

Sermon: How Will You Be Judged?

Text: Romans 2:1-16 ESV

Gary L. Wackler

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Introduction: JUDGMENT is inescapable! BUT I don't want just anybody judging me, because they might misread my heart/motives. Even my wife and I misunderstand body language or misinterpret the tone in *my* voice, I'm told.

Do you think you are a good judge of others? Do you have all the information you need to evaluate another person?

Illus: "Sleepy Man" - At a pastor's conference in Spokane, Chuck Swindoll told of being at a California Christian camp. The first day there a man approached him and said how greatly he had looked forward to hearing Dr. Swindoll speak and his delight at now finally being able to realize that desire.

That evening Swindoll noticed the man sitting near the front. But only a few minutes into the message the man was sound asleep. Swindoll thought to himself that perhaps he was tired after a long day's drive and couldn't help himself. But the same thing happened the next few nights, and Dr. Swindoll found his exasperation with the man growing.

On the last night the man's wife came up and apologized for her husband's inattention to the messages. She then explained that he had recently been diagnosed as having terminal cancer and the medication he was taking to ease the pain made him extremely sleepy. But it had been one of his life-long ambitions to hear Dr. Swindoll speak before he died, and now he had fulfilled that goal.

I don't know about you, but I want God to judge me! Because He is perfect and because of my relationship with Jesus Christ, I feel confident about my final destination.

Sometimes, though, overconfidence can get you in trouble can't it?

Illus. Sports teams, Ohio State University (#2 seed) was beaten by Oral Roberts (#15 seed). Who had them in their brackets?

Phil Michelson at 50 years old was a 300-1 shot to win the PGA Championship. Almost everyone thought they would come out ahead of "old" Phil.

In chess, there is something that is called Fool's mate!

Apparently both Jews and the early church for different reasons felt immune to God's judgment on them.

Paul says:

I. Everyone Will Be Judged Despite a Perceived Relationship.

Does the Jew have an advantage with God ultimately?

Does the Church?

Romans 2:1-5 ESV ¹ Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things. ² We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things. ³ Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God? ⁴ Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? ⁵ But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.

Bonhoeffer, *Cost of Discipleship*, p. 206 - If when we judged others, our real motive was to destroy evil, we should look for evil where it is certain to be found, and that is in our own hearts. But if we are on the look-out for evil in others, our real motive is obviously to justify ourselves, for we are seeking to escape punishment for our own sins by passing judgment on others, and are assuming by implication that the Word of God applies to ourselves in one way, and to others in another.”

Paul insists there are *not* different sets of rules for Jews, Gentiles or Christians!
Illus. I have seen rules vary with whom it was in churches. In Eden we had a hard rule on who could perform marriages in the church building. And that was always observed until it wasn't...

The Jews always thought they were immune to God's Judgment. Because of the LAW and circumcision and other rituals they performed, the Jews felt safe from God's wrath. Wrath/Judgment was reserved for Gentiles and the uncircumcised. When Justin Martyr was arguing with the Jew about the position of the Jews in the *Dialogue With Trypho*, the Jew said, “They who are the seed of Abraham according to the flesh shall in any case, even if they be sinners and unbelieving and disobedient towards God, share in the eternal Kingdom.”

In the time of Christ and the early Church there were those Christians who felt they were better than other people. This of course was simply a first century aberration and could not happen in such an enlightened spiritual time as ours. Apparently though this must have been an attitude that found its way to the 19th century – because some of the founders of the Restoration Movement had a slogan “We are Christians only, but we are not the only Christians.” Sadly enough there are still churches that insist by word or practice or both that they are the only God-chosen group.

Practices like: Communion, Baptisms, Membership (e.g. Floyd Siebert)

So that we don’t think Paul is just talking about someone else – he says, in **verse 1**, “You (Church) therefore have no excuse” literally no defense/apology.

And Paul tells us, too, that God’s kindness should not be interpreted as a suspension of judgment. It is merely allowing for us to come to our senses and repent (turn to Him) and be forgiven. In fact, later, Paul will say: **Romans 6:1-4 ESV** ¹ What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? ² By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? ³ Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

Those who pass judgment on others must presume that they know the difference between right and wrong. Jesus had something to say about this type of attitude in John’s gospel. **John 9:35-41 ESV** ³⁵ Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”[a] ³⁶ He answered, “And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?” ³⁷ Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you.” ³⁸ He said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him. ³⁹ Jesus said, “For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.” ⁴⁰ Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, “Are we also blind?” ⁴¹ Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no guilt;[b] but now that you say, ‘We see,’ your guilt remains.

Footnotes: [a] John 9:35 Some manuscripts the Son of God

[b] John 9:41 Greek you would not have sin

We are not fit to judge because:

1. We have blind spots in our own lives, e.g. it is a little like bad breath/ someone who loves you can tell you “you smell” and then after a workout when you can smell yourself you know that you really need a shower. This is not a sudden condition. Sometimes problems with vision and eventually blindness, is a long process. You don’t notice the problem and you compensate and make excuses for what has become a severe situation.

2. We deny we have any problems/rationalize away our peculiar situations, and how we are the exception, how we are not like other people. Unique.

3. We use euphemisms and rename our guilt, i.e. lying becomes stretching the truth; stealing, reparations; e.g. lyrics: *Killing Me Softly with His Song* sung by Roberta Flack

II. We Will Be Judged By Our Obedience and Attitude.

Romans 2:6-13 ESV ⁶ He will render to each one according to his works: ⁷ to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; ⁸ but for those who are self-seeking[a] and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. ⁹ There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek, ¹⁰ but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. ¹¹ For God shows no partiality.

Footnotes: [a] **Romans 2:8** Or contentious

God is a righteous Judge. The Question is posed: WHAT ARE WE SEEKING?

Giving up SELF must be a real part of our daily living. We are commanded to take up our crosses daily if we are to be true disciples. C.S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity* writes, “Give up yourself and you will find your real self. Lose your life and you will save it. Submit to death, death of your ambitions and favorite wishes every day and death of your whole body in the end: submit with every fiber of your being, and you will find eternal life. Keep back nothing. Nothing that you have not given away will ever be really yours. We need to commit to the task of following Jesus by the way we treat others to ever have hope *we* will be accepted.”

There was a philosophy in missions years ago-if not in writing certainly in practice, that if we did not take the gospel to the pagan in Africa he somehow would not reject the Gospel and then as a result go to Hell. It was the old, “What they don’t know can’t hurt them”.

The more you know, the more you then become responsible for.

The Elder is responsible for the entire flock, but those who do their job WELL are worthy of double honor according to Scripture. The basis for judgment in our text, for those who do not know Jesus is in **v.12** 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.

READ Romans 2:13 ESV ¹³ For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified.

Obedience is what is required once we KNOW. Even then only GRACE can provide the solution to our dilemma. We are all sinners - even Christians. The difference between Christians who sin and those who have never accepted Jesus who also sin is only the Christian through God’s grace can be saved.

But just doing right is not what God is after. He is after our hearts and minds. He is not impressed with offerings and sacrifices in the OT or in the NT. Listen to an example from each testament: **Psalm 51:16-17 ESV** ¹⁶ For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. ¹⁷ The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Romans 12:1-2 ESV A Living Sacrifice

¹ I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

And attitude is everything. Our attention needs to be pleasing to God. “Why” is as important as “what” we are doing.

Putting God first in what we do and in our thoughts is deadly serious stuff. C.S. Lewis in his great book, *Mere Christianity* (quoted by Ray Stedman, p. 57)

“Give up yourself, and you will find your real self. Lose your life and you will save it. Submit to death, death of your ambitions and favorite wishes every day and death of your whole body in the end: submit with every fiber of your being, and you will find eternal life. Keep back nothing. Nothing that you have not given away will ever be really yours. Nothing in you that has not died will ever be raised from the dead. Look for yourself, and you will find in the long run only hatred, loneliness, despair, rage, ruin, and decay. But look for Christ and you will find Him, and with Him everything else thrown in (*from “The New Men” in Book IV, Beyond Personality*).

All of us ultimately:

III. We Will Be Judged By God.

AND aren't you glad, because God Is Patient, Loving, Kind and Righteous...

Romans 2:14-16 ESV ¹⁴ For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. ¹⁵ They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them ¹⁶ on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.

Ray Stedman in his commentary put it this way: “God found a way to condemn our sin and to destroy it without destroying us. No man can do this”.

Judgment is inescapable!

I want God to judge me, not my peers. God's righteous judgment will come to all.

God's loving kindness is sometimes misunderstood as weakness and inability to punish those who are in the wrong.

And another distortion is: God's patience is viewed as one will never be called into account for what he/she has done.

The reason for delay in Christ's coming is not so some prophecy can be fulfilled, BUT SO WE MIGHT REPENT. This opportunity still is available for now!

There will be an end to history. Time will be no more and then there will be an accounting. God says in [verse 6](#) that God will give to each person according to what he has done. God does not show favoritism. He accepts us as we are.

The oriental custom of greeting was to bow one's face to the ground. If the one greeted accepted the person, he was allowed to lift his head again. Our heads have been raised, those of us who are Christ's Body.

Someday because of Jesus, we will see God face to face. Those of us who are Christians, even now, are looking up and waiting for Christ's return. **Unafraid. "Come, Lord Jesus!", we say with the ancient church.**

Conclusion: HOW WILL YOU BE JUDGED? Judgment – Κρισις

If you are a Christian, you will be judged by grace most certainly, but grace is not an excuse for inactivity in God's Kingdom. What are you doing for God and with what kind of an attitude?

Hear the psalmist: [Psalm 62:11-12 ESV](#) ¹¹ Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God, ¹² and that to you, O Lord, belongs steadfast love. For you will render to a man according to his work.

When Judgment comes, will it be with the benefit of having Jesus Christ as your attorney, or will it be with no counsel at all? Don't think for a moment you can be your own attorney. You know what they say about that? Don't be foolish! Accept Jesus' counsel and help, today! There is only one way to be found "NOT GUILTY" and that is to have a relationship with Jesus Christ.

FAITH, REPENTANCE, CONFESSION, BAPTISM

AND THEN A HOLY LIFE is what is required.

I left out "hearing" because you have heard and now you must choose how you are to be judged. For some of you it is time to make a decision.

Craddock Stories, pp.125-26 (Explain a little background on Albert Schweitzer.)

“I think I was twenty years old when I read Albert Schweitzer’s *Quest for the Historical Jesus*, I found his christology woefully lacking--more water than wine. I marked it up, wrote in the margins, raised questions of all kinds. And one day, one day I read in the Knoxville News-Sentinel that Albert Schweitzer was going to be in Cleveland, Ohio, to play the dedicatory concert for a big organ in a big church up there. According to the article he would remain afterward in the fellowship hall for conversation and refreshment.

I bought a Greyhound bus ticket and went to Cleveland. All the way up there I worked on this *Quest for the Historical Jesus*. I laid out my questions. I had my questions on a separate sheet of paper, but I made references to the pages. ‘You said...’ because I figured, if there was conversation in the fellowship hall, there’d be room for a question or two.

I went there; I heard the concert; I rushed into the fellowship hall, got a seat in the front row, and waited with my lap of questions. After a while he came in, shaggy hair, big white mustache, stooped, and seventy-five years old. He had played a marvelous concert. You know he was a master organist, medical doctor, philosopher, biblical scholar, lecturer, writer, everything.

He came in with a cup of tea and some refreshments and stood in front of the group, and there I was, close. Dr. Schweitzer thanked everybody: ‘You’ve been very warm, hospitable to me. I thank you for it, and I wish I could stay longer among you, but I must go back to Africa. I must go back to Africa because my people are poor and diseased and hungry and dying, and I have to go. We have a medical station at Lambarene. If there’s anyone here in this room who has the love of Jesus, would you be prompted by that love to go with me and help me?’

I looked down at my questions: they were so absolutely stupid. And I learned, again, what it means to be Christian and had hopes that I could be that someday.”