

BOB HALLMAN - THE EPIC LIFE

To Judge or Not to Judge

Romans 2:1-16

2000

Introduction

Last week we considered the wrath of God that is being revealed against all godlessness and wickedness of men. In chapter 1:18-32, Paul is primarily focusing his attention on unbelieving Gentiles. And I'm sure Paul's Jewish readers were cheering every word!

The Jews believed that everyone else would be judged except the Jewish race. They actually believed that they were immune from God's wrath simply because they were Jews. They never dreamed that they were under the same condemnation. They even took a certain delight in looking on the unbelieving Gentiles with a critical and disdainful eye.

Now Paul anticipates their hypocritical response and spends chapters 2 and 3 confronting their sin of self-righteousness and by showing with great force and clarity that, before God, they are equally guilty and condemned.

I The Unrighteous Judgment of Man

A. Two errors to avoid:

1. **Hypocritical** judgment

Judgment = Krino = "To try, condemn, punish"

a. It is inexcusable (indefensible)

Jews who judge Gentiles hypocritically are without excuse since they are guilty of the same sins.

Religious hypocrites imagine that because they have not actually committed any of the sins mentioned in 1:11-32 that they are free of guilt. The truth is, they may not have overtly committed adultery, but it has happened in their heads. They have not overtly stolen, but their minds have robbed even their loved ones. They have not overtly committed murder, but numerous times the mental knife has plunged.

In Mathew 5-7 in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus exposes the true measure of sin. It's not just the physical act that counts, it is the heart. Bottom line; If I have thought it, I am guilty before God just as much as the person who actually carried out the act.

Application:

The religious hypocrite is extremely judgmental and critical of others. Unfortunately, this kind of ungodly behavior has become the favorite pastime of many Christians.

We can communicate it in a thousand ways:

1. In the tone of our voice
2. By the look in our eyes
3. Through a subtle message of rejection

Matt 7:3-5 "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."

b. It is self-condemning

If a person has enough knowledge to judge others, he has enough knowledge to judge his own true condition.

Illustration: David and Bathsheba

2 Sam 12:5-7 "David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, "As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this deserves to die! He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity." Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man!"

Matt 7:1-2 "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

c. It incurs God's judgment

Prov 16:5 "The LORD detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished."

2. Passive non-judgment

Now, while we are not to make judgments of condemnation, we are to make judgments for identification.

a. We are called to judge**Identification**

Matthew 7:15-20 "Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them."

1 Cor 5:11-13 "But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat. What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked man from among you."

Application:

There is a fine line between condemnation and identification:

1. Motive
 - a. Self-righteous: The motive is fleshly and carnal
 - b. Godly: The motive is love
2. Goal
 - a. Self-righteous: The goal is highlighting someone else's failure
 - b. Godly: The goal is restoration

How can you know the difference? If your judgment leads to:

- a. Prayer on their behalf
- b. Protecting the person's reputation (no gossip)
- c. Confronting the person directly in love (Matthew 18)
- d. Being motivated by the goal of restoring the person to a right relationship with God and others.

If these attitudes and actions are missing from your judgment of others, then you are guilty of self-righteousness and hypocrisy.

II The Marks of Righteous Judgment

A. It is based on truth

Man's judgment is never completely based on the truth, because man never knows the complete truth.

Ps 9:7-8; 96:13 "The LORD reigns forever; he has established his throne for judgment. ... He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his truth."

B. It is characterized by:

1. Kindness

Titus 3:4-5 "But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy."

2. Tolerance

Ps 78:38-39 "Yet he was merciful; he forgave their iniquities and did not destroy them. Time after time he restrained his anger and did not stir up his full wrath. He remembered that they were but flesh, a passing breeze that does not return."

3. Patience

The religious hypocrite actually believes that the kindness, tolerance and patience of God in his life are a kind of divine "wink" at sin. That everything will be all right and that God will overlook our persistent disobedience.

2 Pet 3:9, 15 "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." ... "Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation ..."

C. It leads people toward **repentance**

God's patience is awe inspiring! But some people mistake His kindness, tolerance and patience as weakness, ignorance or apathy. In reality, these qualities are a demonstration of His supreme desire for people to come to a place of repentance -- and place of life! The purpose of the kindness of God is not to excuse men of their sin but to convict them of it and lead them to repentance.

Job 33:27-30 "Then he comes to men and says, 'I sinned, and perverted what was right, but I did not get what I deserved. He redeemed my soul from going down to the pit, and I will live to enjoy the light.' "God does all these things to a man-- twice, even three times--to turn back his soul from the pit, that the light of life may shine on him."

III The Righteous Judgment and Wrath of God

A. It will be **stored** up

Unbelievers are making deposits everyday in a bank account from which he will one day collect -- principal plus interest of the wrath of God.

1. For those with a **stubborn** heart

Stubborn = Sklerotes = "Hardness"

Where we get our medical term "arterial sclerosis" (hardening of the arteries). This is an ideal picture of the spiritual condition of hearts that have become unresponsive and insensitive to God. But where hardening of the arteries may take a person to the grave, hardening of his spiritual heart will take him to hell!

2 Chr 30:8 "Do not be stiff-necked, as your fathers were; submit to the LORD."

Heb 3:13 "But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness."

2. For those with an **unrepentant** heart

Jer 5:3 "O LORD, do not your eyes look for truth? You struck them, but they felt no pain; you crushed them, but they refused correction. They made their faces harder than stone and refused to repent."

B. It will be **fair**

No one will ever be able to stand before God and declare that He has been unfair.

1. Based on what each person has **done**

The basis for salvation is faith alone.

Eph 2:8-9 "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast."

Titus 3:5 "... he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit ..."

But that salvation, if it is genuine, will manifest itself in godly works. For that reason, good deeds are a perfectly valid basis for God's judgment. In other words, salvation is not by works, but it will always produce good works.

Jer 17:10 "I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve."

Believers will have to give an account to God at the Bema Seat of Christ for their works and will be richly rewarded (Rev 22:12).

Unbelievers will have to give an account for their works at the Great White Throne Judgment of God and will be fully judged for their wickedness.

a. To those who persist in doing good

1 Cor 15:58 "Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain."

1. **Eternal** life

a. Those who seek glory

2 Cor 4:16-17 "Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all."

b. Those who seek honor

1 Pet 1:7 "These have come so that your faith-- of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire-- may be

proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed."

c. Those who seek immortality

2 Tim 1:10 "... but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

b. To those who persist in doing evil

1. God's **wrath** and anger

- a. Those who are self-seeking
- b. Those who reject the truth
- c. Those who follow evil

Isa 3:10-11 "Tell the righteous it will be well with them, for they will enjoy the fruit of their deeds. Woe to the wicked! Disaster is upon them! They will be paid back for what their hands have done."

C. It will be **impartial**

When God's divine judgment comes it will be absolutely impartial.

1. **Trouble** and distress for those who do evil

2 Pet 2:9 "... the Lord knows how to ... hold the unrighteous for the Day of Judgment, while continuing their punishment."

Prov 13:21 "Misfortune pursues the sinner, but prosperity is the reward of the righteous."

a. To Jew and Gentile

2. **Glory**, honor and peace for those who do good

1 Pet 1:7 "These [trials] have come so that your faith-- of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire-- may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed."

a. To Jew and Gentile

3. For God does not show **favoritism**

Col 3:25 "Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism."

D. It will be **reasonable**

God's judgment is so perfect that he takes into account an individual's moral perception in rendering judgment.

1. Those who sin apart from the law

a. Will perish apart from the law

People will be held accountable for the knowledge they have, not for what they didn't have. The Gentiles did not have the Law of Moses, as the Jews had, but they had the law of conscience, the distinction between right and wrong engraved on their hearts.

They will be judged by the law of general revelation:

1. What has been made (general revelation)

2. Their conscience

Intuitively, they know the moral standards of God:

He condemns murder, adultery, rape, assault, stealing, lying, etc.

The principle is laid down that men and women are judged by the light that is available to them, not by the light that is not available.

2. Those who sin under the law

a. Will be judged by the law

Jews who have special revelation (the Law, the prophets, and the Word) will be judged based on both general and special revelation.

Paul has demonstrated that the Jews are also in need of salvation.

Though they have the Law, their failure to keep it perfectly has resulted in their justified condemnation before God.

Ps 130:3-4 "If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared."

Conclusion

We need to come to grips with our true condition before God. We are all guilty.

Rom 3:9-12 "What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."

The day of God's wrath and judgment is coming. But it's not too late. It is still possible to "settle out of court" by coming to God, accepting his gift of eternal life through His son Jesus Christ and being forgiven for your sin.

The only way any person, no matter how outwardly moral and religious, can escape God's judgment is to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. By

doing so you will receive the gift of God -- Jesus Christ, who took upon Himself the full penalty of God's wrath so that you might be given abundant life now, and eternal life in the future.

*Copyright, Bob Hallman, 1996-2021, All Rights Reserved.
Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the
New International Version ©1984 by International Bible Society.*