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No Excuses
Romans 2:1-11

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Martin Luther said in his introduction to Romans: “This Epistle is really the chief part of the New Testament and the very purest gospel, and is worthy not only that every Christian should know it word for word, by heart, but occupy himself with it every day, as the daily bread of the soul. It can never be read or pondered too much, and the more it is dealt with the more precious it becomes, and the better it tastes.”

In the first chapter of Romans, there was a clear statement that all men were without excuse because the truth of God had been written clearly

- Upon all of creation itself, upon the face of nature, we can hear God's voice.
- God has shown his glory and majesty through creation.
- In chapter 1, we are given one of two C's that speak of the existence of God: The first is Creation.
- Ex. I love the outdoors; I love walking in the woods. Have you ever just picked up a leaf and pondered its complexity? How about a porcupine? I was once sitting under a tree in prayer when I heard something. A porcupine was walking by.

Romans 1:19-20

...because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse...

Psalms 19:1-2

*The heavens declare the glory of God;
And the firmament shows His handiwork.
Day unto day utters speech,
And night unto night reveals knowledge.*

- Even the most remote tribes of the earth can see a Creator God, and they worship the creation itself.
- In Chapter 1 we studied that God gives us what we want. Burger King was not the originator of “Have it Your Way.” No, God was.
- In Chapter 1, verses 24, 26 and 28 we saw that we can have all the sin we want. God's not going to stop us. You can have it your way.

- Man is willingly turning from God. We see the rebellion of men.
- Paul wants to be sure that everyone knows, especially the proud Roman Jew, that all of us have no excuse. We are all sinners.

See Romans 1:28-32

- Paul is taking all of us to court here.
- He is not just condemning the unrighteous but also the self righteous!
- We have no excuse, none of us have any excuses for our self righteousness.

Now in chapter 2, we will read that man has no excuses because the truth of God has been written upon his conscience.

The second C: Our Conscience!

So God uses creation and our conscience to reveal Himself to man.

Romans 2:1

- The key word in this verse is “inexcusable.”
- The 1st chapter says in effect: Did you ever look at nature?
- Now, our passage says: Have you ever criticized anyone?
- Paul is painting a picture for the Jewish moralist, religious and self righteous, that they are all without excuse.
- The word “judge” is used 211 times in the New Testament.
- We all tend to condemn the wrong people and condone the wrong people!
 - We would not criticize someone if we didn’t have a conscience.
 - We would not criticize another if we didn’t recognize sin in others.
 - We can’t criticize sin in others if we aren’t aware of the existence of sin.

- But then the question is: “Have you ever not lived up to the light of your own conscience?”
- In other words, if you have ever been critical of others, you have condemned yourself.
- For even the finest critic has been guilty in some degree of the thing he has judged another!
- We always break the rules we set.
- It is noteworthy that Paul moves from the general plural in chapter 1, to the specific singular in chapter 2.
- We tend to think God is grading on the curve: “I’m not quite as bad as that person.”
- This is a question for all of us as individuals to deal with.
- We are all guilty! We are all guilty of judging others and having no excuse.
- Ex. As a matter of fact, sometimes I am the greatest critic of the faults in others in the areas that I have similar faults.

Vs. 2-3

- I once read these words: “The greatest reason why you should prepare to meet your God is because you must meet your God.”
- Ex. If you ask a person why he is going to the doctor, he will tell you why. If you ask a person why she is going to the dentist, she will instantly know why. There is a kind of imperious necessity to all we do and so it will be with God.
- The Bible clearly states:

Hebrews 9:27

And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment...

Our passage says, “*judgment of God... according to Truth*” (not speculation). All of us will stand before God, the Judge, and He will decide our case

- Ex. Once my wife was to be brought before a judge for an apparent traffic violation. She prepared her case with testimony, a video, and photos.

She prepared because she knew that there was an appointed time for her trial to stand before a judge. She would only have one chance to present herself—either innocent or guilty.

- All of us will appear before the judgment seat of Christ.

Romans 14:10-12

But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. 11 For it is written:

*"As I live, says the LORD,
Every knee shall bow to Me,
And every tongue shall confess to God."*

12 So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.

- So, how we judge others will determine our own case before God, our judge.
- Again, the point is that we all judge! We all judge others. Yet, are we perfectly living up to our own standards?
- There is a day coming when we will meet the Lord. Are you ready to stand before Christ?
 - He will ask, "Why should I let you into heaven?"
 - If you are preparing to point to your own self righteousness and acts of service, you will be rejected.

Isaiah 64:6

*But we are all like an unclean thing,
And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags;
We all fade as a leaf,
And our iniquities, like the wind,
Have taken us away.*

Romans 3:23

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...

- We deceive ourselves!
- Ex. Like the mirrors at the amusement parks, which make a tall man look short and a thin man look fat, our hearts deceive us.

Jeremiah 17:9

*"The heart is deceitful above all things,
And desperately wicked;
Who can know it?"*

- We all tend to justify ourselves.
- Ex. In Plato's *Republic*, we find the Greek philosopher saying, "Just as poets always like their own poems and parents love their own children, so those who have made their own fortunes are delighted with their wealth, as the work of their own hands."
- In the 17th century Glanvill wrote, "While all complain of our ignorance and error, everyone exempts himself."
- We are reading that we have no excuses! We have the truth as stated here in the Bible.
- The German writer Goethe, who wrote the great literary work, *Faust*, once said, "Man is a darkened being, he knows little of the world and least of all himself. I know not myself, and God forbid that I should."

Ex. We close the psychology books that constantly tell us that we are basically good. We close the sociology books that tells us that we are excusable because it is the culture that has created all these problems. And then we open the Bible and we read:

- We are a direct result of God's creation. Indeed, we are His highest creation, created in His image for His love.
- But, we have sinned against His righteousness and are all in rebellion to Him.
- We read that God sent His Son, Jesus, to redeem and restore us back into a personal relationship with Him.
- We think that there is something to salvage within ourselves, but we are all dark and doomed.
- Barnhouse writes: "The man who confesses that he is in utter bankrupt apart from the revelation of God in Christ as recorded in the Bible can reach the highest plane of knowledge of himself and his world because he has begun by obtaining the truth as it has been given to us by God."

Vs. 4

- Ex. It was the love of Christ that won my heart. It was when God gave me revelation of the loving and wonderful cross of Jesus Christ, that my heart and mind was transformed.
 - For all those years I had “despised” the love of God!
 - Despising means “to look down one’s nose at.”
 - I had despised His goodness, forbearance, and goodness!
 - We reject His grace and eternal love.

Romans 5:8

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

- And this is why we are all still alive, listening to this message today. If you are not a believer in Christ, the fact that God has not yet sent you to the lake of fire for your rebellion against Him, is because of His love and grace. He keeps giving you chance after chance to repent and come to know Him.
- This is a supreme act of love: A God Man, Jesus, died in our place on a rugged, jagged, brutal cross.
- God has given man a common grace, a grace for all of the human race.
- A trinity of blessing is ours because of His love: Goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering.
 - Goodness comes from God
 - This term is used 9 times in the New Testament.
 - It speaks of His moral goodness.
 - Another word would be “kindness.”
 - Forbearance also comes from God
 - It means toleration.
 - In classical Greek, forbearance generally means “to hold back; a delaying.”

- He is not tolerant of your sin, rather He loves you and He is giving you a chance to repent before judgment is released.
- God holds back His judgment giving you the opportunity to say “yes” to Him.
- Longsuffering comes from God
 - This is close in proximity to forbearance in that God’s love is slow in avenging wrongs.
 - Longsuffering is the idea of giving the easy side of the yoke, meaning that God takes the yoke to make it easier for us.
 - He gives grace repeatedly.
 - But the blackest of all sins is to reject the love of God.
- The purpose of God’s goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering is to lead us to repentance.
 - Repentance means “an about face,” to change direction.
 - If you are facing north, you turn around and face south!
 - Instead of confidence in yourself, you place all of your confidence and hope in Christ!

Vs. 5-6

- The sinner is running out of room and time.
- God is giving opportunity to repent, but if you don’t know Christ as your Savior, you are storing up wrath.
- He is hoping that His goodness will lead you to repentance.
- But the wrath of God is building up, building up, building up.
- And someday it will be revealed.
- We will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.
- Wrath’s Day is coming. You don’t want “pay back,” you want mercy!

Vs. 7-11

- God is just. He rewards good and condemns evil.
- But, lest we think that our good works are what makes us righteous, look at Romans 3.

Romans 3:10-12

As it is written:

*“There is none righteous, no, not one;
11 There is none who understands;
There is none who seeks after God.
12 They have all turned aside;
They have together become unprofitable;
There is none who does good, no, not one.”*

- We don't lack for knowing; we lack for doing.
- It is only the grace of God that enables us to do good.
- So, if you come today and you haven't given your heart to Christ, if you think you are righteous, but you haven't bent your knee to Christ...
- Turn away from your self righteousness, its filthy rags, and turn toward the goodness, forbearance and longsuffering of Jesus.
- He loves you!
- The evidence for a God of love is: Two C's
 1. Creation itself and all of its complexity and beauty.
 2. Your Conscience: If you have ever judged or condemned anyone, you have a law written upon your heart, given by God.