

240616am Sermon Transcript

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Romans 2:1-11

(This sermon transcript is an extract of a video recording of the full service. The numbering is auto-applied and reflects the number of minutes into recording that the transcript relates to.)

40:02

We're continuing our series this week in the book of Romans.

41:42

We've had a few weeks break and so you might wonder what's Romans all about?

41:48

Well, Romans is a book all about the good news of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

41:56

It's the most full and extensive summary of how any person can be right with the God of heaven.

42:07

And in the book there are three main sections.

42:11

We're focusing initially on chapters 1 to 8 and in chapters 1 to 8.

42:17

Paul, the author whom God inspires to write the book, is telling to us.

42:23

He's unpacking and explaining the the fullness of this gospel this way in which we can be right with God.

42:31

And in the first three chapters of those first eight chapters that are all about the gospel, Paul is explaining God is telling us why all people need this gospel.

42:45

Maybe you're here this morning and you're wondering, why is it Christians are so excited about the Lord Jesus?

42:50

And why do Christians focus so much on the work of the Lord Jesus?

42:54

Why is his cross so central?

42:58

Well, in this extended section in chapters one to three, Paul is laying the foundation to show us just why the cross of the Lord Jesus matters so very much.

43:08

He is, through the rest of the book going to build a skyscraper as he explains to us what Jesus has come to do.

43:18

And it's going to be high and it's going to be majestic and it's going to be glorious.

43:24

But in these first three chapters, what he's doing is he is building the foundations, and he is building deep foundations to build this skyscraper to show us why we need the Lord Jesus Christ.

43:43

And in order to grasp just what this good news is, we need to know why we need this good news.

43:53

In order to grasp what Jesus came to do, we need to know why it is we need him to do something for us.

43:59

And there are millions who do not understand the cross because they don't see the need of the cross.

44:09

And so in these first three chapters, Paul takes his time to show why all people, whether they are Jews or Gentiles, that's everyone, whether whatever the background they come from, whatever their circumstances, whoever you are this morning, you need this good news.

44:28

So last week we were in chapter one, verses 18 to 32, and we saw that in that first section following Paul's introduction that he explained that God is angry at people because we deny what is true.

44:45

We deny the truth that God is there even though His invisible attributes, the reality that He exists, is proclaimed to us by the created worlds.

44:55

We suppress that truth and deny it.

44:58

And alongside that we worship what we should not worship.

45:03

Rather than worshipping the Creator God who has made all things and all people, we worship the creation that He has made, worshipping things and one another and ourselves rather than Him.

45:18

And that is the heart of what we do when we sin, when we break God's good law.

45:23

And at the end of chapter one in verse 32, there was this summary of what we do, and it reads as follows in chapter one, verse 32.

45:32

Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things, but also approve of those who practice them.

45:48

And now as Paul comes to chapter two, he comes to address something we might do when we hear this description of what people do in chapter one.

46:01

Because someone might listen and say, well, you've described that that people deny that got us there, but I don't deny that got us there.

46:07

And you describe people who do all kinds of awful things in worshipping creation rather than God.

46:13

But that's not me.

46:15

And I'm so thankful, Paul, that you gave this thorough analysis of the evil of people and how truly wicked it is that people deny that God is there, that they know they're doing evil deeds, they continue to do them, and they approve of others that do them.

46:30

But I'm not like that.

46:33

I acknowledge that God is there, I disapprove of the evil of others, and I live a rather good life.

46:43

And how reassuring it is to know that God is not angry with me because I'm not that kind of person.

46:52

That response to Romans chapter one is what Paul is going to address in Romans chapter 2.

47:04

God wants all of us to know that we should not think in that way, that we're either excused or excluded from God's judgments because all of us need to repent and believe in the gospel, including outwardly moral people.

47:21

And that is whom Paul is addressing as he comes to chapter 2.

47:24

Someone who is living an upright and moral life looks down upon the sins of others and says, I'm not like that and thinks they're OK.

47:34

Paul is addressing the judgmental moralist in these verses and he very directly calls them out.

47:44

Did you notice in the opening verses, verses one to three, chapter two, he uses the pronoun you no less than seven times.

47:52

This is a very personal and direct challenge.

47:55

In chapter one, he spoke about they as he spoke about those who are under judgement.

47:59

But now as he comes to chapter two, he speaks about you giving this personal direct challenge and he wants you and I to understand three things.

48:07

And the first is this when we judge others or when you judge others, you condemn yourself.

48:15

Let's in verses one to three, when you judge others, you condemn yourself.

48:20

Paul says you verse one therefore have no excuse you who pass judgment on someone else.

48:27

For at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself because you who pass judgment do the same things.

48:38

Paul is saying that if you judge someone else, you are actually condemning yourself because you do the very same things that you judge others to have done and say they're wrong.

48:51

You're inconsistent, he says.

48:53

You don't apply the same standard to yourselves that you use when you judge others.

49:01

Well, there's a bigger problem that Paul highlights in verse 2.

49:05

Verse two says, now we know that God's judgement against those who do such things is based on truth.

49:12

The bigger problem is that you and I are not the ultimate judge of morality.

49:17

God is and God is not inconsistent.

49:21

He will make fair and accurate judgments.

49:24

They will be, as Paul says, based on truth.

49:27

That is to mean that they will be fair and just.

49:30

And so God sees their sins and he sees your sins.

49:37

And so Paul presses at home in verse three to say, So when you, a mere human being, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment?

49:53

Paul's point is that in the act of judging others, we condemn ourselves.

50:02

What do we do?

50:03

We judge someone else.

50:04

Well, we set a standard for right and wrong.

50:07

We measure others against that standard of right and wrong, and we decide that they have still fallen short.

50:13

But the problem is, we never really apply the same standard to ourselves that we use when we judge others.

50:24

So we hear of the sins of celebrities, and we say tut, tut to their adultery and their greed.

50:31

But do we maintain perfect faithfulness to our spouses and our thoughts?

50:36

Do we long for more and more money in possessions?

50:41

Or we hear of the evil acts of murderers and we cast judgment upon them, but do we entertain anger and bitterness in our hearts?

50:51

Do we strike people down, murdering them in our hearts and with our words?

50:58

Or we drive around in our cars and we judge others for their driving, But is our driving faultless?

51:07

We set a standard for others that we do not keep ourselves and that shows that we are guilty before God.

51:18

There's a great Bible teacher called Francis Schaeffer who when he wanted to press home this point that we are inconsistent in our standards set and he was teaching in the 1950s, sixties and 70s.

51:29

He said, imagine you have a tape recorder hanging around your neck all day, and imagine that tape recorder recorded all of the standards you set for others in their actions and in their words.

51:44

And imagine on the final judgment day that when you stood before God, God took that tape recorder and He used the standard that you set for others to evaluate your own life.

51:56

How would you have done friends?

52:02

On that basis alone, we would all fall short.

52:07

But God's standard by which we will be judged is higher than that which we set for others.

52:15

It's high, friends, and we can forget just how high God standard is when sin is put before us.

52:23

In chapter one and in verse 29 to 31, there was this long list, one of the longest lists in Paul's letters of different sins.

52:31

Let me read it to you, he said, Speaking of those who have turned away from God.

52:37

They said they have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity.

52:42

They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice.

52:46

They are gossips, slanderers, God haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful.

52:51

They invent ways of doing evil.

52:53

They disobey their parents.

52:55

They have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, and no mercy.

53:01

But you know what the problem is, friends?

53:03

When we hear that list of sins, we have selective hearing because we hear things like every kind of wickedness and evil and depravity and murder.

53:17

But we also heard about greed.

53:20

Did we miss that?

53:22

We also heard about envy, how we doing and how we want the things that others have.

53:29

We also heard about gossip.

53:31

Have you ever gossiped?

53:34

We also heard about slander, which of us has a perfect record in how we are spoken of others Friends, the problem is that we do the very things that we condemn in others.

53:53

Our problem isn't that we recognize wrong and sometimes judge it.

53:57

Our problem is that we are inconsistent, unwilling to apply that same standard to us.

54:05

And one day that will be exposed on the day of judgment, we will discover that we are all sinners who stand before a holy God, having no excuse.

54:20

We are all in the same boats.

54:24

And if that's true, then we must be ready for that day when God will judge.

54:30

Which brings us to the second thing we need to see.

54:34

Having highlighted that when we judge others, we condemn ourselves, Paul then says, secondly, God's kindness should lead you to repentance.

54:46

It's in verses four and five.

54:47

God's kindness should lead you to repentance.

54:51

When our eyes are opened to our desperate situation, the right response, the only response is repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ to turn to Christ to look to him and trust in what he has done on the cross and trust in Him alone.

55:13

And Paul starkly warns us in verse four and five that God in his kindness is calling us to repentance, and He should lead us to repentance.

55:27

You know, God's judgment could come today, friends, before we're done this morning in our service, the Lord Jesus Christ would return, and He will judge all people before we get to the next sentence.

55:43

God's judgment could come before you breathe your next breath.

55:48

Eternity could begin for you.

55:52

And if it did, none of us could complain that God had been unfair.

55:57

We would all have to say that we've had enough time.

56:01

We have had every opportunity.

56:03

We have been here to hear God's words.

56:06

And yet the God of heaven see this, friends, the God of heaven is giving you and I the opportunity to repent in this very moment because of his kindness and what kindness God's have.

56:21

Look at this, for God is rich in his kindness, in his forbearance or long-suffering.

56:28

He is extended verse four, and his patience is long and steady, far beyond what is reasonable.

56:37

And because God is kind, you woke up this morning.

56:42

Because God is kind, you came to church today.

56:47

Because God is kind.

56:48

He gave you food to eat this morning.

56:50

So you had energy to be here because God is kind.

56:54

You had transport to get to church because God is kind.

56:58

We are here today to hear his word, Reds.

57:01

And because God is kind, he gave you a functioning mind to respond to his truth.

57:08

And so you and I find ourselves here in this moment living and hearing the living God who is showing us our sin, who is saying that all of us are without excuse.

57:20

And he's saying, turn to me, do not remain as you are.

57:28

That kindness of God should lead us to repentance, should lead us to turn to him.

57:35

Do not show contempt for God's kindness, thinking that God's judgement will not come.

57:42

We've got time.

57:43

It will come later.

57:45

Don't do that, friends.

57:46

Instead, cry out to God.

57:49

Have mercy on me because I am a Sinner in need of your salvation.

57:57

Do not be friends like the person in verse five who is stubborn and will not repent, who hears God's

word, who knows God's truth and yet double S down stealing their hearts against God in stubborn refusal.

58:16

Do not do that, because if you do, Paul says in verse 5, you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of God's wrath.

58:29

That is a fearful thought.

58:34

We accumulate even greater debt in our stubborn response to God's truth, and if we do not turn and trust, we store up wrath like a great quantity of water is stored up behind a dam when there have been floods and friends.

58:58

The water builds and builds and builds until you can feel and and hear the concrete creaking and the joints under strain.

59:08

And it keeps building and building and building until it bursts on the day of judgement.

59:15

And on that day it will be a terrible thing.

59:20

It will be a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a justly angry God.

59:31

Stop testing God's patience.

59:35

Stop stretching God's forbearance.

59:39

Stop counting on God's extended kindness.

59:44

Because, friends, his kindness is rich, but it has a limit.

59:53

When I was at school, I remember doing an experiment where you take a plank of wood and you put it across two of the benches in the science classroom and you load it up with weights.

1:00:06

And what you're doing is you're testing this plank of wood to the point of failure.

1:00:12

So when you put one more weight on.

1:00:15

And the plank finally cracks and the weights fall.

1:00:20

Now when that plank cracks because the weight had become too great, you can't get it back.

1:00:26

You have to discard and start again.

1:00:29

But that's OK because you have multiple planks, the same wood.

1:00:31

And once you have found the limit of the breaking point of that plank of wood, if you have similar ones, you can load up others to just below the limit and know it's going to hold it.

1:00:46

Friends, do not live your life like that.

1:00:50

Do not use your life to test God's patience to the limit.

1:00:56

You only get one life and you do not want to find the limit to God's kindness in how you live, because once it fails, you will face judgment.

1:01:10

And I cannot tell you how long God's kindness will last for you.

1:01:14

Only God knows that in His kindness it will be different for each of us.

1:01:20

So the only thing we can do is not test it and not try it, but instead let the riches of His kindness, let His forbearance and patience lead you to repentance that you trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

1:01:44

When I first heard the gospel, this message clearly preached and explained to me, I was on a camp in Holland and I heard it consistently night after night after night.

1:01:56

And I thought, I know that's true, but I'm going to leave it for now.

1:02:02

I know that's true.

1:02:03

I'm going to leave it for now.

1:02:04

I know that's true, I'm going to leave it for now.

1:02:06

Was there for 10 days, came home and kept on doing that for two further weeks until late one night as I wrestled in my room, I realized I was playing a very dangerous game.

1:02:28

Because none of us knows if tomorrow will come.

1:02:32

None of us knows if judgement will begin today and in the kindness of God.

1:02:40

He gave me that time, but do not count on another day.

1:02:45

He has already been rich in His kindness to you.

1:02:49

Make sure you are right with God today.

1:02:52

Make sure you are trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ.

1:02:56

Turn from your sin.

1:02:57

That's what repentance is.

1:02:58

It says I don't want to live that way anymore.

1:03:01

Way Lord, I want to live your way.

1:03:02

I recognize it's wrong, forgive me of it.

1:03:06

And then look to the Lord Jesus by faith.

1:03:09

Believe in Him, believe that he died for you.

1:03:13

And if you do that, then then and there, you are safe.

1:03:18

Whatever happens, you are safe.

1:03:23

So do not delay.

1:03:25

Do this today.

1:03:26

Make sure you are right with God.

1:03:28

And then Paul presses home the urgency of this with one further direct challenge.

1:03:36

We've seen that as we judge others, we condemn ourselves.

1:03:41

We've seen that God's kindness should lead us to repentance.

1:03:44

And thirdly and finally, if that's all true, then every one of us must choose between 2 paths.

1:03:50

And here's verses 6 to 11.

1:03:53

On the day of God's wrath, God's judgment, God will judge according to what we have done.

1:03:59

That's what Paul says in verse six.

1:04:02

Judgment is coming and judgment will be fair and on that day there'll be no special treatment.

1:04:08

God doesn't show favoritism.

1:04:09

Verse 11.

1:04:11

There is no background that will get you a get out of jail free card on that day.

1:04:17

There are no special privileges or excuses.

1:04:20

Whether you are Jew or Gentile, you cannot bargain with God as He judges on that day.

1:04:27

You can't buy Him over like you would buy over a corrupt judge in a failed state.

1:04:32

God is true and fair and just.

1:04:38

And so in light of that in verses 7 to 10, in light of God's coming judgment, we must choose between two paths for our life.

1:04:49

Now as we seek to understand these verses, we're going to think about two paths that Jesus taught about that are exactly the same.

1:04:56

We taught about them in Matthew Chapter 7.

1:04:58

There are well known verses, Maybe you've heard them before.

1:05:01

In Matthew Chapter 7 verses 13 and 14, Jesus spoke about two paths, 2 roads that begin with two gates.

1:05:10

He said enter through the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction and many enter through it.

1:05:20

But small is the gate and narrow is the road that leads to life and only a few find it.

1:05:28

Jesus saying there is a wide gate with a broad Rd.

1:05:33

that leads to destruction and there is a small gate with a narrow Rd.

1:05:38

that leads to life.

1:05:41

And that same framework is what Paul applies in verses 7 to 10 and he does it with a sandwich.

1:05:49

So verses 7 and 10 are a sandwich.

1:05:53

This is how it works.

1:05:55

Verse 7 and 10 are the outside of the sandwich and they describe the narrow Rd.

1:06:04

the road that leads to life.

1:06:05

We read to those who by persistence in doing good, seek glory, honor and immortality.

1:06:12

He will give eternal life and then down to verse 10.

1:06:16

But glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good, first for the Jew and then for the Gentile.

1:06:24

That's the narrow Rd.

1:06:25

that leads to life in verse 7 and 10.

1:06:27

But then in verses 8:00 and 9:00, in the middle of that you've got the broad Rd.

1:06:31

that leads to destruction.

1:06:33

Look at verse 8:00 and 9:00.

1:06:34

But for those who are self seeking and who reject the truth, follow evil.

1:06:40

There will be wrath and anger.

1:06:42

Verse 9.

1:06:43

There'll be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil, first for the Jew and then for the Gentile.

1:06:50

So it's the same two paths, the narrow one that leads to life and the broad one that leads to destruction.

1:06:57

And then notice there is another pattern in these two roads in these verses, because each of those two roads has the same three elements.

1:07:05

There is an aim to the life of that road.

1:07:08

There is a character of what it looks like, and there is a result at the end of it.

1:07:14

So if you think about the narrow Rd.

1:07:16

in verses 7 and in verse 10, it aims at glory and honor and peace and immortality with God.

1:07:25

That's the goal of that life.

1:07:28

The character of that life is that someone who is walking that life is persistently doing good.

1:07:35

And then the result of that life is that they are given eternal life.

1:07:40

So the name, honor, glory, peace and immortality with God, there's a character of what it looks to walk this life.

1:07:47

It's persistently doing good and there's a result eternal life.

1:07:51

That's the narrow Rd.

1:07:52

But then there's another road and it's the broad road and it's there in verses 8:00 and 9:00.

1:07:59

And the aim of the broad Rd.

1:08:01

is not God word but southward.

1:08:03

It is self seeking.

1:08:05

The character of that broad Rd.

1:08:08

is that you reject the truth and you follow evil.

1:08:12

And then the sad result of that broad Rd.

1:08:15

is wrath, anger, trouble and distress.

1:08:20

And in these verses God is putting before all of us a choice, a question to say which of those paths are you on this morning?

1:08:36

The broad Rd.

1:08:37

is well trodden.

1:08:39

It's a path of someone who isn't a Christian and it's a horrible path to choose in aim and in character and results.

1:08:48

And the narrow Rd.

1:08:50

is the path of the Christian.

1:08:55

We go on to this path.

1:08:57

The gate to this path is repentance and faith.

1:09:00

It's trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ.

1:09:03

That's how we begin on this path.

1:09:06

But then as we walk this path, it's a path of persistently doing good.

1:09:10

That's a description of a believer's life.

1:09:13

It's not the way we join it because it's not salvation by works, but it is what it looks like to walk it, pursuing what is good and right and pure.

1:09:23

And that's what happens in a Christian because the Spirit of God comes and gives us a new heart and new desires, and we repent when we repent and believe.

1:09:33

And we live differently because we've come by faith to the Lord Jesus and he has changed us.

1:09:40

The gate to the narrow path is repentance and faith.

1:09:44

But those who walk that path have lives that persistent good works.

1:09:50

Paul is not saying those works are the basis of our salvation, but he is saying that those works are the evidence of a changed person.

1:10:00

So those are the two paths and the question we need to ask is which are we on today?

1:10:07

And at every stage of our lives we have to keep on choosing the narrow path.

1:10:18

And I was to think about some different ages and stages and how we have to do that.

1:10:21

So children, you are at the beginning of your life, God has shown you great kindness already.

1:10:32

Your your parents might be Christians.

1:10:34

Maybe you've been taught so much at home and you hear so much in church.

1:10:39

But are you choosing that narrow path personally?

1:10:45

Are you coming personally, not relying on your parents faith, but you're coming personally with repentance and faith to the Lord Jesus Christ.

1:10:55

Choose this path young.

1:10:57

Stay on this path each day and by God's grace you will earn eternal life.

1:11:03

You'll be given sorry eternal life as a gift.

1:11:07

Teenagers and young people, you live in a world where many around you are choosing the wide path of self glory, rejecting the truth, and following after evil.

1:11:22

And it can seem so tempting to jump on that path for a time.

1:11:28

It looks fun, it looks exciting, it looks fulfilling, and it might be for a time, but never forget where it leads.

1:11:39

And do not presume that if you choose the wide Rd.

1:11:45

that you'll be able to choose the narrow Rd.

1:11:47

later in life.

1:11:51

There may be no later.

1:11:54

You may become hardened in your stubbornness.

1:11:57

Do not presume upon the kindness and patience of God.

1:12:02

Instead, choose the path that leads to life.

1:12:05

Now repent and believe.

1:12:07

That's the gate, and then seek the glory that lasts in Gods.

1:12:12

Seek honour that matters from God and seek immortality with gods and you will be given eternal life.

1:12:21

Choose that path.

1:12:24

But then, older adults in midlife, the challenge is to keep on choosing the narrow paths.

1:12:32

Keep on living the life of faith, persistently doing goods.

1:12:36

And when you feel the strain, keep going.

1:12:41

And when you find that doing good means far more than you ever imagined, keep on choosing it.

1:12:49

And when others choose a wide path and you drive past their big houses, their shiny cars, and their comfortable lifestyles, do not forget the eternal.

1:13:03

Don't join them in living for a career or comfort or success as your ultimate goal.

1:13:10

The devil wants you to think that's everything, but without Christ, it's nothing.

1:13:16

Stay on the narrow path that leads to life.

1:13:20

Keep on choosing it each day.

1:13:24

And then, senior Saints, you are nearly there.

1:13:31

Eternal life is before you.

1:13:34

Having come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, your long walk of daily obedience is almost over.

1:13:43

You have resolved to seek glory, honor, and immortality, and as you keep on seeking that, you will receive eternal life.

1:13:55

Do not turn back at the last hurdle.

1:14:00

Do not go a different way in those final days, but keep on living the life of faith, Keep on doing good, and the Lord will give you peace in His eternal rest.

1:14:18

Friends, whichever of those stages you find yourself in, keep on choosing the narrow path.

1:14:27

And if you have never chosen it for yourself personally, if you have never entered by the narrow gate of repentance and faith, why not do it today?

1:14:42

We have seen that we are all sinners.

1:14:44

None of us can claim that we are beyond God's judgment.

1:14:50

Use the opportunity of the kindness of God to turn to Him in repentance and take that first step on the life that leads to eternal life.