

Romans 2

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Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] Good morning and a warm welcome to the service this morning.

Those who are watching online, those who are listening in on the telephone, it's good for us to be able to come together once more to worship God. The intimations, nothing out of the ordinary.

Just to remind you that the service this evening will come online just before six o'clock as we continue going through the Psalms. And the Zoom prayer meeting will be on Wednesday at half past seven.

YF Meets as usual this evening again on Zoom and details of these meetings are on the Facebook page or will be on the WhatsApp group.

So let's begin this time of worship and let's sing to God's praise. We sing from the Psalms, Psalm 139. And we sing from verses 1 to verse 10.

[1 : 14] Down to the end of verse 10.

To God's praise. O Lord, thou hast me searched and known, thou know'st my sitting down, and rising up yea, all my thoughts afar to thee are known.

My footsteps and my lying down, thou compasses always.

Thou also most entirely art, acquaint with all my ways.

For in my tongue before I speak, not any word can be.

[2 : 37] But altogether, O Lord, it is well known to thee.

Behind before thou hast beset and laid on me thine hand, such knowledge is too strange for me, too high to understand.

From thy spirit wither shall I go, or from thy presence fly.

Ascend I, heaven, lo, thou art there, that if in hell I lie.

Take I the morning wings and dwell in utmost parts of sea.

[3 : 59] In there, Lord, shall my hand be led. Thy right hand hold shall me.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you for this day. We thank you for the fact that we come together in worship.

We come in the name of Jesus. We come putting our faith in the finished work of Jesus. We come as those who readily confess that we are sinners. And we know that it would be futile for us to come any other way because you are the God whom, as we've sung of, searches us and knows us.

You know our thoughts. You know our words. You know the things we do. You know the things that we leave undone. And you know, Lord, that we fall far short of your standard.

There is none righteous, no, not one. And we confess, Lord, that we in and of ourselves are unrighteous. We are sinners. But we thank you that as we repent, as we turn away from sin, and as we turn in faith to Jesus, the Savior, we are promised that there is forgiveness.

[5 : 17] There is cleansing. There is eternal life. We thank you for the good news that is the gospel. And we pray that you would help us to hear it today, to believe it, to take hold of it, to rejoice in it, that we would know day by day the joy of your salvation.

And if there are those who are listening or watching in just now who still have not received that salvation, we pray that you would be at work in their lives, that you would be at work in each heart, all of our hearts, causing us to turn from our sin and to turn to Jesus.

We thank you that all who come to Jesus have the promise that he will not cast us out. He will not drive any away, but all who come, he will receive, he will cleanse, he will forgive, he will grant eternal life.

We thank you, Lord, that the call of the gospel is for everyone. We pray for those who are charged to go out with that gospel message.

And we recognize that it's a message that is given to every believer. We are all ambassadors for Christ. And we pray that you would give us opportunities to speak the gospel as we speak to people on the phone, as we have meetings online, as we speak within our own homes.

[6 : 42] Help us, Lord, we pray, to speak much of Jesus. And for those, Lord, whom you have given particular opportunities to, we pray for them as well.

We thank you for Gordon Thompson, who spoke at our prayer meeting on Wednesday evening. We thank you for the challenge and for the encouragement that word brought to us. And we pray for him as he asked us to, as the gospel message goes forth through him to Lomas Prison this morning.

We expect that the message will have been heard by now. And we ask, Lord, that you would be at work in the power of the Holy Spirit, speaking into the life of each person who is there, each person who has heard that message.

Be at work, we pray, drawing them to Jesus. We thank you that you are the God who saves to the uttermost. And no matter what we may have done in the past, no matter what the prisoners who heard the message may have been charged with, there is salvation, there is redemption for all who come to Jesus.

So help them, we pray. Help us to come to Jesus. There is no one too bad to be received by him. And yet there is no one who is too good not to need Christ. So help each one of us, Lord, to see our need of Jesus and to come in faith this morning.

[8 : 07] We ask, Lord, that you would be with those who are in particular need just now. We pray on for those in our congregation who are struggling with different things. We pray for those who are grieving at this time.

We think especially of Marlene Mitchell, having lost her brother in this past week, her brother David. We ask, Lord, that she would know your comfort, that she would know your peace, that she would know your presence where she is and be with all of the family.

We commit them to you. We pray for those who are struggling with their health, those who continue to get treatment and hospital. Again, we think especially of Ian Davidson and Shona.

We ask that you would continue to have your hand upon them. And we thank you for the treatment that Ian was able to get this week past. Continue, Lord, we pray, to be near to him.

We pray for those who are further afield from us, those who are struggling with this virus that is so prevalent at this time.

[9 : 12] And we think especially of those in Portree, in the care home there, those who are struggling. We ask, Lord, for your hand of healing to be upon them. And we ask for your presence to be with them.

Be near, Lord, to their families also. Uphold them and strengthen them through this difficult time. We pray for those who are anxious, some whose businesses have been closed down for this last few months and who worry about the prospects for the future.

For those also who work away, who may work at sea and who wonder what to do, whether to stay on land or whether to head back offshore.

And we ask for wisdom for those who struggle with these decisions. So hear our prayers. You know, Lord, all of our needs. You know our hearts. You know everything that goes through our minds.

And we pray that you would help us. That you would meet us at the point of our need. That you would draw us close to yourself. And, Lord, that you would guide us and lead us in the power of the Holy Spirit.

[10 : 19] And all these things we pray in Jesus' name and for Jesus' sake. Amen. Boys and girls, it's good to not see you, but to know that you're behind that camera there.

So you've been very patient having to look at me and listen to me every week. So this week, rather than me speaking to you for the whole time, I want to watch a couple of videos that are going to be on the screen in just a second.

You were sent out a challenge in the last few weeks. I know some of you have been working on that. The photo challenge. And for the big ones who don't know anything about this, let me just explain it.

But there was a wee competition set for the boys and girls. And they were to try and combine as many of the things below on this list that I'll read out in a picture. And the person who has the most things in the picture gets the most points.

And so the closing date was last week. And our judge was Hugh Brownie. So people got one point if they had antibacterial spray, a piece of fruit, a family member or a pattern in a picture.

[11 : 38] They got three points for having a rock or a pet or a vehicle or if they were on a piggyback or giving a piggyback. They got five points for having a toilet roll, mismatched clothes or if they were eating sweets in a picture.

And they got ten points if they had crazy hair, if they were holding someone else or if they had a musical instrument. So that was the challenge. Some photographs have come in.

And you're going to see the photographs now on the screen. Thanks for doing them. And then we're going to hear immediately after that from Hugh Brownie. Because I know he's looked at your photographs.

He enjoyed doing that. He's come to his decision. And he's going to announce who the winner is at the end of his video. So enough from me. Over to you.

Matthew. Matthew. Matthew. 2899. 2899. Matthew. Matthew.

[12 : 40] Therefore go and make disciples of all nations. Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. All right. Get ready. Here we go. Run. Here we go.

Clap your hands. Here we go. Go, go, go, go, go, go, go, go, go, go, go, go. Here we go. Are you ready? Pull up your hands now. Go.

Go. Let's go. Let's go. Let's go. Go. Hey, hey, hey.

Bit of a random face to see you on a Sunday morning I'd imagine. But David asked me to give you a quick video update regarding the results of the Connect Club COVID photo challenge.

- [13 : 41] The kids were asked to take a picture and to do certain tasks which would get them points. For instance, if they had toilet roll in the picture, it would get them five points.
- And if they had a musical instrument in the picture, it would get them ten points. I don't know how I ended up judging it, but I just said yes to it anyway. But it was absolutely hilarious.
- The pictures were so funny. I hope you get to see them online. I had to stick to the guidelines. The Marcus came really, really strictly. Otherwise, I'd have been given loads of bonus marks.
- Just at the top of my head, Alistair in his mum's nurse's uniform would have scored really highly. Also, Ross Miller's goatee as well was worth at least 50 points, I'd say, in my book.
- Absolutely hilarious. There were two pictures, though, that stood out. They managed to get the maximum score of 61 points. The Mance girls were obviously perfecting that picture for days beforehand.
- [14 : 45] Lois doing the handstand and also wearing socks and sandals. You don't get much more mismatch than that. So they scored 61 points. And also the McLeans, John O'Michael featuring Marion, busted on top of the car, along with Michael playing the guitar on top as well.
- I'm sure the people in McLean said wondering what on earth was going on. But anyway, that scored the maximum amount of points as well. It was really fun judging it all. It was good to see you all.
- Friday afternoons don't really feel the same. Don't get to kick a ball around the back of the church or play ping pong. We're missing you guys, but we're praying for you guys as well.
- And we're looking forward to getting back into it once lockdown's over. Take care. Well, thank you for that, boys and girls. Thank you for that, Hugh, as well, for your judgment.
- We've seen the photos. We've heard who the winners are. And I want to just say a wee bit now, thinking about that and thinking about the passage we're going to come to as well today.
- [15 : 52] You'll be at Sunday school, but you can test your parents with questions about this chapter as well. But with your competition, the thing that you had to do was you had to try and keep all the rules.
- So you had all these things that you had to try and get into your photograph. And for everything that you did, every rule that you kept to, you got points. So you got one point, was it, for an antibacterial wipe?
- And you got more points for a piggyback. And you got more points for a pet and a vehicle. And the more you kept the rules, the more points you got. And that's how you won the competition.
- But with God and with our being saved, that's not how things work, is it? If we want to be right with God, if we want to be saved, it's not about what we do.
- It's about what Jesus has already done. It's not about us trying hard to do all these things perfectly, because we just can't do that.
- [17 : 01] And you and I both know that, don't we? We just, we can try to be good, but sometimes the harder we try, the more we know we just can't do it. But thankfully, our being saved, our sin being taken away, our getting the eternal life that God wants us to have, it's not about what we do.
- It's about what Jesus has already done. And in Romans chapter 1, verse 17, it says, See, our being made right with God, it doesn't come through our works.

It comes through putting our faith, comes through believing in Jesus. He's the only one who ever did everything right. He's the one who never sinned. And when we put our faith in him, when we believe in him, he takes all our wrongs, all our sins, away from us.

And he gives his rightness, his righteousness to us. It's like Jesus has the perfect score every time. And when we believe in him, he takes our imperfect scores away from us.

And he gives his perfect score to us. He shares his victory, his winning with us. And he has won over sin.

[18 : 35] He has won over the devil. He has beaten death. He has beaten hell. And he promises he will give to us his victory, his salvation, his saving of us when we believe in him.

And that's the good news. And let's take hold of, let's believe that good news. We'll pray for a minute. Lord God, we thank you for the good news about Jesus. We thank you that we are saved, that we're made righteous.

Not through the things that we do. Because we know we just, we can't do these things. We try to be good. But like the Apostle Paul said in Romans 7, The things we want to do, we don't do.

The things we don't want to do, the bad things, we so often fall into them. And we confess that, Lord. We say sorry for that. But we thank you that you love us.

We thank you that in Jesus you make it possible for all our sins, our wrongs to be taken away. And for all the righteousness of God to be given to us. So help us, Lord, we pray.

[19 : 41] Boys, girls, men, women, grannies, shenners, help us all to believe in Jesus. And to know that victory, that salvation that only he can give us.

And we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to read now in God's word. And we're going to read from Romans chapter 2.

Romans chapter 2. And we'll read the whole of this chapter. This is God's word. You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else.

For at whatever point you judge the other, you're condemning yourself. Because you who pass judgment do the same things. Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth.

So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience?

[20 : 46] Not realizing that God's kindness leads you towards repentance. But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you're storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath when his righteous judgment will be revealed.

God will give to each person according to what he has done. To those who, by persistence in doing good, seek glory, honor 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. There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil.

First for the Jew, then for the Gentile. But glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good. First for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For God does not show favoritism.

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. But it's not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight.

[21 : 50] But it's 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.

This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares. Now you, if you call yourself a Jew, if you rely on the law and brag about your relationship to God, if you know his will and approve of what is superior, because you are instructed by the law, if you are convinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light for those who are in the dark, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of infants, because you have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth, you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself?

You who preach against stealing, do you steal? You who say that people should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?

You who brag about the law, do you dishonor God by breaking the law? Well, as it's written, God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you. Circumcision has value if you observe the law, but if you break the law, you have become as though you had not been circumcised.

[23 : 24] If those who are not circumcised keep the law's requirements, will they not be regarded as though they were circumcised? The one who is not circumcised physically and yet obeys the law will condemn you, who, even though you have the written code and circumcision, are a lawbreaker.

A man is not a Jew if he is only one outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. Nor is a man a Jew if he is one inwardly, and circumcision is circumcision of the heart by the spirit, not by the written code.

Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God. Amen. And may God give us understanding as we come to his word.

We'll pray. Lord, we do pray for that understanding as we come to this chapter. There's much about it that can be complicated. There's much that we can struggle to understand.

And yet we thank you that you've not left us to try to figure things out on our own. But the Holy Spirit himself is given to us as our teacher.

[24 : 35] And we pray that we would know his teaching, his touch upon our hearts, as we consider this passage before us. Speak, Lord, into our hearts, we pray.

Give us ears to hear and eyes to see. And we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen. There are a few things that draw interest as quickly as a dark and a scandalous story.

We know that's how the tabloids make their money. They get to hear about some possible scandal. And they break it. More often, they check the truth of it. They break it.

And this scandal, as it's reported on the front pages, it sells thousands of newspapers. We know also this is how many social media posts go viral.

Somebody famous behaves badly and says something unwise. Another person catches on a camera and uploads it. And in no time at all, it's been shared far and wide.

[25 : 39] It's everywhere. And yet we know that we don't need the internet, and we don't need newspapers or phones for scandal to travel.

We know on an island, we know in village life, nothing moves faster than bad news about someone else. And that's our first point this morning.

Bad news about someone else. Now, we're in Romans chapter 2. We just read that. But if you glance back to Romans chapter 1, the previous chapter, we see from verse 18 through to verse 32 of Romans chapter 1, it's bad news.

It's bad news for the godless. It's bad news for the wicked. Look at verse 18. It's bad news, verse 21, for the person who neither knew God nor glorified God.

It was bad news about someone else. That's what they would have been saying in the church as this letter was first read. It would have been read amongst the Christians in Rome, the believers in Rome as they gathered together.

[26 : 52] And likely as this chapter 1 was read out, and as they heard God's word through Paul, the likelihood is that some people would have been nodding approvingly as they heard about these judgments that were pronounced on people who had committed all these offenses.

One of the commentators, David Coffey, says, some people might read the terrible catalogue of wrongdoing listed in Romans 1, 18 to 32, and with an air of moral superiority say amen to that, Paul.

We can imagine that happening. And although Paul would never have approved of this, we can imagine these verses where these judgments are pronounced, where these sins are condemned.

We can imagine these verses being taken hold of by some in the church fellowship and being lobbed like grenades in the direction of the people that they saw in their culture to be pronounced guilty in these verses.

We can imagine some who are church scorers taking hold of Romans 1, 18 to 32, and lobbing it in the direction of those who are not church scorers and who were guilty in their might.

[28 : 17] And sometimes we can be guilty of that, can't we? We can sometimes be guilty of taking Bible verses and throwing them like people like grenades, firing them at people like bullets.

And that, I think, is what some of these religious Jews that Paul wrote to were getting ready to do. The second half of Romans 1, Paul has given them the ammunition.

And now perhaps they're loading up their guns and they're taking aim at all the bad people that they could see. All these sexually immoral, all these wicked, evil, greedy, depraved people who, as Paul said, were full of envy and murder and strife and deceit and malice.

Look at 1, 29. We can imagine the conversation outside the church door. Let's go and tell these people the bad news about their sin. Let's go and tell them the bad news about God's wrath and judgment and anger against them.

Let's give them both barrels of this bad news about their depraved condition. Some people just revel in that kind of thing.

[29 : 31] There can be a tendency in us sometimes when spiritual pride creeps in that we want to rub salt in spiritual wounds.

We want to very quickly call down fire from heaven against other people. Remember the disciples, James and John. Luke chapter 9.

They've been in a Samaritan village and Jesus was not welcomed there. So what do James and John say? The sons of thunder, what do they say?

Well, Luke 9.54. When the disciples, James and John, saw this, they asked, Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them? Let's blast the place, they say.

But Jesus turned and rebuked them. And when we are in that mode where we are quick to condemn others for the sin that we see in them, when we're quick to want to blast them with the bad news about their guilt, and yet we're slow to reach out to them with the good news about Jesus, Jesus rebukes us.

[30 : 46] So often when we look at the way that Jesus treated people, he was gentle, he was patient, he was tender with those who were deepest in sin.

Think about the woman in John 4 at the well, a Samaritan woman with a bad reputation, but everyone avoided. Yet Jesus came to her. He reached out to her.

He spoke to her about the possibility of good news, of forgiveness, of having the thirst of her heart quenched. Think about John 8, the woman who was caught in adultery, and who was waiting for the religious people to throw their stones at her.

And yet Jesus deals with her with such tenderness. He doesn't gloss over her sin or the sin of the woman at the well. He called both of them to repent of their sin, but he doesn't rub their noses in their sin.

And I think that was the risk that was here in Rome, that the believers, having seen this list of awful sins, and heard about God's judgment and condemnation of those who were engaged in such sins, that the risk was that these believers would look disapprovingly around them, and with proud hearts would open fire, with harsh words directed at these sinners that were all around them.

[32 : 19] And so before they can do that, before they can fire their guns, Paul moves swiftly from the bad news about someone else to the bad news about you, as he speaks to the Roman believers.

So that's the second point. Bad news about you. And if we can put ourselves in the pews of the people who were sitting in the congregation in Rome, all of a sudden for them, the tables were turned.

Up until now, the spotlight was on the people around them, the pagans, the godless, those who knew nothing about God, the people that they saw and they recognized as being bad people who are deep in sin.

And as Paul gave his assessment of their sin and God's judgment on these sins, no doubt, as we said, some of them nodded in agreement. They were very comfortable with that, but now the spotlight turns on them.

Now the camera is focused on the congregation, the good people, in their suits and with their church hats on and with their Bibles on their laps.

[33 : 35] And Paul says, I now need to give you the bad news about you. And so they sat up and they listened. And you and I, we all need to sit up and listen.

Because very often, our judgment about ourselves, our assessment of ourselves and our own lives, can be way off beam. We see the guilt in everyone else and we miss what's in here.

Proverbs 21 and verse 2 says, Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord pondereth, the Lord examines the hearts.

So what does God see in the hearts of these religious people in Rome? What does the Lord say to these people as they sat in their pews and listened to this letter being read out?

Well, there's various things that God says to the Apostle Paul. The first thing he says to these people is, you have no excuses.

[34 : 47] Look at verses 1 to verse 3. You therefore have no excuse. You who pass judgment on someone else, for whatever point you judge the other, you're condemning yourself because you who pass judgment do the same things.

And so Paul goes on. I'm not going to go through all the verses in the time that we have. So what's Paul saying in verses 1 to 3? Well, he's saying the people that you're looking out the window at, that you have your long fingers pointing at, those who we recognize from verse 18 to 32 of chapter 1, he says, well, we can understand how they might try to make excuses for the sin that they're engaged in when they realize it.

But he says, you're not able to make these excuses. They, these people that you're pointing at, they, verse 21 of chapter 1, they don't know God.

They don't know about God's law. No one has told them who God is and what God is like. You, on the other hand, he says to the congregation, you do know. You've been told.

They sin and you call them out on that sin. But he says in verse 3, you do the same things. Do you think that you will escape God's judgment?

[36 : 12] And we can almost hear the howls of protest coming from that fellowship in Rome. What do you mean we do the same things? We don't murder. We don't commit adultery.

We're not in this category of sin. And yet, we only have to think about Jesus' teaching in Matthew chapter 5. The obedience that God requires is not simply outward.

It's heart obedience. We may not murder, but we often boil over with murderous thoughts. We may not commit adultery, but we may burn with lust.

And so we are left with no excuses. It's true, isn't it?

When we think about ourselves. Many of us have been taught since Sunday school who God is and what God is like.

[37 : 12] And that's a great privilege. One that we should be so thankful for. But if this morning we are still outside of Christ, we have no excuse.

How shall we escape God's judgment if we neglect such great salvation, says the writer to the Hebrews? How shall we escape God's judgment if we knowingly turn away from the Savior that we have been told about?

And the answer is we won't. Escape God's judgment if we neglect the Savior and the salvation that's offered to us. We will have no excuse.

That was the first thing. The bad news for them. Paul says, you have no excuse. You know God. You know his law. You have no excuse. The second thing he says verses 4 to verse 6 is you have no repentance.

There's no repentance evident in your life. Do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance, patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you towards repentance?

[38 : 24] Look at verse 5. But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you're storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath.

And so the verses go on. No repentance. The Jews at that time, they had a saying in their wisdom writings and the saying was this, even if we sin, we are thine.

Now what did that mean? Well it meant in that context, the context of the religious Jew, it meant we're special. We will get special treatment.

We can get away with sin because of who we are by birth. It's like the child at their grandparents' house. They don't eat the broccoli soup. We're not hungry, they say.

But then they have four chocolate biscuits immediately after because they know they can get away with that at Granny's house. And some of the religious Jews that Paul is addressing here, they thought they could get away with sin.

[39 : 35] They thought that they could get away with sin because God would let them off on account of who they were. And here Paul is saying to them, no that's not how it is.

And Paul has learned this for himself. There needs to be repentance or there will be judgment and wrath for you, says Paul, not salvation.

Paul needed to literally and spiritually turn around. He, as a religious Jew, was on the road to Damascus but he had to turn around when Christ confronted him.

He had to turn away from his sin. He had to turn away from his religion in order to take hold of the salvation that was offered to him. And we can imagine the Jews again reeling at this point.

How can he be saying this to us? Warren Weersbe, the commentator, says, the Jews may have argued back, surely God won't judge us with the same truth he applied to the Gentiles.

[40 : 44] Why, see how good God has been to Israel. But they were ignorant, says Weersbe, of the purpose God had in mind when he pointed out, he poured out his goodness on Israel and waited so patiently for his people to obey.

His goodness was supposed to lead them to repentance. repentance. Instead, they hardened their hearts and thus stored up more wrath for that day when Christ will judge the lost.

And what Paul was teaching here was simply what Jesus preached repeatedly. Repent and believe. If there is no repentance, there is no salvation.

It doesn't matter who you are or where you're from. And the question and application for you and I is have we repented yet? And are we day by day, hour by hour, people who are constantly repenting?

Luther, I think, speaks about the Christian's posture being a posture of repentance. It's not a one-off thing. It's a continual thing. Are we people who are repenting, turning away from sin?

[41 : 57] You know, God may have been very good to us as he was to Israel, he may have been very patient with us, he may have blessed us in so many different ways, but for what reason?

It's so that we will turn from sin and turn to him and be saved. And if we refuse to do that, no matter who we are, no matter where we're from, no matter what blessings we may have tasted in the past, there is no salvation, no salvation, only judgment, only wrath, only bad needs.

Proverbs 28, 13, whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

peace. And the sad thing about some in the congregation that Paul addressed was that there was no repentance, so there was no salvation.

Third thing here, under this heading of bad news, is that God shows no favoritism, and that's verses 7 to 11.

[43 : 20] And you can scan these verses yourself, I'm keeping my eye on time, but look at verse 11, it's made so plain, for God does not show favoritism.

Remember Josie Mourinho, he's the manager of Spurs just now, but he came to the English Premiership in 2004 as the manager of Chelsea, and in the early press conferences, he described himself as being the special one, and he seemed to think that he had license to say and do what he wanted on account of him being the special one.

And that's the kind of thing that was happening in Rome. There were Jews and there were non-Jews, Gentiles, in this church fellowship, and it caused tension, and Paul will address that in the course of this book, but it was also causing confusion, because some thought that their background would save them, that some of the Jews believed that simply because of their background, their Jewish heritage, that they would be saved, and Paul makes clear, building on the last point, God has no favorites.

There's no special treatment for some over and above others. Those who live for self, those who seek to glorify self, those who please themselves, those who reject the truth, those who are unwilling to be led by God's good and true way, those who follow evil, whether they're Jew or Gentile, will be lost eternally.

There will be trouble, there will be distress, there will be wrath, there will be anger. These are descriptions, ultimately, of hell. that's the teaching of verses 8 and 9. Then by contrast, we learn here that those who seek eternal life, those who seek to glorify and honor and obey God, they will be saved.

- [45 : 24] Not by what they do, unless we misunderstand the verse, but by what Jesus has done. Pursuit by faith of what Christ has done for them.

William Newell says people do not get eternal life by patiently seeking it, but if they are seeking for life, they will find it in Christ.

And that's always the key, in Christ, one of Paul's favorite phrases. It comes up in all his letters, in Christ. There's only one way to be saved, and it's in Christ, it's through Christ.

There are no exceptions, there are no special conditions, there are no favorites. You may have a godly mother, you may have a grandmother who was a missionary, a father who was a minister, an uncle who was a moderator of a general assembly, but it won't save us.

These may be privileges that we have enjoyed if we have had people who have pointed us to Christ, but these people cannot save us.

- [46 : 26] There are no favorites, only Jesus saves us. Tim Keller says judgment is impartial. What matters is not who we are, but what we do.

What matters is not our family or cultural background, Jewish, church going, completely cut off from the Bible and so on, but what matters is how we decide to relate to God, whether or not we're in Christ.

God has no favorites. The next point here is that Paul, or God, as he speaks to Paul, he looks into the life of some of these people and he says to them, there's no obedience.

That's verses 12 to verse 16. And if you just look at verse 13 to get the gist of this, 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.

Now in first reading, that may not sit easy with us. it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. We might ask Paul, is this a contradiction?

- [47 : 40] Because did you not say, Paul, in verse 17 of the previous chapter, that righteousness is from God? It's by faith. Is Paul now saying something different?

Is he saying that righteousness comes from works of obedience? Well, no, he's not saying that. Martin Luther, who so loved that text, Romans 117, and so loved the whole theology of the righteousness of God, the righteousness that comes from God as a gift.

He understood how all this fitted together. And Martin Luther said, we are saved by faith alone. But the faith that saves is never alone.

meaning it's accompanied by evidence, it's works of obedience. If the holy God comes into a life through the believer's faith in Jesus, then he begins to do a sanctifying holy work in that life.

And that will be seen, it will be evidenced in works of obedience. Keller again says, good works show us, good works show sorry, we have saving faith.

- [48 : 55] They do not add to our faith in saving us. Think about what Jesus said in John 14 and verse 15. He says, if you love me, you will obey what I command.

It's not an obedience that saves us. But if we are saved, if we are those who love the Lord, then we will want to live lives which are obedient to him.

And many of the church-going people in Rome, they flagrantly did not obey the law of God. Even though they had heard the law, even though they knew the law, even though some of them probably could teach the law, they didn't obey it.

God. And the bad news for them was that not only would they not be saved, but they would be judged more severely than those who had never heard and never known the law of God.

Now, Weerspey says, the Jews hear the law, but they refuse to do it. speaking of those in this chapter, the Jews hear the law, but they refuse to do it and will be judged more severely.

[50 : 20] The same will happen, he says, to sinners who hear God's word today, but will not heed it. You know, that's a serious thing to think about.

on the day of judgment, the fact that some of us heard the gospel so many times and refused it will prove to be very bad news for us because our guilt will be far greater than those who never walked in the door of a church.

You know, don't think they're just coming to the church, or don't think they're just tuning into a church service will automatically in and of itself do us good.

Don't think that just having a good head knowledge of the Bible and catechisms will do you good. Actually, it will do you harm if you and I do not act on what we know and put our faith in Christ, trust and obey the Lord Jesus.

will of God. Paul says to them in this point, there's no obedience. He charges them under that.

[51 : 42] Next, he says there's no integrity. That's from verses 17 down to verse 24. Look at verse 21 just till we get the gist of it.

You then, he says, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who teach against stealing, do you steal you say that people should not commit adultery do you commit adultery you who abhor idols do you rob temples you who brag about the law do you dishonor by breaking the law dishonor god by breaking the law as it's written god's name is blasphemed among the gentiles because of you paul talks elsewhere in 2 timothy 3 verse 5 of those who have a form of godliness but but deny its power and that's what he's addressing here he's addressing those who who use god's name and who claim to be god's people but but know nothing of god's power there's no there's no spiritual reality there's there's nothing that's touched their hearts there was a a disconnect it seems in the in some of the lives of of the people in that roman church there was a disconnect between uh who they said they were and how they lived there's a disconnect between uh what they what they preached and what they practiced and and people saw that and what was the result paul says in verse 24 god's name is blasphemed among the gentiles because of you you know if we are god's people if we are known to be to be christians to be christians what do our lives say about jesus are people attracted to jesus through the way that we live or are they repelled from jesus through the way that we live keller says are we living as an advertisement for god or as a keep clear sign for some of those that paul spoke to uh there were those who were keeping clear of christ because of the poorness of their witness there was no integrity in their lives and the final thing under this point is uh there is no salvation through outward religion verse 25 uh down to verse 29 and uh the word of you scan these verses that's repeated often circumcision i'm not going to go into the details of that it was the mark it was the bodily mark of of on the jew it was a sign of god's special covenant with his people and and some of the jews thought that that sign uh itself brought salvation a well-known rabbi at the time of of paul uh said circumcision saves you from hell abraham sits at the gates of hell and no circumcised jew is allowed to pass him now where did that rabbi find uh that uh which part of the bible uh did that rabbi get that teaching from well he got it from no part of the bible it's not true circumcision ritual outward religion does does not not save nicodemus knew that john three he was a circumcised jew he was a a teacher he was a a leader he had it all in terms of religion but he felt that lack and jesus told him uh you need to be born again needs to be a work done not simply on your body not just in your head but but in your heart and and for us today uh the issue uh is not circumcision thankfully but we we need to understand that uh that baptism uh communion having your name on a church role uh being a member of a particular

denomination these are not things that save us whatever markings of outward religion that we may sometimes be tempted to put our faith in we have to step back from outward religion does not uh does not save only jesus saves so that was the bad news that paul delivered uh for the the church there was the bad news about someone else woman's woman's 118 to 32 uh and then paul turns and he says let me give you the bad news about you and uh we see that as he goes through these verses and then uh we come to finish uh by by thinking about and thanking god for the good news the good news uh the good news uh that was for them uh and for us good news that's for everyone and the good news is simply this jesus saves now where does paul say that uh he says it in in romans 1 verses 16 to 18 that's what he began before he began to to speak about bad news he says i am not ashamed of the gospel because it's the power of god for the salvation of everyone who believes first for the jew then for the gentile for in the gospel a righteousness from god is revealed a righteousness that is by faith from first to last just as it's written the righteous will live by faith that's where paul began after he gave his greetings that's where he began with the good news about jesus and that's where paul will keep on returning to you know just like we sometimes we have a favorite place that we go and walk we have a favorite place that we go and exercise or we go and sit we keep going back to it paul keeps coming back to this message that righteousness comes from god righteousness is found in christ that's paul's gospel and that's good news for everyone whether we are knee-deep in in the sins of sexual indecency and greed and slander and malice and murder that whether we find ourselves guilty under the list of sins in romans chapter one or whether we find ourselves knee-deep in the sin of religious hypocrisy that paul deals with in romans chapter two the need we have is the same it's righteousness that comes from god and the good news is that it's offered to us in jesus he died for our sins our rotten depraved secret ones and our respectable religious ones and he died to make it possible for god's perfect righteousness to be to be given to all jew and gentile anyone anywhere anytime who will come in faith in faith in faith to christ so be encouraged this morning to come in faith to jesus just as i am as we'll sing without one plea but that thy blood was shed for me and that that that bids me come to thee oh lamb of god i come and we'll sing the words of that hymn to close just as i am without one plea but that thy blood was shed for me and that thou bidst me come to me

the word of god i come to thee oh lamb of god i come i come i come just as i am and waiting not to rid my soul my soul of one dark blot to thee whose blood my soul of one dark blot can cleanse each thought oh lamb of god i come i come just as i am and waiting not to come just as i am am but tossed about with many a conflict conflict many a doubt many a doubt fightings within and fears without many a doubt fightings within and fears without and there's a good way and that's why i am of god i come i come i come just as i am oh wretched blind sight which is healing of the mind yea yea all i need yea all i need in me i find of God

I come I come Just as I am wilt receive wilt welcome pardon cleanse relief because thy promise I believe O Lamb of God I come I come Just as I am thy love unknown hath broken every barrier down now to be thine be thine alone

[63 : 32] O Lamb of God I come I come come just just as I am of that free love a breath length depth and height to prove if here for a season then above O Lamb of God I come I come oom oom oom oom oom oom oom and may the grace of our lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all now and forevermore.

Thank you.