at the end of Romans 2.

Brothers and sisters, We need to appeal to the Lord: "Do we have the inward reality?" If we don't, we will miss the mark. What is the inward reality? It is Christ, Christ in us the hope of glory. God put you in Christ. We live because His life is in us. The whole understanding of the Christian life is inwardness not outwardness. If we live according to form and religion, we will be guilty of the righteous judgment of God. But in the mercy of God, He has made another way if we allow Him in His goodness to reveal Himself and work into us that inward life and inward character. Through that inward life and inward character, we will escape the judgment of God. That is the message of Romans.

Father, we thank You for how complete Your Word is even when we cannot explain it. We bow to it. We say this is truth, this is right, this is righteous. We ask You, Lord, to be merciful to us. We pray for everyone that has not come to know You that that moment the goodness of God will come to them and lead them to repentance. We ask that everyone of us that are yours would not be living an outward life according to rules and doctrines and outward things, but we would allow the Holy Spirit to do within us that inward work, and that Christ in all His fulness we would experience living in us. That is the secret, and how we ask You to do that. In Your precious name. Amen.