

Romans, pt.3, 2.1–16, 9.10.06

Don't Go There!

Introduction:

1. Review 1.18–32; active & passive wrath; God's intentional non-intervention; Foundation – suppressing the truth; continuing in sin & normalizing it; flippant attitude towards God; knowing God but not honoring him; What giving over looks like – darkened heart, worshipping the creation rather than creator, all forms of sexual immorality; depraved mind.
2. Paul can almost sense their response. He stops & turns on his heels and says, “Wait a minute...before you think yourself superior...what's true of them is true of you...” He emphasizes the universality of sin among not only among the worst but of those who claim to be morally superior.
 - a. His response is almost like your spouses response when you want to tell an embarrassing story about her. She looks at you with this, “Don't go there...I also have embarrassing stories & more of them!”

Walk in humility, because we're all guilty – 2.1–4.

1. Read text
2. He's now addressing moral people, Christians, good church goin' folk...he's addressing people like you & me...There's a tendency to be harsh towards others and lenient towards ourselves...we tend to excuse our sins
3. Verse 3 – referring to 1.29–31. I take some comfort in knowing that the early church believers struggled with hypocrisy...taking a stand against sin, but then committing it
4. Verse 4 is critical. God is patient towards sinners...we take advantage of his kindness, tolerance & patience and remain in our sins...we take refuge in his mercy, while tinkering with our sins...we must understand that God is tolerating sin in order to

give us a little more time to repent...he's not reacting against our sin, because he's waiting for us to repent of our sin.

- a. Prophetically - we're living in a time of mercy (post 9/11; wars in Afghan & Iraq; tsunami; Pakistan earthquake; Hurricane Katrina; etc)...God is giving us time to turn from our sin into wholeheartedness...if we do this there is blessing & grace
 - i. God is weighing people, cultures & regions in the balance to see if there is repentance
 - ii. Don't become too smug to think that God couldn't or wouldn't allow a greater level of chastening to America. If all we do on the 5th anniversary of 9/11 is strengthen our resolve w/o turning from our sin then I think we're missing it.
 - iii. Jer.7 - the people believed that being in Jerusalem next to the Temple spared them from God's judgment; ultimately it didn't; God wanted repentance, but the people drifted further into rebellion
 - iv. If we don't turn from our sin during a time of mercy then we God moves into chastising us there's no guarantee our hearts will respond in repentance.
- b. God's tolerance for sin, should lead us to repentance and thankfulness, but for many it's just more time to stay in sin

Live in the light of the Judgment Seat - 2.5-10.

1. Read Text.
2. Don't want to go into the eschatological questions - when, where, etc.
3. He's not referring to a work's salvation...3.20 makes that clear. It's about impartiality - the religious/non-religious; Jew/Greek; everyone will be judged;
4. LIVE WITH THE END IN MIND - (September 10, 2007)

5. If you knew that in one year, you were going to stand before God and be judged how would you live differently? (DON'T WAX SENTIMENTAL THIS IS ABOUT JUDGMENT)
 - a. What one thing would you stop?
 - b. What one thing would you do more of?
 - c. What one thing would you develop?
 - d. What one thing would you fix/get right?
 - e. Since you don't know when your life may end, why don't you start today?
6. God's judgment is based on our actions
 - a. For the believer, we will give an account of our works – stewards spiritual gifts, resources, relationships, spiritual growth, taking care of our physical bodies & environment,
 - b. For the unbeliever, everything including their sin will be judged...thought, word, action, sins.
7. Wrath will be experienced by those who –
 - a. Refuse to turn from sin (v.5). You are storing up, like treasure, to be heaped upon you.
 - b. Live for themselves &
 - c. Reject the truth (v.8)
 - d. Continue to sin (v.9)
 - e. A word to those who claim to be Christians and continue in sin – (I'm not talking about those struggling & seeking a way out) How can I follower of Christ remain in sin and be content...at peace with himself...
8. Joy & reward will be experienced by those living an obedient life. They will experience –
 - a. Eternal life (v.7)
 - b. Verse 10 – Glory (presence of God); Honor (we will reign); Peace (inner wholeness) in this life and the one to come.
 - c.
9. I don't believe every Christian will hear those words, "Well done good & faithful servant." Those words are for those who lived an obedient & fruitful Christian. There will be weeping in heaven.

Rev.21 is clear there is weeping even after Jesus comes to planet earth...could it be that we're weeping b/c of an undisciplined life?

The Standard is the same – 2.11–16

1. Read Text
2. God is an equal opportunity rewarder & chastiser (2.11–12).
 - a. 2.6 – he judges everyone & no one is shown favoritism. We're all judged by the same standard – what did we do with our sins; what did we do with Jesus; what did we do with our lives.
 - b. The Jews have the same standard of salvation – faith in Jesus. Acts 4.12 was spoken by Peter to Jewish leaders. The fate of a Jew who doesn't confess Jesus as their Messiah is the same fate of a Baptist who doesn't confess Jesus as Lord.
3. Everyone knows the truth (2.12–15).
 - a. Jews have the Law (v.12b). The written word; today a large % of the human race has access to the Word of God. We have the Word; Americans will be judged more intensely by God than any other nation; American Christians will be judged more critically than any other group of Christians; American Christian pastors will be judged more deeply than any other segment
 - i. Luke 12.47f: "That servant who knows his master's will and does not get ready or does not do what his master wants will be beaten with many blows. 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.
 - b. The Gentiles have the moral law written on their conscience. (v.14f.). There is a moral sense of right & wrong in everyone.
 - i. No one is ignorant; we all know something of God (1.20).
 - ii. We all know right from wrong (1.32; 2.15).
 - iii. We've suppressed the truth & indulged in sin (1.18, 2.8).

This law (the Bible or inner conscience) should not be subverted by good intentions to remove its convicting properties. In an effort to make the gospel more accessible/relevant, sometimes we neuter it...we talk about finding purpose/destiny, learning how to be the best we can be, experiencing hope, but we minimize the part about the issue of sin in the human heart, surrender to the Lordship of Jesus, servanthood & judgment, because that's not really fun.

That sense of right & wrong is a part of our humanness & it's very healthy. Our conscience rebukes us for doing wrong & it makes us miserable until there's cleansing/forgiveness. We're doing no one any service by either trying to minimize or normalize that sting. It's like a person working near a yellow jacket's nest and they keep getting stung. They don't know what's happening or how to stop it, but instead of pointing out the nest and telling them to get out of the way, we hand them some anti-sting medication and pat them on the back and tell them it will be okay...it will never be okay. The other person's conscience is on our side.

Another thing about the inner workings of our conscience is this. When believer's stand up for higher moral standards, we are not imposing our belief's on people...we're only surfacing what they know to be true...we are elevating what is already inside most people. Why did the amendment pass in TX by such a large % defining marriage as between husband & woman?...it's inside us. As we tolerate sin (1.18-32) God allow our heart to be darkened so we can't make right moral choices and the lines between right & wrong become convoluted. Our moral decision making ability slips. People inherently know God's law is good for society...for it's the law of humanity...Don't let people try to intimidate you with a tolerance message when everything within you and from God's word says, "No, this is right" To give in to those messages, is to suppress that moral compass which God put inside of you.

4. God knows the whole truth (2.16). God know the secrets of the heart. This should stir something in us...as we're probing around in gray or even scandalous areas of mental morality, lurking above is

the presence of the Holy Spirit...gathering intel...and speaking us.
He's also there when no one sees the good, true, lovely & healthy thoughts.

Conclusion:

1. Before you start condemning others for their sins, walk in humility
b/c we're all guilty;
2. Live in the light of the Judgement Seat