

Romans - God's Heart Explained

Week #3: Why do we need the Gospel? (part 2)

September 22, 2019

Paul's letter to the Christians living in Rome is perhaps the most influential book of the Bible outside the four Gospels. Its influence lies in the way God's heart is explained, and how His heart powerfully interrupts our empty existence. The American Pastor, Charles Swindoll describes Romans as God's grace invading the sin-fueled storms of our humanity - a grace that puts an end to our emptiness by offering forgiveness, new life through Jesus Christ and hope both for this present life we live and what lies beyond.¹ More than any other book, Romans explains our depravity, God's holiness, Christ's redemption and what new life in Jesus really means. You cannot follow Jesus well without comprehending what Paul writes to the Christians in Rome.

Our Sunday teaching on Romans this fall will speak to some of these deep truths that we must grow familiar with: human depravity; justification through faith; sanctification in Christ; glorification in God. But the mind is never the target ... it's our heart that matters. So, while engaging our minds with the goal of renewing them, we will consistently target our heart - because God wants our affections not merely our assent.

Study Questions: A Word to the Self-Righteous.

Read Romans 2:1-16

1. How big an issue is judging others in Canada today: really big? big? somewhat? not at all?
 - What types of things tempt you to be judgmental about those you know and those you don't? Where would others accuse you of being self-righteous?
 - Have you been judged as a follower of Jesus? How has it damaged your relationships?
2. In chapter 2, God uses Paul to carefully shatter self-righteous people - those who measure others against *their* behavior instead of Gods.
 - Read verse 1 again. Is it really true that the righteous do the same things as the unrighteous? What is Paul really saying?
 - Read verse 16. Because we all have 'secret sins', what's the fundamental flaw of the self-righteousness? What are your 'secret sins' and how do you hide them?
3. Paul clearly reminds us that there will be a day of judgment for all of us.
 - How often do you think about this moment in *your* future?
 - Preaching about God's judgment used to be far more common than it is now. Why is that? What response do preachers get when they preach on sin, hell & judgment?
4. Because God's judgment will miss nothing and be both impartial & fair, God really wants Jesus to be there advocating for us. The Judge is doing all He can to pardon you & I.
 - Take a moment and remind yourself (and each other in your Life Group) what Jesus is able to do that you are not. Read 1 John 2:1-2 & Romans 5:6-11.
5. Pastor Ken exhorted us to stop judging others, to stop abusing God's kindness & testing His patience, and to embrace our Advocate, Jesus Christ.
 - Refusing to judge others is difficult. It means loving people unconditionally while affirming only behavior that honours God, and remembering that I, too, am a sinner.
 - Are there people you are judging that you need to apologize to? Will you?

¹ Swindoll, Charles. Insight for Living Bible Study Guide: Romans 1-5. 1977, Insight for Living, Fullerton CA. Back cover.