

Dig Deeper: Romans 2:1-16

Overview

V1-4 God's inescapable judgement

V5-11 God's righteous judgement

V12-16 God's impartial judgment

- 1) V1-4 Discuss how these verses show that the self-righteous/the self-conscious moralist are just as deserving of God's judgement as the shamelessly immoral in chapter 1. Turn to Matthew Chapter 5: 21-30 to help discussions.
- 2) How does this apply to you? Where are you tempted to judge others to feel morally superior or to pretend you are less deserving of God's judgement?
- 3) Why is hearing about judgment actually part of the Gospel of good news? (V4 will help). How does this encourage us as we seek to explain judgement to others as we share the gospel?
- 4) Why is it important to pause and consider the full weight of verses 5-6? How does this help us in our evangelism?
- 5) V 7-11: 'Does this show salvation is by works?' How would you respond to this question? Why is the context of Romans important in answering this? Romans 1:16-17 will help. (See page 2 for options to discuss if helpful from the Romans Whatsapp group)
- 6) V16 What do we learn about Jesus' role in judgement?

Judgment will be through Jesus: Jesus speaks of this himself in **John 5:22** which says ' ²² the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son'. The Father has appointed the judge. I was reminded what a comfort this is to those who repent; our judge is also our saviour...

MG

I'm a bit confused by v7-11. David Cook says that Paul is not speaking hypothetically when he says ""To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he [God] will give eternal life."

In the past I've understood this whole section as hypothetical - "Hypothetically/in theory, if you live a good life, you go to heaven, if you do evil, you face God's wrath", the implication being "Nobody has lived or can live a good life, so we're all facing God's wrath. Is this not what Paul is saying? Is there an interpretation that doesn't involve Paul speaking hypothetically?"

CN

Hi Matt. This is indeed tricky. Quite often in Romans we will need to stop and prayerfully think through what are the options and which is most likely, here are 2 I have read about....

Option 1- v7-11 (and in fact 11-13) speaks of a theoretical perfection which if we could live like Jesus would mean that we would be in the right with God through works. Eternal life as a reward that no-one achieves. Not exactly "hypothetical" because Paul is speaking about God's objective standards, but not attainable by any as he concludes in 3:19-20. This would make sense of the "doers of the law being declared righteous" language of v13. Also it would explain the progression in these chapters. Paul is working towards "no-one righteous" in ch3, and only then will he explain how to be right with God by faith in Jesus. Douglas Moo takes this view.

Option 2. These verses talk about people who are right with God through faith in Jesus not by works, but whose lives are now committed to seeking to please God in response. In other words Christians. This would be consistent with language like "requirements of the law written on the heart" which looks like new covenant language (v15). Christopher Ash takes this view I think. John 5:29 may be a cross reference at this point.

Neither option would contradict Paul's current point that God 's judgement is impartial and fair (v11), or his big point coming up that we need to put our trust in what Jesus has done to be made right with God (3:21-26). And neither would contradict v6 that judgement is according to our works (which give an index of our faith), though the works themselves are filthy rags and unable to save.

There may be a bit of both- it's Christians who are enabled to "do good" by faith, or the do the good thing of faith- putting our trust in Christ. I have swung between both arguments. But if I had to choose I think I would go with 1. Hope that helps!