

**Sermon Title: The Moral Person is Under the Sentence of Condemnation, Part 1-2**

**Sermon Text: Romans 2:1-16**

**Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to understand why the moralist, ethical, religious, and good person is judged.**

**Sermon Proposition: There are 6 reasons why the moralist is under condemnation.**

**Introduction:** “Throughout history many pagan individuals and societies have held high standards of conduct. As F. F. Bruce points out, the Roman philosopher Seneca, a contemporary of Paul,

*‘might have listened to Paul’s indictment and said, “Yes, that is perfectly true of great masses of mankind, and I concur in the judgment which you pass on them – but there are others, of course, like myself, who deplore these tendencies as much as you do.”*

*Paul imagines someone intervening in terms like these, and he addresses the supposed objector ... How apt this reply would have been to a man like Seneca! For Seneca could write so effectively on the good life that Christian writers of later days were prone to call him “our own Seneca.” Not only did he exalt the great moral virtues; he exposed hypocrisy, he preached the equality of all men, he acknowledged the pervasive character of evil, ... he practiced and inculcated daily self-examination, he ridiculed vulgar idolatry, he assumed the role of a moral guide. But too often he tolerated in himself vices not so different from those which he condemned in others – the most flagrant instance being his connivance at Nero’s murder of his mother Agrippina. (Romans [London: Tyndale, 1967], pp. 86, 87)’*

In his *Dialogue with Trypho*, the second-century Christian Justin Martyr reports his Jewish opponent as saying, “They who are the seed of Abraham according to the flesh shall in any case, even if they be sinners and unbelieving and disobedient towards God, share in the eternal kingdom.”

Even the unregenerate have the basic knowledge of good and evil built into them and into society. Consequently, many people today recognize and seek to uphold the moral standards of Scripture and profess to be Christians. But also like Seneca, because they are not true believers in God, they lack the spiritual resources to maintain that divine morality in their lives and are unable to restrain their sinfulness. They trust in their baptism, in their church membership, in their being born into a Christian family, in the sacraments, in high ethical standards, in orthodox doctrine, or in any number of other outward ideas, relationships, or ceremonies for spiritual and even eternal safety.”

(The MacArthur New Testament Commentary Romans 1-8, Moody Press, Chicago, 1991, pp. 112-113)

**I. The moral person demonstrates an innate knowledge of right or wrong. V.1**

- A. The indictment of a moral person because of knowledge, a knowledge of right or wrong. V.1a
- B. The identification of the moral person because of a knowledge of right or wrong. V.1b

Who is Paul talking to? Any person who judges others or the heathen/pagan in (1:18-32) (2:9-10) references both Jews and Gentiles. It is sufficient to say that this is a man or woman who knows right from wrong, they have moral or religious discernment. This section starts with man judging others, but ends with God judging them.

It is a universal temptation to exaggerate the faults of others while minimizing our own sin. (Matt 7:1-3)

- C. The indorsement of the moral person because of a knowledge of right or wrong. V.1c

The ability to make moral or ethical judgments is right, God approves of it. Everyone ought to be able to look at another man and say, “That is right or that is wrong.” In (1:32) the pagan did something of which they approve, the moralist did something of which they disapprove, this 2<sup>nd</sup> reaction is worst. (Matthew 5:20-22, 27-28; 15:1-3)

**James 3:1** My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.

**Luke 18:21** And he said, "All these things I have kept from my youth."

- D. The inclination of the moral person because of a knowledge of right or wrong. V.1d
  - 1) They may have done all but some.
  - 2) They may have done sin inwardly but not outwardly.
  - 3) They sin against the light of truth. (1:21)

## II. The moral person demonstrates an innate understanding of truth for right or wrong. V.2-3

- A. The judgment of God is according to the truth. V.2a  
Oida means commonly known, awareness or knowledge. God's truth will be used to judge the moral or all for that matter.  
**1 Corinthians 4:3** But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. **4** For I know nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord. **5** Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.  
**Hebrews 4:12** For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. **13** And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things *are* naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must give* account.  
**1 Samuel 16:7** But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For *the LORD does not see* as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."
- B. The judgment of God is according to those who practice such things. V.2b  
Everything God does is by nature, right and according to the truth (**Romans 3:4; 9:14**) God is not capable of doing that which is not right or that which is not true.
- 1) David's statements  
**Psalms 9:4** For You have maintained my right and my cause; You sat on the throne judging in righteousness.  
**Psalms 9:8** He shall judge the world in righteousness, And He shall administer judgment for the peoples in uprightness.
  - 2) Psalmist statement  
**Psalms 96:13** before the LORD. For He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with righteousness, And the peoples with His truth.
  - 3) Isaiah's statement  
**Isaiah 45:19** I have not spoken in secret, In a dark place of the earth; I did not say to the seed of Jacob, 'Seek Me in vain'; I, the LORD, speak righteousness, I declare things that are right.
- There is always a distortion in human perception, but never any in God's perceptions.
- C. The judgment of God is inescapable. V.3
- 1) This misperception is due to man's false logic. V.3a  
Do you think or suppose you are going to escape the judgment of God. Any man who thinks that is a victim of false reasoning.  
Logizomai (suppose) carries the idea of calculating or estimating (It is related to the English term logic). The moralist falsely calculates his own sinfulness and guilt.
  - 2) This misrepresentation is due to man's false view of self and their sin.  
Donald Grey Barnhouse gives a contemporary and forceful paraphrase of this verse. "You dummy – do you really figure that you have doped out an angle that will let you go up against God and get away with it? You don't have a ghost of a chance."  
The question, If man cannot escape his own judgment, how can he escape the divine judgment of God. (**Hebrews 2:2-3; 12:25-29**)  
**Matthew 23:27** "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead *men's* bones and all uncleanness.  
Dr. Barnhouse continues by commenting, "There is no escape. Do you understand? No escape – ever. And this means you – the respectable person, sitting in judgment upon another fellow creature, and remaining unrepentant yourself."  
(Exposition of Bible Doctrine, Vol 2, God's Wrath) [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1953. p.18]

### III. The moral person demonstrates an innate guilt about right or wrong. V.4-5

Do you despise (kataphroneo) means “to think down on, or underestimate the true value of someone or something.” They ignore the provisions of God, to escape His judgment. From the silence of God men draw false conclusions about their sin.

Every willful sin is an attitude and act of contempt for the goodness of God. Intentional sin takes lightly and presumes upon God’s character. (**Genesis 6**)

**2 Peter 2:5** and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, *one of eight people*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly;

**2 Peter 3:9** The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

A. Despising the riches of God’s **goodness**. V.4a

This refers to the kindness of God, dealing with the benefits God gives to mankind. This character trait of kindness is reflected in His children by creation, and by New Birth as fruit of the Spirit.

**Galatians 5:22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

B. Despising the riches of God’s **forbearance**. V.4b

Comes from the Greek (anoche), which means “to hold back as of judgment. “It sometimes is used of a truce, which involves cessation of hostilities between warring parties. God’s forbearance with mankind is a kind of temporary divine truce.

C. Despising the riches of God’s **patience**. V.4c

Translates “makrothumia,” which was sometimes used of a powerful ruler who voluntarily withheld vengeance on an enemy or punishment of a criminal.

**Psalms 33:5** He loves righteousness and justice; The earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.

**Psalms 52:1** <To the Chief Musician. A Contemplation of David when Doeg the Edomite went and told Saul, and said to him, "David has gone to the house of Ahimelech."> Why do you boast in evil, O mighty man? The goodness of God *endures* continually.

**Psalms 107:8** Oh, that *men* would give thanks to the LORD *for* His goodness, And *for* His wonderful works to the children of men!

**Psalms 119:68** You *are* good, and do good; Teach me Your statutes.

**Psalms 145:9** The LORD *is* good to all, And His tender mercies *are* over all His works.

**Job 12:10** In whose hand *is* the life of every living thing, And the breath of all mankind?

D. Despising the riches of God’s **objective**. V.4d

The purpose or objective of God’s kindness; is not to excuse men of their sin but to convict them of it and lead them to repentance. “Metanoia” has the basic meaning of changing one’s mind about something or someone.

**1 Thessalonians 1:9** For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,

**Luke 13:1** There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. **2** And Jesus answered and said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all *other* Galileans, because they suffered such things? **3** "I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. **4** "Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all *other* men who dwelt in Jerusalem? **5** "I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish."

E. Despising the riches of God's **wrathful** judgment. V.5  
Why are people ignorant of God's intention to be kind? And why do they despise it? It is because of their stubbornness (hardness) skleroteta English word ("sclerosis") and their unrepentant hearts.

- 1) The new heart promised.  
**Ezekiel 36:26** "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.
- 2) Divorce is a result of hardness of heart  
**Matthew 19:8** He said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.
- 3) Pride is a result of hardness of heart  
**Mark 3:5** And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched *it* out, and his hand was restored as whole as the other.
- 4) Rejection of the Gospel is a result of hardness of the heart.  
**Hebrews 3:8** Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness,  
**Hebrews 3:15** while it is said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."  
**Hebrews 4:7** again He designates a certain day, saying in David, "Today," after such a long time, as it has been said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts."

Man in either case human reasoning or ignoring the truth, they are storing up God's wrath against them. Just think that every thought, word, and deed of man outside of Christ, is storing up wrath.

The righteous judgment of God, will be revealed at the Great White Throne of Judgment.  
**Revelation 20:10** The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet *are*. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. **11** Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. **12** And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. **13** The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. **14** Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. **15** And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

Examples of Past and Present Judgment of God:

- 1) Garden
- 2) Cain and Able
- 3) Flood
- 4) Tower of Babel
- 5) Wilderness Wandering
- 6) 400 years of silence Malachi to Matthew
- 7) Cleansing of the Temple
- 8) The Cross
- 9) Ananias and Sapphiria
- 10) 7 Churches of Revelation
- 11) Tribulation Period
- 12) Millennial Kingdom
- 13) Great White Throne of Judgment

**2 Peter 3:7** But the heavens and the earth *which* are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

**2 Timothy 4:1** I charge *you* therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom:

**2 Thessalonians 1:7** and to *give* you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, **8** in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Matthew 13:41** "The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, **42** "and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. **43** "Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

**Hebrews 10:31** It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

#### IV. The moral person demonstrates an innate awareness of deeds that are right or wrong. V.6-10

A. The saved and unsaved will be rewarded according to their deeds. V.5-6

The Word of God consistently teaches that God's judgment and the handing out of rewards or punishment is always on the basis of man's deeds or works. (Salvation is not based on man's deeds or works.)

**Psalm 62:12** Also to You, O Lord, *belongs* mercy; For You render to each one according to his work.

**Proverbs 24:12** If you say, "Surely we did not know this," Does not He who weighs the hearts consider *it*? He who keeps your soul, does He *not* know *it*? And will He *not* render to *each* man according to his deeds?

**Isaiah 3:10** "Say to the righteous that *it shall be* well *with them*, For they shall eat the fruit of their doings.

**John 17:10** "And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them.

**John 5:28** "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice **29** "and come forth-- those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

**2 Corinthians 5:10** For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

**1 Corinthians 3:8** Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.

**Romans 14:12** So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.

**Matthew 16:27** "For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.

There are 2 distinct groups of people addressed in this section of Scripture: the saved (**vv7, 10**) and the unsaved (**vv 8, 9**). The works and deeds of the saved are not the basis of their salvation but they are the evidence of it. Saved people are not perfect and are susceptible to sin, yet there is an undeniable pattern of righteousness in their lives. (**James 2:14-20, 26**)

**Ephesians 2:10** For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

B. The saved will be rewarded with eternal life. V.7, 10

"The subjective basis for salvation is faith alone, with nothing added. But the objective basis of salvation is manifested in the demonstrated godly works that the Holy Spirit leads and empowers believers to perform. For this reason alone, good deeds are a perfectly valid basis for God's judgment."

**Matthew 7:16** "You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?

**Matthew 7:20** "Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

While judgment is based on works, salvation is not based on works. We are only able to produce good works because God produces them in us. (**Jer 31:31-33; Eph 2:8-10**)

**Psalm 115:1** Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, But to Your name give glory, Because of Your mercy, Because of Your truth.

**1 Timothy 1:15** This *is* a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. **16** However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.

**Philippians 2:12** Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;

Outward godly works are the evidence of inner transformation, as a result of faith in Jesus Christ.

Characteristics of salvation are:

- 1) Seek to reflect God's **glory** (**1 Cor 10:31**)
- 2) Seek to reflect God's **honor** (**Matt 25:31**)
- 3) Seek to reflect God's **immortality** (**1 Cor 15:53**)

C. The unsaved will be rewarded with **eternal works**. V.8, 9

If a person is not saved, there will not be evidence of good or godly works in their life.

Their life will be barren of righteousness.

Characteristics of the unsaved:

- 1) The 1<sup>st</sup> characteristic of the unsaved is selfish ambition.  
This is the idea of a hireling, or mercenary, who does his work simply for money, without regard for the issues or the harm he or she may be doing. Everything they do is for the purpose of pleasing and serving self.
- 2) The 2<sup>nd</sup> characteristic of the unsaved is disobedience to truth.  
They are rebellious, by nature.
- 3) The 3<sup>rd</sup> characteristic of the unsaved is they obey unrighteousness.

No one lives in a moral and spiritual isolation cage. They are either godly or ungodly, righteous or unrighteous.

**Matthew 6:24** "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

**Revelation 3:15** "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. **16** "So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.

To such people the wrath of God (orge) signifying the strongest kind of anger, that which reached a fervent pitch, then is when God's goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering is fully exhausted.