

The Footsteps of Faith Series
Lesson # 2 “The Jews need for Righteousness”
Romans 2:1-16

Scripture: Romans 1:16-17

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.”

Introduction:

I can only imagine what the Jews must have thought as this letter was read to the Roman Church. I can see them standing tall with an air of superiority with maybe a huff under their breath. Perhaps thinking It’s about time somebody reminded these guys who is who around here.

I was thinking about the movie Titanic and how the rich, well to do people, in their arrogance had separated themselves from the common folks and didn’t even want to be around them. They looked down their noses at the lower class of people and thought the world somehow evolved around them.

They had their very own cliques and enjoyed feeding each others egos. And were prideful to the point that one man declared that God Himself couldn’t sink this ship.

Well as you know God did sink that ship and those folks found out on that day that they were all alike.

Transitional Statement:

Church, the Jewish struggle to make the transition from the Old Covenant to the New was difficult because they had bought into the idea that they could somehow control their own righteousness. That is was like some kind of pressure gauge to be periodically adjusted. But, in regards to righteousness God directs us to close our physical eyes and open our spiritual eyes and walk in the footsteps of faith.

Lesson:

I. The Jews were judgmental toward the Gentiles

Romans 2:1-4

1 Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. 2 And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things. 3 But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God? 4 Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

A. The “*You*”

1. In my estimation here is a transition from talking about Gentiles to talking about the Jews. There is some debate over where the transition is but I think this verse in language shows a transition and with the topic switches to a definite Jewish struggle.

B. Jews have “*no excuse*”

1. In our last lesson we saw that the Gentiles were without excuse before God.
2. Now, God turns to the Jews and says your guilty too !
 - a. This term “*no excuse*” is often used in a legal sense, basically meaning that there is no way to make a defense for your position.
 - b. Basically, the Jews can no more defend their position than the Gentiles can theirs.

C. “*everyone of you who pass judgment*”

1. The fact is that the Jews were a very judgmental group.
 - a. You see, the Jews were the folks that God had chosen to make into His nation. He called gave them His Laws and declared them to be His chosen people.
 - b. So it came with great surprise to them that God would, in these latter days, include the Gentiles. Ephesians 3:6
 - c. What was established in them was meant for all the world.
 - Most Jews wouldn't accept this
 - Jews that did, for the most part held a grudge against it.
2. Judgment here holds the concept of being judge, jury and executioner all rolled up into one.
 - a. So the Jews in many regards choose to take their place upon the judgment seat.
 - Looking down their noses at others.
 - b. Living under the old covenant, they had lived under a strict legal system that condemned them at every turn. So by the time of Christ they had learned to point the finger at others to take the focus off themselves.

- c. It is probably safe to say bitterness and the fear of exposure and condemnation was a key motivator in their hearts, instead of love.
- d. And in some sick twisted way the Jews thought perhaps that they could justify themselves by cutting others down.

-Do we ever get caught up in this?

3. This type of judgmental thinking lead them to prideful arrogance.

a. James 2:1-4

“My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism. 2 For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes, 3 and you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, "You sit here in a good place," and you say to the poor man, "You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool," 4 have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives?”

4. So what is the big problem with judging others

a. First, we are commanded not to do it. Matt 7:1

b. Our judgments are often wrong

- Don't know all the facts
- Don't know the motives of men's hearts
- How do we know the boundaries of God's mercy and grace? We don't

c. Do we ever struggle with being judgmental in the Churches of Christ?

-When I was a kid I heard on many occasions “If your not a member of the Church of Christ your going to hell!”

-You probably remember the joke that shows a person in heaven being shown around by Saint Peter and they ask who are those people? Saint Peter says sh! that's the Church of Christ they think they are the only ones up here.

d. Many times a deep love for the truth leaves us walking a fine line and it's easy to get off track.

5. Judgment belongs to God. 2 Cor 5:10 says that we will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. And will be judged with the same measure we have judged others. Matt 7:2

D. Basically the Jews were hypocrites

- a. You practice the same thing your judging them for
- b. Jews won't escape God's judgment if they do the same things
- c. Brethren let it be known that there is a willingness about hypocrisy that turns on God's wrath. And in so much as we would agree to one thing and do another God will turn violently passionate against us.

E. Then the Jews had taken God for granted.

- a. Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience,
- b. "Lightly of" disesteem or think against
- c. Do we take God lightly sometimes?

F. They had failed to see that God's kindness had led them to repentance.

- a. That salvation had not come by their own efforts.
- b. That i.e. it was the kindness of God's own heart that had drawn them unto Himself.

II. God's wrath was being stored up for the Jews because they wouldn't change their hearts.

Romans 2:5-10

5 But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, 6 who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS: 7 to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; 8 but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. 9 There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, 10 but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

A. The Jews were stubborn and had been for many centuries

1. In the Old Testament God says that they were stiff necked and He almost killed the whole lot of them until Moses asked God to spare them.

- a. I worked with a guy named Bobby one time that had been in an accident and couldn't move his neck. So he would have to turn his whole body every time he looked at something. Which for the most part left him judging what was really important and what wasn't so he could limit the number of times he had to turn his whole body to listen.
 - b. The Jews were, for the most part, only willing to look in the direction of their own understanding instead of being led by God
 2. Stubborn here basically has to do with their hearts being calloused.
 - a. Unwilling to let God have His way with them.
 - b. Un moldable clay.
- B. Because of their stubborn and unrepentant hearts they were storing up wrath for themselves.
 1. That is because of their unrighteousness
 - a. Obeyed unrighteousness....
 2. They were filling up a storehouse full of God's violent passion against them.
- C. And in the day of God's righteous judgment
 1. Both the (Jew and Gentile) will be judged according to their deeds.
 - Not judged by their nationality
 - Social status
 - Or religious affiliation
 - *But by their deeds... the obedience that their faith has led them to**
 2. To those who do good...eternal life, with glory and honor and peace
 3. To those who are disobedient.....wrath and indignation and tribulation.
- D. Then He says, First for the Jew and then the gentile
 1. The Jews were first.
 - God had given them his oracles
 - He had instructed them in His ways.
 - Directed them to Christ
 - *God expected more from the Jews.

-For they had sit in His class room for thousands of years.

2. And then the Gentile

-The Jews were not the end all of God's plan.

-God's purpose included everyone in salvation 2 Peter 3:9

III. Then God says hey let me spell out something very clear for you Jews.....God is not partial.

Romans 2:11

11 For there is no partiality with God.

A. God is not partial

1. He doesn't play favorites
2. He doesn't prefer one man over another

IV. Justification is a matter of the heart, not stone.

Romans 2:12-16

12 For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law; 13 for it is not the hearers of the Law who are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified. 14 For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, 15 in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, 16 on the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus."

A. The Gentiles were outside of the Law

1. But outside of God's law doesn't provide a safe haven for sin.
2. In short, ignorance is no excuse and doesn't release anyone from their responsibility to God.
3. And the Law would judge them whether it was formally given to them or not.

a. And as a result of their unrighteousness they would perish

B. But the Jews had been given the Law

1. And they were in sin also
2. But, they wouldn't find protection under the law, just judgment by it because they were guilty too.

C. Here God brings up justification

1. He says it comes from doing the law not just hearing it.
 - a. i.e. Faith is not enough....action is required James 2:26
2. You see, justification is for those who through trust in God have been moved to obedient action.

D. And the Gentiles although they weren't the original recipients of the Law they did by the instinct of their hearts the things of the law and became their own law.

1. And showed the law to be written on their hearts....

-As was prophesied would be the condition of New Testament converts. Jer 31:31

-Written on their hearts

-Instead of tablets of stone.

Conclusion:

- 1. Are you quick to point the finger at someone else?**
- 2. Does your walk match your talk?**
- 3. Has pride got in your way?**
- 4. Have you taken God's Kindness for granted?**
- 5. Has your heart become stubborn and calloused?**
- 6. Are you moldable?**
- 7. Today if God judged you by your deeds how would you fare?**
- 8. Is the law of God written upon your heart?**

Maybe a point we should all remember: None of us have a defensible position we must turn to the grace of God.