

Grace Instead of Judgment

Grace—part 4

July 21, 2019

DAY 1: Our tendency to minimize our own sin

*Luke 18:9 To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told **this parable**:*

¹⁰ *"**Two men** went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.*

¹¹ ***The Pharisee** stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men--robbers, evildoers, adulterers--or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'*

¹³ *"But **the tax collector** stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' ¹⁴ "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."*

1. Man #1: the Pharisee.

a. Pharisees were religious leaders, considered the most spiritual in Judaism. They considered themselves experts at knowing not only the Old Testament laws, but all the many laws of “the Mishnah.” The Mishnah was an authoritative collection of exegetical material embodying the oral tradition of Jewish law and forming the first part of the Talmud.

b. In other words, if obeying the over six hundred laws of the Old Testament wasn't enough, there were Jewish scholars who broke down the OT laws into hundreds and hundreds of tiny “laws” that had to be obeyed as signs that one was obeying the OT laws. These men were experts at “keeping and obeying” all these tiny outer laws.

d. In reading the parable, what attitude(s) do you discern in the Pharisee?

2. Man #2: the tax collector

a. What attitude(s) do you pick up in the tax collector?

3. Read Luke 18:9. This parable was directed at men who do two things. What were they?

4. What do you think Jesus meant by those “who were confident in their own righteousness?”

5. Part of our sin nature is a willful blindness to our own sinful condition.

DAY 2: The reality of divine judgment

1. It is very easy to see the sin in others. It is very difficult, if not impossible to see the sin in ourselves. This is one reason why our world, and we, hate the idea of divine judgment. We “naturally” don’t see any reason why a good God would judge who is “basically good, like me.”

2. To address this blindness, God attacks this head on. He lays out the case for judgment, in hopes that we will take Him seriously, and take an honest look at ourselves.

Romans 2:1 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.

3. We may not consider ourselves “judgmental” or “passing judgment” on someone else, but listen to conversations all around you. What do you normally hear?

4. During the past week I have been to several coffee shops, restaurants, and stood in lines at the drug store and grocery store, and pumped gas. All around me were people either in conversations with a live person or on their phones, talking to someone. Here is a sampling of the kinds of things I heard.

___ Criticism

___ Sarcasm

___ Putting someone down

___ Gossip

___ Accusing someone of being a “hater,” which in today’s culture means, “you disagree with me.”

___ Some angry because they were cut off by some “idiot” in traffic.

5. This is partly what God means in Romans 2:1. Though we don’t believe we are “judgmental,” just listen to yourself through the course of the day!

6. Think back on the last few days. What kinds of conversations have you had? Have some of the things mentioned above come pouring out of your mouth?

7. What strikes you from today’s devotional?

DAY 3: Judgment that is true, and due

Romans 2:2 Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth.

1. Another reason our secular culture reacts so strongly to God's judgment is we assume His judgment is capricious, arbitrary, and not fair.

2. Paul is very clear about this matter. How does Paul address this question?

Romans 2:3 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?

3. Paul then puts together what we saw in Romans 2:1 and Romans 2:2.

4. How does he match the *reality* of judgment with the *truth* of divine judgment?

Romans 2:4 Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?

5. And, Paul exposes another reason for judgment in Romans 2:4. What is the reason?

6. Human beings are glad to receive all the blessings of this life as long as God does not require us to change or obey Him.

7. Instead, what should be the response of someone to God's kindness and blessings?

8. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 4: Judgment, for what?

1. When secular culture thinks of sin and judgment, we always jump to the “I’m a good person” defense.

2. We follow that with what we see as irrefutable evidence of our escapability of judgment, “I’m not an axe murderer or rapist.”

*Romans 2:5 But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed.
6 God "will give to each person according to what he has done."*

3. But what, according to v. 5 are two reasons for a coming judgment?

4. What strikes you about:

a. Stubborn heart?

b. An unrepentant heart?

5. Paul reminds us that God’s judgment is “righteous.” He means the opposite of capricious, arbitrary, and unfair.

6. How would you think about judgment if you KNEW God would be righteous in His judgment?

7. Paul then puts judgement squarely in our court in v. 6. What does he say?

8. What strikes you from today’s devotional?

DAY 5: Judgment and grace

Romans 2:7 To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life.

⁸ But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.

⁹ There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile;

¹⁰ but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

¹¹ For God does not show favoritism.

¹² 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.

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ (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,

¹⁵ 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.)

¹⁶ This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.

1. The rest of this passage in Romans 2 answers several other questions about divine judgment.

2. What should be clear by now is this. No one will escape standing before a righteous Judge and giving an account for how we lived.

3. Is this week's devotional meant to be "Debby Downer?"

*2 Corinthians 5:21 **God made him** who had no sin **to be sin for us**, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

4. The more we understand the reality of divine judgment, the inescapability of judgment and our own guilty position, the more we will stagger at:

- a. The wonder of the Jesus Christ who took our judgment upon Himself, and instead,
- b. Lavished all of His grace on undeserving people like us!

5. What strikes you from today's devotional?