

## Romans Session 26

### Principles of God's Judgment Part 2 (2)

I want to remind you that we have been looking at Paul's description of the principles that is the basis of God's judgment upon sin and the sinful man who refuses to repent and worship the living God.

Those principles as he has listed them are:

Knowledge (1)

Truth (v-2-3)

Guilt (v-4-5)

Deeds (v-6-10)

Impartiality (v-11-15)

Motive (v-16)

We are in the middle of looking at the principle of **Deeds**, and this evening we want to begin with taking a look at Paul's words that speaks of the deeds of the redeemed, and also the deeds of the unredeemed.

*Romans 2:7-10 (NASB)*

<sup>7</sup> *to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life;*

<sup>8</sup> *but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.*

<sup>9</sup> *There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek,*

<sup>10</sup> *but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*

#### THE DEEDS OF THE REDEEMED

*Romans 2:7 (NASB)*

<sup>7</sup> *to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life;*

True salvation is manifested in a believer's **perseverance in doing good**, and the highest good he can do is to **seek for glory, and honor and immortality**.

Although these three terms seem to be used here almost as synonyms, they carry distinct meanings. Together they describe a believer's heavenly perspective and aspiration.

**First**, the highest and most wonderful desire of a believer is **glory**, above all, God's glory.

A person who does not have such a desire deep within him cannot be a true believer. Listen to these words;

*1 Corinthians 10:31 (NASB)*

<sup>31</sup> *Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*

To live to the glory of God is to manifest the very nature of God as a willing vehicle for His own divine working.

A believer also seeks **glory** for himself, not in the fleshly, self-seeking way that is common to fallen human nature, but by looking forward to his sharing God's own glory some day when his salvation is perfected.

*Romans 8:30 (NASB)*

*<sup>30</sup> and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.*

*2 Thessalonians 2:14 (NASB)*

*<sup>14</sup> It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

We know that any, "*momentary, light afflictions is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison.*(2 Cor. 4:17)"

And we also know;

*Colossians 3:4 (NASB)*

*<sup>4</sup> When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.*

In seeking this heavenly glory it is really a seeking of Christ-likeness.

Paul had this in mind when he penned this next passage;

*Philippians 3:10-14 (NASB)*

*<sup>10</sup> that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death;*

*<sup>11</sup> in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.*

*<sup>12</sup> Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.*

*<sup>13</sup> Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,*

*<sup>14</sup> I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

*Philippians 3:20 (NASB)*

*<sup>20</sup> For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;*

*Philippians 3:21 (NASB)*

*<sup>21</sup> who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.*

So we are to be seeking God's glory to shine in and through us, and out of us in a way that transforms us by His power.

Secondly, a true believer seeks **honor**, again not the worldly honor that most men long for but the honor that comes from God, the honor of His saying;

*Matthew 25:21 (NASB)*

*<sup>21</sup> "Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master."*

Thirdly, a true believer seeks **immortality**, the day, the day when his perishable body;

**1 Corinthians 15:53b (NASB)**

***53 must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.***

Paul is not discussing how a person comes to salvation or how God produces Christlikeness in him. He is describing what the life of a true believer is like, pointing out that those divinely-bestowed qualities will eventuate in the final glory of the divinely-bestowed **eternal life**.

John beautifully states that basic truth at the end of his first epistle:

**1 John 5:20 (NASB)**

***20 And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.***

Eternal life is not simply a quantity of life, although by definition it lasts through eternity. But even the unsaved will have eternal existence.

Eternal life, however is first of all a quality of life, the life of God in the soul of man. Speaking of his own eternal life, Paul said;

**Galatians 2:20 (NASB)**

***20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.***

Now Paul's point in the present passage is that a person who possesses the life of God will reflect the true character of God, and that it is on the basis of that reflected godly character that he will be judged.

It is just as impossible for a person having eternal life to indefinitely fail to reflect something of God's character as it would be for him to indefinitely hold his breath.

Eternal life induces spiritual breathing just as surely as physical life induces bodily breathing.

John Murray succinctly noted that "works without redemptive aspiration are dead works. Aspiration without good works is presumption"

Justification by faith alone does not negate works of righteousness in the believer's life. Scripture makes clear that just as surely as we are saved by our faith we will be judged by our works.

When in sovereign grace God receives a sinner at the time of his conversion, He asks nothing but that he believe in Jesus Christ and submit to Him.

But from that moment on, the believer enters into a responsibility of obedience, and the mark of his new spiritual life becomes his obedience to God.

Faith in Christ does not produce freedom to sin and to do as we please but freedom from sin and a new God given desire and capacity to do what pleases Him.

James makes the relationship between faith and works explicitly clear:

*James 2:14-20 (NASB)*

<sup>14</sup> *What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?*

<sup>15</sup> *If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food,*

<sup>16</sup> *and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?*

<sup>17</sup> *Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.*

<sup>18</sup> *But someone may well say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works."*

<sup>19</sup> *You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder.*

<sup>20</sup> *But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?*

*James 2:26 (NASB)*

<sup>26</sup> *For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.*

In this passage, Paul is focusing on the completed, fulfilled **eternal life** that comes after the final judgment, when the eternal state begins.

The completed eternal life will be rendered according to the salvation evidenced by those good deeds a believer has manifested during his life on earth (v-6)

#### THE DEEDS OF THE UNREDEEMED

*Romans 2:8-9 (NASB)*

<sup>8</sup> *but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.*

<sup>9</sup> *There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek,*

Paul is now contrasting those who prove by their good deeds that they belong to God with those who similarly prove by their bad deeds that they do not belong to Him.

Those who do not belong to God manifest many evil characteristics, three of the general underlying ones Paul mentions in verse 8.

First, of the characteristics is **selfishly ambitions**, a phrase that translates the single Greek word *eritheia*, and the root meaning of which may have been that of a hireling.

The idea is of a mercenary, who does his work simply for the money, without regard for the issues or any harm he may be doing.

Everything he does is for the purpose of serving and pleasing self.

Certainly this fits the Bible's emphasis that the basic problem of unregenerate man is his being totally wrapped up in himself and having no place in his life for God.

**Secondly**, the characteristic of the unredeemed is that they **do not obey the truth**.

The person who seeks his own way above all else naturally resists any other way, including God's, which is the way of **truth**.

Disobedience of **the truth** is synonymous with rebellion, and spiritual rebellion is what the Fall was all about and what fallen human nature is all about.

The unredeemed are rebels by nature, they are the enemies of God:

*Romans 8:7 (NASB)*

*7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so,*

*Romans 5:10 (NASB)*

*10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.*

*Colossians 1:21-22 (NASB)*

*21 And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds,*

*22 yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach—*

**Thirdly**, the next characteristic of the unredeemed as Paul lays it out for us is that they **obey unrighteousness**.

No person lives in a moral and spiritual vacuum.

He is either godly or ungodly, righteous or unrighteous.

Jesus declared categorically that;

*Matthew 6:24 (NASB)*

*24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.*

It can be deduced that no man serves no master.

It is either God or another

And when man does not serve God, all other masters lead him to sin.

Serving God means obeying God's will!

Serving another master means obeying sin.

It may be said that the road to hell is here very simply defined as the spirit of antagonism against the lordship of Jesus Christ.

The unsaved person is by nature **selfishly ambitious**, and his enmity against God leads him to disobey God's truth and instead to **obey unrighteousness**.

To such people God will render (see verse 6) **wrath and indignation**.

Now the world wrath (*Orge*) signifies the strongest kind of anger, that which reaches fever pitch, when God's mercy and grace are fully exhausted.

It will mark the end of God's patience and tolerance with unregenerate, unrepentant mankind in the swelling of His final, furious anger which He will vent on those whose works evidence their persistent and unswerving rebellion against Him.

The next word, *Tumos*, (**indignation**) speaks of an agitated, vehement anger that rushes along relentlessly. The root meaning has to do with moving rapidly and was used of a man's breathing violently while pursuing an enemy in a great rage.

In the final day, of judgment, God's **indignation** will explode like a consuming fire upon all rebellious mankind.

Consequently, "**there will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil.**"

*Thlipsis* (**tribulation**) means to exert extreme pressure, and is sometimes translated as affliction, anguish, or persecution.

*Stenochoria* (**distress**) this literally means, "A narrow place" and came metaphorically to refer to severe confinement to constriction, and hence the idea of anguish or severe **distress**.

Besides capital punishment, solitary confinement has long been considered the worst form of punishment, being the absolute, lonely confinement of a prisoner who is already strictly confined.

Part of hells torment will be its absolute, isolated, lonely, and eternal confinement, with no possible hope of release or escape.

And Paul here uses the phrase **the Jew first and also the Greek**. And he uses it twice.

Paul is trying to help them understand that **the Jew first** means that being first in salvation opportunity also means being first in judgment responsibility.

Ok so we know that the righteous deeds that God requires and for which men will be judged are, of course, impossible even for a believer to produce in his own power.

He is no more able to keep his salvation by good works than he was able to attain it by good works.

Like salvation itself, the good works it produces are made possible by God's sovereign grace alone and empowered by His Holy Spirit working within the life.

They only way to produce righteous deeds is to possess the righteousness of Christ, which comes by trusting in Him as Lord and Savior, to possess the Holy Spirit who empowers those works, and to consciously seek to obey the Word of God!

In His infinite justice as well as His infinite grace, God will be certain that the **glory and honor** that is sought by **every man who does good** will indeed be his reward.

This **peace** that God divinely imparts is perhaps used by Paul as a synonym for the immortality, the true believer seeks along with glory and honor (see v 7).

Everything divine that the saint of God seeks he will receive.