



Paul says that we are judged according to our works look at verse 1 again therefore you have no excuse on every one of you judges for imparting judgment on another you condemn yourself because you the judge practice the very same things what do I tell my children

[ 4 : 28 ] I tell my children who are very fond of telling tales when they point the finger when they point the finger at someone else they have three fingers pointing back at them don't they every time you point the finger you have three fingers pointing back at them and we so easily forget that the failings of other people seem so very obvious to you and I don't they she's such a gossip he's so full of himself she is so selfish he just loves being the centre of attention and we condemn them in our own minds if not in our own words and when we do that it is reassuring isn't it to ourselves that we are better that we are standing on the moral high ground but the point is we do the very same things ourselves we make excuses for our own failings or we may be blind to our own failings but the reality is according to chapter 2 verse 1 we do the same things and our judging of other people confirms how right God is to judge us let us look at verse 2 we know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who do such things do you suppose oh man or oh woman you who judge those who do such things and yet do them yourselves that you escape the judgment of God those who are the self appointed moral policemen are as verse 5 says storing up wrath for themselves on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed why?

well because of verse 6 verse 6 tells you he will render he will give to each one according to his works and so God's judgment in the end will be based on what we have done verse 7 they're not on your sheet they lay out two options of doing good or doing evil but the good option is only hypothetical the description in verse 8 is of those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth that fits all of us by nature never in the history of the world have people people been so informed as how others on the planet are behaving or misbehaving there's never been a generation like ours that knows so much of the misbehaving of others we see it on the news we see it on the internet the sins of our fellow human beings are everywhere and that can feed can't it a sense of moral superiority that there's always someone worse than I am how can people be so evil and that can feed our sense of moral superiority so imagine you've found yourself on the day of judgment standing behind a paedophile you're the next person in the queue after the paedophile and you think to yourself well surely after coming after someone like him or her

I would appear saintly but this is saying that each one of us stands when each one of us stands at the judgment we will not be judged on how we compare to other people it will be simply what I myself have done so listen to verse 16 on that day when according to my gospel God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus your secrets and mine everything out in the open when you stand before God on the last day the issue will not be whoever it will be it will not be I am better than such and such I've lived better than her or him no verse 11 says God shows no partiality there's no favoritism so imagine one day in 2035 when the cinema has finally been built in the evening and you go to sit in the afternoon showing after the evening lunchtime talks the lights go down you've seen the adverts and then the curtains kind of creak backwards you settle down with your popcorn and in front of a huge screen says this is your life and it's the unedited director's cut version and it shows not only your actions but your words and your thoughts we'd be horrified wouldn't we we will each be judged by what we have done but secondly notice that the judgment will be according to knowledge let me reach you again from verse 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 it's saying and to you and I which is quite helpful we will be judged by the standard which we've known so there are those who are without the law that is the bible those who are without the bible they will be judged by the life that they have had and verses 14-15 talk about this inner law that every single human being has we have it from God

God has written his law on our hearts but those of us who have the law who have heard God's word we will be judged by the greater light that they have now that is fair isn't it but that is frightening it means that the standard I have used to judge other people will be used against me on the last day so when I judge other people in my mind because they are a gossip or they are selfish or they are loving I have a standard that I am judging them by and that same standard that I know will be used to judge my life on the last day and the light that we have shone into the nooks and the crannies of other people's lives will be turned on our life and each of us every single one of us will be found in wanting and exposed therefore you who have no excuses every one of you who judges this is saying that those who think they are in their own mind better than other people you have no excuse

but the second type of person who thinks that they are an exception and that they will escape God's judgement and that is the religious person in chapter 2 verse 17 to 3 20 Paul is dealing with them and it's focused in the first places on the dew of his day but the principle applies to all those who think that their religion gives them special immunity from God's judgement so we can imagine can't be the response of the Jewish person of

Paul's day to what he said in chapter 1 they would have said Paul your description of the world is spot on the world out there you're dead right thank goodness that we are an exception we are God's special people thank God I wasn't born a Gentile rather a Jew and that sort of self confidence before God was rife among the Jews of Paul's day any form of judgement but it couldn't be referring to us it couldn't have been we've got special immunity as God's people but I want to say to you you don't have to be a Jew to fall into that trap the self confidence that the Jews had according to this passage really stood on two legs before God firstly there was the law and then circumcision so look at verse 17 but if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God what law is Paul talking about there he's talking about the law of

[12:18] Moses so the requirements of God given on Mount Sinai they're summarised aren't they in the Ten Commandments and the essence of that was to love God and to love our neighbour now the Jews they saw this special revelation it set them above all other nations verse 17 but if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God and then verse 23 let me read that to you it says you who boast in the law you who boast in the law the Jews of their day they thought that they were a guide to the rest of the world let me read to you from verse 19 and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind a light to those in darkness an instructor of the foolish a teacher of children having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth you teach others do you not teach yourself in other words what is Paul saying Paul is saying to the Jewish people of his day he's saying do you practice what you preach and the implied answer to all these questions is no isn't it in the law as verse 20 says they have the embodiment of life and truth and the trouble was as everyone else could see they didn't keep it verse 24 for as it is written the name of

God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you they thought it was safe and this presumption had spread from the synagogues the churches and you could call it ten commandments religion so religious people they pride themselves and they see themselves as being set apart from other people they know the ten commandments and they might say I'm trying to live my life by them although their neighbours might dispute that and Paul is saying that knowing religion and seeing yourself as a guide for others is not good enough for God to accept you on that basis you must live by the ten commandments and the problem is that none of us does that and that's the section in chapter 3 in verses 9 9-20 in this section there are seven quotations from the Old Testament and they ram home to you and I that no one will be accepted by God through obeying the law the ten commandments you've probably known that at one to four that deals with our relationship with God but commandments five to ten deals with our relationship to each other and we fail on both those accounts we fail in our relationships with God and we fail in our relationships with each other so look in verse 11 that's on your sheet it says no one understands no one seeks for God then look at verse 18 there is no fear of God before their eyes it accuses of everyone every single one of us of failing to seek and fear

God and the verses in between in between verse 11 and verse 18 accuse everyone of failing in their relationships with other people but just notice one thing with me that I can point out to you just notice how the sins of mouths come up the sins of our mouths verse 13 their throats their throat is an open grave they use their tongues to deceive speaking about our words you see where the emphasis falls the emphasis falls none is righteous no not one no one understands no one seeks for God there's not even one verse 20 sums it up if you want sums up the point if you've not got to it for by works of law no human being will be justified in his sight since through the law comes knowledge of sin what is this saying it is saying that those who build their lives if you build your life on religion if you build your house on religion you are building on sand and that sort of house was going to be flattened on the day of judgment it will offer you no protection and you may be thinking well if no one can keep the ten commandments why did

God even give the ten commandments isn't it like setting an exam that no one can pass what's the point verse 20 for by works of all no human being will be justified in his sight since through the law comes knowledge of sin why were the ten commandments the ten commandments were given in part to show you that you fail to show you that we are condemned it's like when you go home and

the sun shines through the window on those kind of autumn days it shows you the dirt doesn't it on the window it exposes it the light of the sun exposes the dirt and the law was given to expose the dirt in our lives the law was given to convince us that good works they are a dead end that leave us condemned by God the other leg that the Jews stood on one was the ten commandments the second was circumcision that cutting off of the foreskin and basically that was a sign that God gave and it was supposed to symbolise a heart response to God a life of obedience to the ten commandments which is the true putting off the flesh well let me read to you from verses 28 and 29 there's a contrast between the physical and the reality for no one is a Jew who is one outwardly nor is circumcision outward and physical but a Jew is one inwardly and circumcision is a matter of the heart by the spirit not by letter this phrase is not from man but from

God there's a contrast between the physical and the reality it's a matter of the heart someone who was physically circumcised and obeyed God's law from the heart they had nothing to fear from the judgment of God but no one did obey God's commandments as they should and without that obedience of a life seeking to live and follow God's law circumcision was neither here nor there it just didn't matter as verse 25 says for circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law but if you break the law your circumcision becomes uncircumcision it's saying without obedience to God's law circumcision the sign of belonging to God's people offers you no protection no protection from the judgment of God it will not make the slightest bit of difference on the day of judgment and the Jews relied on that sign they saw it this is a guarantee from God they thought that we will escape judgment what's that got to do with you today the New

[19:20] Testament teaches that the equivalent of circumcision is baptism and the mistake that the Jews made how they viewed circumcision I would want to argue is exactly how some people view baptism or christening they think I've had the sign and on that day just as much as it won't cut any ice that you've tried to keep the ten commandments or you've had a God baptism certificate or you've been circumcised chapter 3 verse 1 says then what advantage has the Jew what is the value of circumcision well it's much in every way because it points you to God but as protection from God's judgment there will be zero protection a large paper bag is useful isn't it a large paper bag is useful for lots of things but it's not useful on a rainy day and much traditional religion has gone down exactly the same route maybe you're here today and you think I'm decent

I've been baptized I come to the evening lunchtime talks I go to church it's the Jews with the law and circumcision and according to God's word that sort of religion will not work and what this means is there are no exceptions and all of us in God's court will be found guilty so let me read to you from chapter 3 and verse 20 where it says for by the works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight since through the law comes knowledge of sin we will have nothing to say in our defence before God we will not have a leg to stand on where does that leave us this lunchtime leave us with very relentless bad news and you have to accept the bad news before you can accept the good news and the good news of the book of Romans is that in Jesus

God has provided the solution for judgment the bad news is that there is no human solution there is no bridge that you can ever build over the gap to get to God's side you cannot live a good enough life being religious will not get you to God having religious things done to you will not get you to God the only bridge is Jesus Christ and so we must remind ourselves why was Paul writing this he was writing to Christians and so why did he tell them this and he told them it I think for three reasons number one so that they would get the gospel out your friends your family your colleagues who are religious are no better off than absolute pagan gods your most moral friend friend is no better off before God than your most immoral friend and all need the gospel and the second reason he tells us this is to get your relationship sorted and so in chapter 14 to 15 it's quite clear that the Jews and the

Gentiles in the church in Rome were not getting on and what chapter 2 and chapter 3 tells us is that Jews and Gentiles religious and irreligious we are in the same boat and not one of us has got a leg to stand on and so get the gospel out get your relationship sorted and then thirdly get your health checked because trying to build our own bridges to God is the default setting of your heart and mine and we are always tempted to drift back into thinking I can get my way to God and Romans 2 and 3 demolishes that and we return to the only solution which is found in the Lord Jesus Christ who is the power of God to salvation for all who believe let's pray