

God's Impartiality

In Romans 1 Paul began his argument about the sinfulness of mankind. He described how mankind has rejected God and the truth that has been revealed to them and as a result how God gave them over to sin to do all sorts of things that are not proper. In our passage, Paul now turns his attention to the moralist. He addresses Jewish self-righteous presumption that believed that because of their spiritual resume that they were not included in the indictment made on mankind in chapter 1. Paul's goal in these first chapters of Romans is to show, however, that outside of Christ ALL the world stands guilty before a holy God. Outside of Christ, no one is good with God.

Read Romans 2:1-16

1. How would you describe the "man" with whom Paul interacts in vv. 1-5? What does this "man" seem to think or believe?
2. What are the "things" that Paul talks about in vv. 2-3?

Brian said:

For most of us we are not Jewish so we don't have that heritage from which we think we have some kind of special favor with God. But there are other ways we do this. We think, "I grew up in the church. I go to Faith eFree. I memorize Scripture. I read my Bible. I don't do the really bad sins." Or even, "I'm an American." And we can think that simply because of such things that we have special favor with God and that just because of such things we will avoid the judgment of God. But Paul is going to go on and demonstrate that it is not these things that matter.

3. Have you ever felt that you had special favor with God on the basis of such things? Why or why not?
4. In 2:6-11, Paul makes it clear that we will all be judged based on our deeds not on our spiritual resume (e.g. Matt. 16:27; 2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Tim. 4:14)? How do you understand this? How does this fit with what Paul writes in Romans 3:20?

Brian said:

Some of you . . . easily identify with the picture of mankind's lostness that Paul painted in chapter one. You know that was your story. And so seeing your desperate need for Christ was easy. But for others, you don't see yourself in that picture as easily. And so seeing your utter lostness apart from Christ and your need for Him to forgive you doesn't come as easily. But Paul's point is that God is completely impartial. It doesn't matter if you've had a squeaky clean, religiously oriented life or whether you've had a life that has been a mess, full of all kinds of sin. For both, judgment is coming. And what is going to matter on that day is what you've done with Christ.

5. As you think about your background has it been easy to see your "desperate need for Christ" or has that been something that has come a little harder for you? Explain.
6. If you ever identified with the self-righteous kind of thinking reflected by Paul's imaginary opponent in 2:1-5, what helped you come to understand that you need Christ just as much as everybody else?
7. What do you sense is the main thing that God is saying to you through this study?

One new thing that we are introducing this week is a monthly stewardship moment. This is something that we are doing as a church to help all of us grow in the area of stewardship. Your group leader may or may not have your group discuss this in your group time. Regardless, we hope these will be encouraging to think about!

Stewardship Moment

Psalm 50:10 says that your heavenly Father owns the cattle on a thousand hills. If He sold some and entrusted you with the money and told you to invest it (**according to your passions**) for His Kingdom's work, what would you do with **His Money**?