

Condemnation of the Self-Righteous Moralists – Part 2

Romans 2:6-16

We come again to our study of Paul's epistle to the Romans. We are in Romans chapter two. This is the second of what will end up being a three part series on the topic "Condemnation of the Self-Righteous Moralists." So if you will turn to Romans two we will look at a few more of these verses between verse one and verse 16.

Before I read that text, I would like to have you think with me about the issue of our sinfulness. One of the amazing aspects of our inherent sinfulness is our ability to convince ourselves of just about anything. You name a sin and we can justify it. Every adulterer can offer 1000 reasons why his rendezvous is acceptable. Every Atheist can justify in his own mind why there is no God. Every slanderer can excuse his rants with the eloquence of a politician. Every religious hypocrite has an explanation that can silence his conscience. He has no compunction about fooling his friends with his hypocrisy.

Again, you name a sin and our heart can defend it. That is the nature of sin, cherished lies that justify our rebellion against God.

The testimony of Scripture reveals that sin is man's innate inability to conform to the moral character and desires of God. This is why man stands in condemnation before God and this manifests itself, primarily, in human self will. Man prefers to obey his will rather than God's. We see this all through Scripture. For example, it is listed in what is called the deeds of the flesh in Galatians five. It includes things like, "...immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing and things like these,"¹ the apostle tells us. He goes on to say "Those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."²

And because man is innately a slave to his sin, according to Romans six, he rejects his Creator causing God to gradually abandon him to pursue the lusts of his heart and experience the devastating consequences of his iniquities bringing him either to ruin or to repentance.

I have said before that you learn much about a man's theology at his funeral. And there is no greater example of man's self willed rebellion against God than found in the lyrics of the most popular song sung at funerals today. It is called *My Way*. Let me read it to you.

And now the end is near
And so I face the final curtain
My friend, I'll say it clear
I'll state my case of which I'm certain
I've lived a life that's full
I've travelled each and every highway

¹ Galatians 5:18-21.

² Galatians 5:21.

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and more, much more than this
I did it my way

Regrets I've had a few
But then again too few to mention
I did what I had to do
And saw it through without exemption
I planned each chartered course
Each careful step along the by-way
And more, much more than this
I did it my way

Yes, there were times
I'm sure you knew
When I bit off more than I could chew
But through it all when there was doubt
I ate it up and spit it out
I faced it all
And I stood tall
And did it my way

I've loved, I've laughed, and cried
I've had my fill, my share of losing
And now, as tears subside
I find it all so amusing
To think I did all that
And may I say, not in a shy way
"Oh no, oh no, not me
I did it my way"

For what is a man, what has he got?
If not himself then he has naught
To say the things he truly feels
And not the words of one who kneels
The record shows I took the blows
And I did it my way.

I have been at funerals where that song was played and sung.

Solomon perfectly summarized such a blasphemous eulogy when he declared in Ecclesiastes 9:3 that, "The hearts of the sons of men are full of evil, and insanity is in their hearts throughout their lives."³

But, dear friends, because of sin's nature those lies of justified rebellion against God, even the most religious person has a difficult understanding, a difficult time

³ Ecclesiastes 9:3.

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undemanding the true character, the true nature, the true condemnation of sin. If you ask the average person, for example, what is sin, you will typically hear answers like, “Well, sin is doing something God doesn’t like.” Or others will say, “Well, sin is breaking one of the 10 Commandments,” or, “Sin is just another word for mistakes.” Or others might laugh and say, “Well, sin is doing unto others things you wish they would never do unto you.”

For most people the emphasis is always on what we do rather than who we are. And herein is the great deception, believed especially by the religious moralist like the ancient Jews of Paul’s day and millions of people even today, religious people trying to earn their way through some religious system into heaven. But they fail to see that sin is the defining disposition of a man’s very nature. It is intrinsic to us. It defines the essence of our character. It is exceedingly deadly in its consequences and it is far more offensive to a holy God than we can even begin to imagine.

For this reason man is under divine condemnation and in desperate need of God’s saving grace. And in the first 16 verses here in chapter two Paul exposes the moral religionists, the type of person who very often condemns others. He is especially speaking to his kinsmen the Jews who have convinced themselves that because of their religious works and because of their heritage as God’s chosen people that somehow they were better than the pagans and therefore not subject to God’s condemnation.

Now in light of that introduction, let me read to you, once again, these first 16 verses of chapter two.

Therefore you are without excuse, every man of you who passes judgment, for in that you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things. And do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment upon those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance? But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who WILL RENDER TO EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, but glory and honor and peace to every man who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God. For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law; and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law; for not the hearers of the Law are just before God, but the doers of the Law will

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be justified. For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.⁴

Here we see three reasons why even the moralist is under divine condemnation. By way of review, you will recall the last time we were together the first reason was because of their self righteous judgment articulated here in the first three verses. Paul confronting especially his Jewish kinsmen who were notorious for being self righteous and hypocritical in their judgment of others though they were guilty of many of the same kinds of sins.

Although a person may have some outward form of morality, he fools himself in his veneer he things fools God, but it doesn't. Therefore he is guilty and also condemned, indeed of the righteousness of Christ. And this is ultimately where Paul is going, that every man is in need of a righteousness foreign to himself, the righteousness of Christ.

But not only is the moralist under divine condemnation because of his self righteous judgment, but, secondly, for his self satisfied disregard for grace in verses four and five.

He says in verse four, "Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?"⁵

So Paul exposed the false security of these religious people who assumed that somehow because God had not abandoned them to the sordid immorality that Paul described in the end of chapter one and since they could see no blatant judgment of God in their lives things were going good in their lives, well, therefore, God must be satisfied with me. Plus, we are part of God's covenant people.

So it was for that reason that it was inconceivable to them that God would consider them under his condemnation. Again, remember, they had a debit credit system of works righteousness. As long as you did a little bit more good than you did evil, then God would be pleased. So in their mind this exempted them from divine condemnation. They presumed, therefore, upon God's grace rather than recognizing that his forbearance was merely a suspension of punishment, giving them a chance to repent.

And in verse five he says that, "because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God."⁶

⁴ Romans 2:1-16.

⁵ Romans 2:4.

⁶ Romans 2:5.

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But the inspired apostle has yet another reason why the self righteous moralist is under the same condemnation as even the most wicked person in society and that is, because, number three, of his self seeking works. And we see this delineated in here in verses six through 16, most of which we will be able to examine today.

Notice verse six.

He says that God “WILL RENDER TO EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS.”⁷

Now bear in mind that the Jews in particular were fastidious in keeping the law. They were external in their religious hypocrisy and they believed that they were, therefore, earning their salvation. And, of course, all of that just fuels pride. That is what Legalism will always do. And, of course, none of it impressed God. And it certainly did not reconcile them to him.

Now for God to judge people based upon their deeds was not something foreign to Paul’s Jewish audience. In Ecclesiastes 12 verse 14 they would have read what Solomon said that “God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.”⁸

They would have read what the prophet Jeremiah said in Jeremiah 17:10 where God spoke through his servant and said, “I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the results of his deeds.”⁹

Perhaps they had even heard of Jesus’ warning that was recorded years later in John chapter five verse 28 where the Lord said, “An hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.”¹⁰

Jesus also said in Matthew 16:27, speaking about those who were left alive when he returns. He warns “For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and WILL THEN RECOMPENSE EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS.”¹¹

So for Paul to warn the self righteous moralist that God is going to render to every man according to his deeds was not something foreign to them.

Now, we must be careful here. Some will erroneously assume from this passage that man is saved by his works. But that is not at all what Paul is saying. In fact, the entire thrust of Paul’s argument in this epistle is that man, no matter how hard he works, cannot save

⁷ Romans 2:6.

⁸ Ecclesiastes 12:14.

⁹ Jeremiah 17:10.

¹⁰ John 5:28-29.

¹¹ Matthew 16:27.

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himself. He has already stated in chapter one and verse 16 that the gospel is the power of God for salvation to everyone that believes. And in verse 17 he says, “For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.’”¹²

The righteous man shall live by faith, not by works.

In chapter three and verse 24 he describes sinners, that sinners are ultimately justified as a gift by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. It is not of works.

In Ephesians chapter two verses eight and nine we read:

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.¹³

But you might ask. Well, if salvation is solely by grace through faith alone, then why would God warn here that he will render to every man according to his deeds? And the answer is because a man’s deeds will either prove or disprove the genuineness of his faith.

You see, salvation is by grace, but judgment is by works. You must understand that we are saved by our faith, but we will be judged by our works.

Now you say you are a Christian. How can we know? If you look around and especially in the state of Tennessee, practically every single person will say that he is a Christian. How can you know? Well, many will say, “Well, because I believe in God.”

Ok, but James two and verse 19 says, “Thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?”¹⁴

So just because you believe in God doesn’t necessarily prove or disprove that you are genuinely born again.

Yes, but I have made a profession of faith.

Well, great. But we know according to Matthew seven that not all professions of faith are genuine, right? So what else would you put forth to prove that you are a disciple of Christ?

Well, I can remember a specific time of decision.

¹² Romans 1:17.

¹³ Ephesians 2:8-9.

¹⁴ James 2:19-20.

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Well, perhaps, but Jesus said in Luke 8:13 that some will receive the Word with joy, but these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away.

So that doesn't necessarily prove or disprove that you are truly born again.

Others will say, "Well, yes, but I live such a moral life. I have got to be part of the kingdom of God."

Well, so, too, did the scribes and the Pharisees of whom Jesus said, "Hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness."¹⁵ Matthew 23 verse 27.

Yes, but on top of all of that, I am actively involved in ministry in my church.

Well, that is wonderful, but so will be those who in Matthew seven will one day say, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?" And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'¹⁶

Beloved, nowhere in Scripture do we find that any of the things just mentioned either prove or disprove the genuineness of a man's faith.

Some might even say, "Yes, but I even grieve over my sin from time to time. I even experience fear and guilt and conviction."

Well, so, too, did Felix when he heard Paul preach to him the gospel, remember, in Acts 25, but he did not know Christ. So even conviction and sorrow over sin doesn't necessarily prove or disprove the genuineness of faith.

Well, what does? The answer is spirit empowered works that grow out of a transformed life. Jesus said, "You will know them by their fruits."¹⁷

If you say you are an apple tree, I want to see your apples. You will bear the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians five, for example: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control."¹⁸

Jesus described the marks of a true believer, you will recall, in his Sermon on the Mount in Matthew five. They will be people who are poor in spirit, mourn who will mourn over their sin. They will be gentle. They will hunger and thirst for righteousness. They will be merciful, pure in heart, peace makers, willing to endure persecution for the sake of righteousness.

¹⁵ Mathew 23:27.

¹⁶ Matthew 7:22-23.

¹⁷ Matthew 7:16; 7:20.

¹⁸ Galatians 5:22-23.

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You see, dear friends, you must understand that genuine saving faith will produce righteous deeds. James helps us understand this distinction between faith and works in James two beginning at verse 14. He says:

What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, 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? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. 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." You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?¹⁹

In verse 26 he says, "For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead."²⁰

Again, we are saved by faith, but we are judged by works.

I want to pause here for a moment and digress just a little bit from the text because this comes up so often in talking with different ones. God has given us many categories and I have mentioned just a few, many categories of the kind of fruit that validates genuine saving faith. Let me just summarize a few of them for you. If we look at Scripture it will include things like a transformed life devoted to the glory of God. It will include a deep love for God. He will be our soul's greatest delight, the source of our greatest joy. You will repentance from sin, a turning from sin and a turning unto God, genuine humility, selfless love, sacrificial love especially for other believers.

You show me a man who says he is a Christian and he has no love for the brethren and I will show you a man who has deceived himself.

He will have a love for the Word of God. He will literally have an appetite for Scripture. You will see a separation from the world. You will see, therefore, a distinction between how he lives, how he conducts his life and the rest of the world. He will be obedient to the lordship of Christ. A true believer will have a passionate commitment to commune with God in prayer. It will not be a duty. It will be a desire. You will see measurable spiritual growth in his life. You will see that he will have a burden for the lost and an ardent zeal for evangelism. You will see that he is unashamed when it comes to proclaiming and protecting the gospel of grace, the truth of the Scripture. He will be willing to suffer for it. He will be willing to do all that he can to protect it. He will manifest the power of the Holy Spirit in his life.

¹⁹ James 2:14-20.

²⁰ James 2:26.

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In fact, in Matthew chapter 20 verses 24 and following Jesus graphically describes six tell tale characteristics of genuine discipleship that includes a submission to the Lordship of Christ. He will fear God more than man. He will publicly confess Christ. He will value Christ more than family. He will value Christ more than life and he values eternal, not temporal reward.

You see, friends, this is the stuff of genuine saving faith. It can be measured and these will be the works that will prove it, the works that God will judge.

And may I remind each of you who name the name of Christ? We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, the apostle Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians five, “that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”²¹

It is fascinating, isn’t it? Although Jude tells us, for example, that we will all “stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy,”²² our eternal rewards, not our salvation, will be based upon our works.

1 Corinthians 3:8 we read that “each will receive his own reward according to his own labor.”²³

Now, again, don’t be confused. The basis of our salvation or the foundation of our salvation is the righteousness of Christ that is imputed to all who believe. It is the free gift of grace.

1 Corinthians 3:11 Paul says, “For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”²⁴

But the basis of our reward will be good works.

Paul goes on to say in 1 Corinthians three verse 12, “Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones...”²⁵

In other words, the analogy here is quality materials that represent works of service that are properly... that represent a proper motivation of our desire to give God glory.

“Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, [versus] wood, hay, [or] stone...”²⁶ which would be inferior materials depicting self motivated, self glorifying works. “Each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire.”²⁷

²¹ 2 Corinthians 5:10.

²² Jude 24.

²³ 1 Corinthians 3:8.

²⁴ 1 Corinthians 3:11.

²⁵ 1 Corinthians 3:12.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ 1 Corinthians 3:13.

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Fire is symbolic of God's omniscient, holy discernment.

And he says:

And the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.²⁸

So, to be sure, we reap what we sow, right? For this reason Paul said in Galatians 6:9, "And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary."²⁹

So, for genuine believers, as well as phony hypocrites, we see here in verse six that God, "WILL RENDER TO EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS."³⁰

Verse seven.

"To those who by perseverance,"³¹ a word that means steadfast endurance.

"To those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life."³²

Now will you notice here. We have three more marks of genuine saving faith. A person who is truly born again will be a man who perseveres in doing good and seeking for, first of all, glory. This refers to a man who has a life that orbits around the center of gravity of the glory of God. He wants the glory of God come what may. And, secondarily, he also wants to one day experience the glory of eternal life.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 10:31, "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."³³

So this will be the driving force behind a true believer in all that he does, everything from mowing the yard to changing diapers.

Secondly, he will seek honor. In other words, he lives for the praise of God, not men. He would do nothing to bring dishonor upon the Lord or himself.

²⁸ 1 Corinthians 3:13-15.

²⁹ Galatians 6:9.

³⁰ Romans 2:6.

³¹ Romans 2:7.

³² Ibid.

³³ 1 Corinthians 10:31.

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Don't you long to hear the Lord say to you some day, "Well done, good and faithful slave"? Don't you long for that?

He also seeks, thirdly, for immortality. I have got to camp on this for a minute. This is exciting.

Beloved, this refers to resurrection glory. Think about what we read before the service this morning in Romans 8:23. Paul says, "[We ourselves] having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. For in hope we have been saved."³⁴

You see, our redemption includes more than just our soul. It also includes our bodies. And this will occur when the Lord returns and raises our bodies from the dead. This is glorification. This is that final stage in the process of redemption. Beloved, this is when God fashions for us a new glorified body and reunites it with our soul. This is when the incorruptible and indestructible resurrection life finally comes into full bloom when we can enjoy the ineffable glories of heaven, when we can enter into that eternal rest, when we can experience the unimaginable, eternal bliss of living in a new heaven and a new earth in the presence of God and the heavenly host in all of the redeemed down through history. This is the immortality of which Paul speaks.

You see, true believers are those who therefore by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality which is eternal life.

Dear friends, if this doesn't motivate you, I don't know what can. If this doesn't drive you, what else could possibly drive you?

You see, this is the hope of the true believer. He doesn't live for this life. He lives for the next, his hope, his joy, his consuming passion is to one day be in his heavenly home. Don't you long for that day?

And, friends, if you don't long for that day, you have nothing to do with Christ. Don't fool yourself.

Our faith causes us to transcend the temporal and to live for the eternal.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:19, "If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied."³⁵

In 1 Corinthians 15 which, by the way, is a watershed passage on all of these truths and, no doubt, I believe that the saints in Rome would have read the epistle to the Corinthians which was written a little over a year before the epistle to the Romans, but they probably would have read much of this, but in 1 Corinthians 15:12-58 Paul speaks there much about our glorified bodies. And in verses 22 and 23 he says of those "... in Christ all shall

³⁴ Romans 8:23-24.

³⁵ 1 Corinthians 15:19.

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be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming."³⁶

So we have a harvest analogy there. And if you can forgive the digression, but again, I think this is so important to really understand what Paul is getting at here even in Romans chapter two.

What he says there in 1 Corinthians 15 is that his resurrection guarantees ours, you see. Likewise, we will be given this glorified body like unto his. He was the prototype.

In 1 Corinthians 15 verse 49 we read, "And just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."³⁷

And in verse 53 he says, "For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality."³⁸

Isn't that great?

In 1 John, you will recall, chapter three verse two, we read that "when He appears, we shall be [what?] we shall be like Him."³⁹

I don't know about you, but I get excited about that, especially the older I get.

Paul stated that Jesus will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body, Philippians 3:21.

In other words, there is going to be this supernatural metamorphosis. There will be an instantaneous recreation.

Also in 1 Corinthians 15 we read how the Holy Spirit describes the uniqueness of our resurrection body, how it is suited for heaven.

In verse 42 he says, "It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body."⁴⁰

In other words, it is like a seed that is planted in the ground. Our body is laid in the grave and then eventually it is utterly reconstituted. You have a new body, completely unrelated to the original one, a body where there will be no more sickness or disease or death. It will be a body like Christ, a body that is not subject to time and to space. We will be able to walk through solid material like Jesus did. We will be able to be transported to any place we want to go instantly.

³⁶ 1 Corinthians 15:22-23.

³⁷ 1 Corinthians 15:49.

³⁸ 1 Corinthians 15:53.

³⁹ 1 John 3:2.

⁴⁰ 1 Corinthians 15:42.

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Verse 43 of 1 Corinthians 15 says that it, referring to our body, “is sown in dishonor, [but] it is raised in glory.”⁴¹

In other words, it will be raised in such a way that it will be completely uncontaminated by the presence of sin. There will be no evidence of aging or disease. We will be perpetually youthful, yet mature in our appearance, bearing the perfect image and likeness of Christ.

And, perhaps, we will even shine or radiate as Christ did emanating from our bodies this supernatural glow as we read about in Scripture, the shekinah, that ineffable brilliance of the glory of Christ because he says we will be raised in glory.

You remember at the transfiguration when Jesus peeled back some of his flesh and the glory emanated from him. That may well be what will happen with us.

It is interesting. Jesus said in Matthew 13:43 that “HE RIGHTEOUS WILL SHINE FORTH AS THE SUN in the kingdom of their Father.”⁴²

And in Daniel’s vision in Daniel 12 verse three we read, “And those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven, and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever.”⁴³

Remember the face of Moses that continued to radiate the glory of God in Exodus 34? And, again, back to 1 Corinthians 15 verse 43 we read, “It is sown,” referring to our bodies, “in weakness, [but] it is raised in power.”⁴⁴

The temptation to sin will no longer be a factor. Won’t that be an amazing thought?

In verse 44 he says, “it is sown a natural body, [but] it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.”⁴⁵

Again, a body that is no longer shackled to time and to space.

Beloved, let me ask you. Do you persevere in doing good because you seek immortality and eternal life?

What an incredible promise we have.

Romans 8:11 Paul says, “He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.”⁴⁶

⁴¹ 1 Corinthians 15:43.

⁴² Matthew 13:43.

⁴³ Daniel 12:3.

⁴⁴ 1 Corinthians 15:43.

⁴⁵ 1 Corinthians 15:44.

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Amazing.

Are you like the apostle Paul who said in Philippians chapter three verse 13, “Forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”⁴⁷

And what is the prize? What is the prize that he was striving after? To be like Christ in all of his glory.

You see, these are the profound realities that await the redeemed, truths that make us alive to God this side of heaven, that cause us to long for that day when someday we will explode into the unimaginable glory of the eternal state.

So back to Romans chapter two verse seven. He says, “To those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life.”⁴⁸

In other words, the true believer will be driven by these truths. Nothing else really matters.

But I contrast that to the way we typically live. Think about all of the things we pursue that are eternally insignificant, meaningless.

If you turn on the news here lately you have got union members protesting the losing of their power to force tax payers to treat them in a special way as if it is a matter of life and death. We live in a world that is absolutely consumed with selfishness and greed. And we know it is just going to get worse as the world gets prepared for the antichrist.

Materialism, idolatry and materialism. Think about it. People today spend their lives seeking power and prestige, wanting a bigger and better house or car or boat or jewelry or clothes, every imaginable form of pleasure and entertainment.

So we have got to keep building more malls, right? It really says a lot about our culture. It is staggering. People fill their houses and barns with all kinds of stuff and then go out and have to rent storage bins to put more of our stuff in.

And our friend Elijah was here from Sudan. He asked about that. It was so foreign to him. He couldn't wrap his mind around it and we talked about it.

People that are self-willed, self-absorbed, self-deceived, but not so the child of God. You see, the child of God will spend his life for the glory of God, not for the glory of himself. He doesn't lay up his treasures here on earth, but in heaven.

⁴⁶ Romans 8:11.

⁴⁷ Philippians 3:13.

⁴⁸ Romans 2:7.

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Romans 2:6-16

Paul endured enormous suffering for his faith, why? Because he lived in light of eternity. And that is why he would say in 2 Corinthians 4:17, “For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison.”⁴⁹

Now in verse seven he talks about the true saint who “who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life.”⁵⁰ That is what will be the reward.

He contrasts that, now, with the self righteous religious moralist in verse eight.

“But to those who are selfishly ambitious...”⁵¹

That refers to the type of person that does things to please himself, the type of person who is consumed with number one, for those people who, he goes on to say “do not obey the truth.”⁵² In other words, the divine truth of Scripture, “but obey unrighteousness,”⁵³ meaning he loves his sin more than the truth. What is he going to receive? “Wrath and indignation.”⁵⁴

Again, now remember the context here. Paul is referring to those who wear the external clothes of religious hypocrisy. These are the ones who are quick to pass judgment on others yet practice the same things in verses one through three. These are the ones who disregard the kindness and forbearance and patience of the Lord thinking that somehow they deserve it rather than recognizing that it is God’s merciful extension of their life that they might repent. These are the religious phonies who in reality he says are stubborn “and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who WILL RENDER TO EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS.”⁵⁵

And here in verse eight, he tells them that the outcome, unless they repent will be “Wrath and indignation.”⁵⁶

The term “wrath,” *orge* (or-gay’) in the original language, speaks of the most fierce kind of anger. It is the idea of a violent eruption of vengeance upon the wicked. Think of this way. This will be the time when the nostrils of God flare and he rises from his holy and sovereign throne in rage and judges the wicked. It is when he has had enough. It is when the day of grace is over and damnation begins.

Not only wrath, but also he says indignation, *thymos* (thoo-mos’) in the original language. It is an interesting term. It is a term whose root meaning is linked to the idea of

⁴⁹ Romans 4:17.

⁵⁰ Romans 2:7.

⁵¹ Romans 2:8.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Romans 2:5-6.

⁵⁶ Romans 2:8.

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a steady and rapid movement, the idea of a chasing, the idea of a man chasing an enemy in full rage.

In fact, it was used to describe the attitude of the Jews in Luke four who were boiling over with rage and seeking to grab a hold of Jesus and throw him over the cliff in Nazareth.

Paul goes on in verse nine and he says, “There will be tribulation,”⁵⁷ *ylīqiv* (thlip’-sis) in Greek. Yet another very potent term. Its root meaning has the idea of exerting extreme pressure and constriction, often translated affliction, trouble, anguish, persecution.

And, he says, not only tribulation, but distress, *stenocwria* (sten-okh-o-ree’-ah). It is a frightening term to me because I have seen some of the torture chambers in the castles in England. This refers to putting a person in a narrow constricted place. If you are claustrophobic you get some sense of what this is. I have seen places where they have had a little hole in the rocks where they stick a person and all they have is just a little grate, about the size of an index card over their eyes for them to peek out. And that is where they leave them until they die.

This term came to speak metaphorically of constricted confinement, solitary confinement, if you will, in a very small place and, thus, it speaks of extreme anguish.

Dear friends, please hear me. Sometimes the wicked distorted lies of the enemy and the people that speak them would have folks believe that hell is going to be some kind of a party where all of our wicked friends come to get together and whoop it up. That is not what Scripture teaches. Hell will be a place of total isolation, total separation from God, total separation from every other creature.

Scripture tells us that it is a place of outer darkness, a place of fire and brimstone, a place of weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, a place of eternal torment, a place where there will be no hope, no reprieve, no chance of escape.

And who will be the recipients of this? Paul tells us in verse nine.

“...every soul of man who does evil.”⁵⁸

And then to make sure that none of Paul’s Jewish kinsmen would think that they were exempt, he added this in verse nine, “To the Jew first and also to the Greek.”⁵⁹

But, verse 10, “glory and honor and peace to every man who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God.”⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Romans 2:9.

⁵⁸ Romans 2:9.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Romans 2:10-11.

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My friends, the only way you can possibly do the kind of good that is acceptable to God, the kind of holy, righteous, God glorifying good that he requires is for you to have a transformed heart and the indwelling Spirit of God that could live through you and produce that kind of fruit whereby you will have the righteousness of Christ so that when God looks at you he doesn't see your sin, he sees the righteousness of his Son. And that is the good news of the gospel of grace.

May I plead with you? If you have never cried out to him for forgiveness, will you not do that today? And when you do, he will not only forgive you of your sins, but he will declare you righteous because of the righteousness of Christ, the one who paid the penalty for your sin. Won't you seek him while he can still be found?

Let's pray together.

Father, thank you for these eternal truths. May we be convinced by them, those of us who know you, may these truths cause us to rejoice all the more in your grace? And for those who know nothing of you, oh God, would you be pleased to make them miserable until they repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, truly believe? We pray for yours sake. Amen.

We pray you have been edified by this presentation. You have been listening to pastor, Bible teacher and author David Harrell. For more information or to order additional tapes or CDs of pastor Harrell's messages, please visit OliveTreeResources.org.

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