

Part Four – Romans 1:33-2:8

We finished last time with **Romans 1:32**, the end of a very vivid list of the end results of a life without God's influence.

God in His Great Wisdom will never force anyone to live a life His way, the way of love.

God knows that unless the desire to follow His way comes from us, it will not be long-lasting.

To encourage this personal desire God allows us to personally experience in our life or see the bitter experience of others' lives the end result of leaving God out of life.

All of the evil attitudes listed in **Romans 1:23-32** are attitudes **lacking real love**, Godly love.

Godly love (agapé)

This is a characteristic word of Christianity.

A study of Greek literature throws very little light upon its distinctive meaning in the New Testament for it expresses ideas previously unknown to Greek thought or culture.

Agapé can be known only from the actions it prompts

- a) A gift - as expressed in God's Gift of His Son (**1 John 4:9-10**)
- b) **Not** out of personal pleasure or affection for the object of this love. (**Romans 5:8**)
God loves sinners but **not** the sin.
- c) **Not** an impulse from any feelings or natural inclinations.
- d) **Not** limited to those with whom we discover some affinity. (**Romans 15:2-3** – Whatever our "neighbour" may be like)
- e) **Seeks** the welfare of all and works no ill to anyone. (**Romans 13:8-10**)
- f) **Seeks** opportunities to do good to all men. (**Galatians 6:10**)
- g) **Expresses** a deep and constant love and interest towards people unworthy of love, producing and fostering love in them for the original giver of this love (God).
- h) Love has its perfect expression in Jesus Christ. (**Ephesians 3:18-19; Ephesians 5:1-2**)
- i) The end result of Christ living His life again in us by the working of the Holy Spirit producing the fruit (end usable product) of love in us

Romans 2:1 [NIV] *"You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things."*

"Therefore" – as a result of what we have just been shown we cannot stand in judgement of others for we too lacked the love of God in our lives in the past.

Just because we have certain religious knowledge, this does not justify us before God.

We cannot judge ourselves as better than those without this knowledge.

What this knowledge does do is make us **more responsible** for our actions, the way we live.

This second chapter of Romans was mostly addressed to Paul's own countrymen, the Jews, as they at that time did have more access to God's Word than the gentiles.

But today it should be addressed to Christians as we now are the group of people with greatest access to God's Word.

Where Paul addresses the Jew we need put our own selves there as a Christian.

Far too often among Christians is a tendency when we know God's Word, to allow this fact to elevate us above others who are without this knowledge; then we fail to allow the knowledge we have to change our lives.

Romans 2:1-15 In this passage Paul gives us five main principles of God's Judgement.

1: Romans 2:2 [NIV] *"Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth."*

According to truth - the truth of God's Word.

John 17:17 [NIV] *"Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth."*

John 12:47-48 [NIV] *"As for the person who hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge him. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it. There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day."*

In the end it is God's Word that will judge us.

Christ our judge is here personally telling us, we need to take careful notice!!

As we read the scriptures we are already being judged.

Matthew 7:24-27 [NIV] *"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."*

Build our lives on a rock [Christ's Words] **not** shifting sands [flooded sands become "quicksands" that suck us down to our death through suffocation, words of this world's society, will do this].

1 Corinthians 11:31 [NIV] *"But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment."*

We need judge ourselves using God's Word as the yardstick so in the end we will not receive face to face judgement and condemnation from Christ himself.

If we read God's Word, repent, and bring ourselves in line with God's Word we have judged ourselves and do not then receive God's Judgement according to the same Word of God.

The person to whom we apply this judgement to is not our neighbour or our brother but ourselves.

2: Romans 2:6 [NIV] *"will give to each person according to what he has done."*

According to our deeds - our works.

What we do, **not** any claims we make, **not** even the prayers we have made, **not** the knowledge of God's Word we have but what we have actually done in our lives.

1 Peter 1:17 [NIV] *“Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.”*

Romans 8:13-16 [NIV] *“For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.”*

If we call on God as our Father, which we as Christians have as a privilege, we then need to live here in fear. The Greek word “*Phobos*” **not** a fear which shrinks from the presence of God, but a **wholesome respect of Him that causes us to flee for anything that would be displeasing to Him** because we are His created children who are loved by Him.

1 Peter 1:18 [NIV] *“For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were **redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers,**”*

This act of great love that God made to redeem us (buy us back from death) is the motivating force to lead us to the great respect and awe of God and His Word.

One reason we need to “walk softly” with God is the tremendous price He paid for our redemption, the blood of His own son.

This is the value that God set on you and I, and the more you value a thing the greater care you take of that object, so God has a very care filled scrutiny of the lives of those He has redeemed [bought] with the blood of His Son.

We also need to be very careful of the lives we lead because of the tremendous investment God has made in us.

3: Romans 2:11 [NIV] *“For God does not show favouritism.”*

No partiality with God

The word in Greek translated as “favouritism” is “*prosopoleptes*” – “an accepter of a face”.

God is **not** interested in the “face” we put on for the world to see; as an actor on the stage.

God is interested in what we really are, inside our minds and character.

No-one is going to be judged by the role [actor's part] we play in life.

The preacher will be judged in the same way as the latest convert, the rich man as the beggar in the street.

James 2:1-9 [NIV] *“My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favouritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, “Here's a good seat for you,” but say to the poor man, “You stand there” or “Sit on the floor by my feet,” have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my dear brothers: **Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?** But you have insulted the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? Are they not the ones who are slandering the noble name of him to whom you belong? **If you***

really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbour as yourself," you are doing right. But if you show favouritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as law-breakers."

James calls respect for persons a sin for it is **not** the mind of God.

God judges by what is inside us.

4: Romans 2:12-15 [NIV] *"All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.)"*

We will be judged according to the "light" we have.

Luke 12: 48 [NIV] *"But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. **From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.**"*

If we have had the full light of the law we will be judged by that.

We are in a generation of Christians that have had a greater "light of God's Word" made available to us than ever before.

Bibles in many translations, Bible dictionaries, Bible commentaries, devotional books: but always remember this carries a tremendous responsibility with it.

5: Romans 2:16 [NIV] *"This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares."*

God will judge our secrets, our hidden thoughts, what motivates the things we say and do.

For example, two people may give the same amount as an offering to God's Church, one out of love he has for God, because of what God has done for him through Christ; the other to impress others in the Church.

God looks at the motive **not** the amount.

1 Corinthians 4:5 [NIV] *"Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. **He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.**"*

In context of judging others, we only see outward acts, God sees the motive.

Paul also in this part of Romans also describes two differing groups of people: one group God accepts, and one He rejects.

Romans 2:7-8 [NIV] *"To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honour and immortality, He will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger."*

One conspicuous feature of people who are under the power of the god of this world, Satan, is that they are self-seeking and self-centred.

Note: Two features about the lives of those who will receive eternal life.

- a) **Persistent** in doing good deeds.
- b) **Seek for** glory, honour and immortality.

Matthew 25:34, 38-39 [NIV] *“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.’ ... ‘When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’”*

Acted in the way they did as a natural working of God’s Holy Spirit in them, this is how we “seek” **not** out of a desire to receive power.

Both these involve faith.

- a) Expressing the faith given to us by our deeds;
- b) Faith in God to accept what we do, in response to what He has done for us.

Final warning: Don’t try to judge who fits into these two groups of people.

Romans 11:33 [NIV] *“Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!”*

Don’t take on the job of God by being a judge.