

## Romans 2

**Romans 2**  
**Tape #8119**  
**Pastor Chuck Smith**

We continue our study of this classic book in the Bible, written by the Paul the Apostle.

In chapter 1, verse 18, he tells us the wrath of God is going to be revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth of God in unrighteousness. And he tells us what men were doing. Because when they knew God they would not glorify Him as God, neither were they thankful. They became vain in their imaginations and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing themselves to be wise they became fools as they changed the glory of an uncorruptible God. And they began to fashion images like corruptible man and birds and creeping things. So God gave them up to the uncleanness through the lusts of their own heart to dishonor their own bodies between themselves. They changed the truth of God into a lie and they worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. So God gave them up to vile affection. The women changing the natural use to that which is against nature. And likewise also men, leaving the natural use of the woman burned in their lust toward one another. Men with men, doing that which is unseemly and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was fit. And even as they did not want to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them up to a reprobate mind to do those things which were not convenient. And thus being filled with all unrighteousness, and fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy and murder, debate, deceit, malignancy, whisperers, back biters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful, who knowing the judgment of God that they that commit such things are worthy of death not only do the same but have pleasure in those that do them.

Now, when you read that what's your response? What's your reaction? The wrath of God is worthy. Just nail them, Lord! They are horrible! They are guilty! That's awful to do such things. But watch out, because Paul said, *Therefore (because of all of this) you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.* Jesus said, judge not lest you be judged. And yet we find it quite easy to pass judgment on people, as though we know what they are thinking. As though we know what is their motive. We don't know what is in the heart of a person. We're so prone to cast judgment. Yet, we really don't know what's going on in their heart. We think we do. We say, well, did you see the way he looked, you know. Did you see that sneer? You know, and we are so prone to judge people. We're all different. A person may be doing the same thing but have a whole different attitude and heart.

I remember when I was just a small boy. My parents had gone to the store. They left my older sister in charge. We found some paint in the garage and decided to surprise my parents and paint the garage while they were gone. It was a bright red paint. But I thought that looks good on the garage door. So as they came home, I was busily painting the garage door. I couldn't understand why my dad was so angry. I couldn't understand why he gave me a whipping. Because I really thought, they are going to be so happy to see this new paint job on the garage. I thought they would appreciate it.

Years later, the chickens come home to roost. When I came home, I found my little daughter painting the garage. My wife screamed out in horror and was ready to correct her. I said, oh, wait a minute. Because I remembered my own experience as a child. And I, you know, said, honey, as you were painting the garage, what were you thinking? She said, I was thinking I'll probably get a spanking for this. But it's fun!

So you don't know what's going on in a person's heart or mind. We are so ready and quick to judge. But God has not allowed us that luxury of judging others. He has reserved that for Himself. Now the moment I enter into judgment on another person's actions, I am now possessing a knowledge of righteousness that is knowing that that is wrong. It's an admission on my part that I know it's wrong! And in the judging, I am actually acknowledging that I know the right from the wrong. Which means that I am inexcusable when I do something

similar. And so often as we judge another person for what they have done, in reality all you have to do is alter the circumstances slightly, and we find that I'm doing the same thing! Just alter slightly.

As when Nathan came to David and said David, there is a man in your kingdom who is extremely wealthy. He has more than he could ever spend. Herds and flocks. Next door to him there lives next to him a very poor man. All he has is one little ewe lamb. It's like a child to him. It eats at his table and sleeps in his house at night. And the rich man had company come for dinner. He ordered his servants to go and by force take the one little ewe lamb from the neighbor and slaughter it in order that he might feed his guests. And David's righteous indignation raised within himself and he said, that man will surely be put to death! Nathan said, David, you are that man.

You see, change the circumstances slightly. Change the story and we find that quite often, we are guilty of judging someone for the same things that they are doing. Only with a slight change of the story. We often are the guilty ones. We're the man. So, we are inexcusable in judging others. As we have pointed out this morning, God sees our hearts. And the law was intended to deal with the spirit, the attitude of man. And interpreting the law to only deal with its physical, outward, was a mistake. Thus I could be guilty of murder without ever touching another person. But by the hatred, the absolute hatred, that I have for them. It is brewing in my heart. Jesus said that I'm guilty of murder.

I may never enter into with a physical relationship with another woman, other than my wife. And yet, if I am lusting and desiring a relationship, then I have already have committed adultery in my heart. So as Paul gives us this list of things that are being done by the pagan world, the murder, adultery, fornication, and all, he says not only do they do those things, but they take pleasure in those that do them. Now today in the film industry, Hollywood, what are the things that are being portrayed in the movies? Murder, violence, fornication, adultery. Do you watch those movies? Why do you watch those movies? As you are watching them, do you think, that is terrible? Nobody should do those things. That's awful. I hate that. I don't want to see that kind of stuff. Are you really turned off by it or are you turned on by it? You see if those kind of things, and the only reason that I can understand a person really watching that, is that it does turn them on. You see, if it didn't you wouldn't be watching. But as you watch, if you are taking pleasure in those things. If you are deriving pleasure out of that movie that is portraying adultery or fornication or murder or whatever, if you take pleasure in that, yet you are judging people that do those things, then you are taking pleasure in it yourself, you see, then you are guilty!

Therefore you are inexcusable O man whoever you are who judges another, and yet you are doing the same thing. Now that is a real fallacy with our judgment. I have no right to judge, that is to condemn. As supposing that I know what is in a person's heart and I know their motives. The judgment of man is often faulty but the judgment of God is true. So Paul teaches us about God the judge here in chapter two. And he tells us about the judgment of God that is coming. And that we need to realize there is a day of judgment coming! People do not get by with evil, though it appears many that they are getting by with it. In the end you will not get by with evil or with sin. There is a day of reckoning. There is a day of judgment. It may not be in this lifetime, but it will come. You don't get by with sin.

<sup>2</sup>*But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things.* God is going to judge them. And His judgment will be according to truth. For God knows what's in their heart. In the day when the secrets of the heart will be revealed. God knows what's in a person's mind. You remember when Ezekiel the prophet had a vision (Ezekiel 8:7). He saw this wall. God said dig a hole through the wall. He dug a hole through the wall. When he went inside the room, God said, crawl in the room there. When he went inside, he saw all kinds of filthy pornography, paintings and all on the walls. And God said, I have allowed you to enter into the chamber of the minds of the leaders of Israel. You're seeing what they're thinking in their minds. God knows our thoughts. God knows our hearts. And thus the judgment of God will be according to truth. Our judgment is not always according to truth. It is as we perceive many times what truth is, but often our perceptions are faulty.

The second thing, <sup>3</sup>*And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God?* God's judgment is inescapable! No man can escape the judgment of God.

<sup>4</sup>*Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?* God is so patient. He deals with us with such patience and longsuffering. He is

so forbearing with us. He doesn't strike immediately. In His goodness He gives time for repentance. He calls us to repentance. He is patient and longsuffering as He waits for us. But the whole purpose of God is that it might bring you to repentance. Now, here is the problem because so often because God is so longsuffering, because God seemingly is allowing you to get by with it. Or you see someone else doing these things and seemingly God is allowing them to get by with it. We begin to mistake the longsuffering of God as weakness. As though God is not able to judge. And that is not a grave mistake to make, interpreting the patience and the longsuffering of God as weakness. But there is one mistake even worse! And people make this mistake. They think that the longsuffering of God constitutes approval. That God actually is approving the things that they are doing. And that is a fatal mistake! God in His forbearance and longsuffering is giving you an opportunity to repent. Because God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9). But you are not to despise this forbearance and goodness of God, but realize that their purpose is to bring you to that repentance. God is slow to anger. God does not want to destroy you. Through the prophet Ezekiel (Ezekiel 3:18), God cried out to those sinful people, "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will you die?" He said, "I don't have any pleasure in the death of the wicked but that they might turn from their wickedness and live." God loves you more than you can ever realize. And in spite of what you are doing, God is patient and He gives you time and space to repent. But there comes a day and make no mistake about it, when God will judge. And if you have not repented of your sin and turned to Jesus Christ then you will face the wrath of God against all sin.

<sup>5</sup>*But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,* (What's happening if you continue in sin and in these practices, God is longsuffering and He is patient. You begin to misinterpret it and think that He is weak or He approves. Actually what is happening is that it's like a river that is being held back by a dam and the water keeps flowing in. But one day the thing is going to burst and the thing is going to burst and the water is going to come flooding out in an uncontrollable surge and force. And thus the wrath of God, the indignation against the sin is building up. You are treasuring through the hardness and impenitent heart this storing up this wrath of God. That when the day of judgment comes, it's going to be revealed. The righteous judgment of God. And thus this next thing we learn about God's judgment. It's righteous, according to truth, it is righteous judgment. When God is judging the world, in the book of Revelation as the sixth vial, I think it is, that is poured out. There comes forth the voices from the altar, that say, "Holy and righteous are Thy judgments, O Lord." The acknowledgment in the midst of the great tribulation period.

For God <sup>6</sup>*who "will render to each one according to his deeds"* God will be righteous in His judgment. Every man will receive from God according to his deeds. Now: <sup>7</sup>*eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality;* God will judge them and reward them with eternal life.

<sup>8</sup>*but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness--indignation and wrath,* (They will receive the indignation and wrath of God. God's judgment will be righteous. It'll be according to truth. And if you are patiently continuing in seeking to do the will of God, and you are seeking the glory of God and the honor for God in your life, God will give you eternal life! But to those who do not obey the truth and follow after unrighteousness, it will be His indignation and His wrath) <sup>9</sup>*tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek;* The Jew first because he has been given the most light and understanding. To them were given the oracles of God, the law of God. And thus with these privileges comes a greater responsibility. That is true for us in this day. God has given us His Word and the knowledge of His Word. Knowing the truth brings a responsibility unto each of us of obedience to that truth that we know. The greater the light, the greater the responsibility. For we will be judged according to the light that we receive.

But in contrast, <sup>10</sup>*but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.* <sup>11</sup>*For there is no partiality with God.* You are as important to God as anybody else in the whole world. God loves you supremely. God is no respecter of persons. Often times I'm embarrassed because people come and say, I want you to pray for this because you are closer to God than I am. Not so! I'm not closer to God than you. All of us are equally close to God. As Paul said to the Athenians, in Him we live, we move, we have our being. I may be more conscious of the presence of God than you, but surely not any closer. And God doesn't respect me or my prayers any quicker than He does yours. God is no respecter of persons. God doesn't say, well,

Chuck is calling on Me. Isn't that great? Great, to hear from you, isn't that fine? How have you been doing? And so I don't have any special privileges or "ins" or whatever. God is no respecter of persons. He will receive you just as He will receive me. You are as important to God as the Pope. Man elevates other men. In God, we are all at the same level when we stand before Him. You are important to God! He is no respecter of persons.

<sup>12</sup>*For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, (Now people always say, what about that poor man in the dark areas of Africa, who has never heard of the gospel of Jesus Christ? Paul deals with that issue here. Those who have sinned without knowing the law of God will perish without the law.) and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law* <sup>13</sup>*(for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified; But in the next chapter he is going to show us that no one has done or kept the law. There is none righteous. No not one. We have all sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Those that have the law will be judged by a higher standard than from those that did not have the law.)*

<sup>14</sup>*for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves,* <sup>15</sup>*who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them)* In other words, every man, whether or not he knows the law of God or the word of God, has the conscienceness of, "This is right or this is wrong." There are things that he knows that he should do and things that he knows that he shouldn't do. And no man has been totally obedient to his own standards that he knows are right to do. All have sinned. Those who have the law have violated the law. Those that do not have the law, the ten commandments and all, still have an awareness that it is wrong to hurt. It's wrong to bring pain. It's wrong to take from someone else. There is that innate law that is written in a person's heart. And thus even because he may not know or have the law of God, he'll still be judges according to that law that God has written in his heart. The standard that God has placed in his own mind and conscience. There's not a single one of us here tonight who have not had the voice of conscience say to us, that was wrong! I don't think there is. If there is, please stand up and identify yourself. So we're all guilty. The degree doesn't matter. We are guilty! The Bible says if you keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, you are just as guilty as if you broke them all. For it is written, cursed is the man who continues not in the whole law to do all that is written therein. How many violations does it take to make you guilty? How many times do you have to go on the freeway at seventy-five miles an hour to be guilty of breaking the law? If an officer pulls you over and you say, well, I've only done this five times, you know, it's not fair. Everybody else is going past me and all. Well, you know, you are guilty! Once, you are guilty. And you may do it just once and get caught, but still you are going to have to pay the same fine as if you had done it a hundred times and finally got caught on the one hundred and first time. Guilty. We all are guilty before God. And that's what Paul is bringing us to in this as he really elaborates this when we get into the next chapter, but Jew or heathen. The Jew has the law, the greater knowledge. Judged by a higher standard. We who are Gentiles without the law, will be judged by the law that God has written in our hearts. None of us shall escape. This law of God written in our heart shows the work of the law whereby the conscience also bearing witness and their thoughts accusing or else excusing them.

<sup>16</sup>*in the day when God will judge the secrets of men* (Ooooh. Have you ever thought what it would be like to stand before God in judgment and try to declare you innocence? To try to lie your way out of it? Well now God, that's not what I was thinking. Oh, it isn't? Gabriel, project on the screen what was going on in their mind when they were doing that. God will judge according to the secrets of men) *by Jesus Christ, according* (Paul said,) *to my gospel.*

<sup>17</sup>*Indeed you are called a Jew, (Now he is addressing the Jews very directly. Up until this point it's pretty much all of us, whoever you are who is judging another and yet guilty yourself.) and rest on the law, and make your boast in God, (We are Jews. We have the law of God. God has spoken to us and given to us His laws. You boast of the fact that you know the will of God.)*

<sup>18</sup>*and know His will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, (The Jew was very proud and rightfully so of the fact that God had spoken to them and the nation as He was seeking to prepare a nation through which He might bring the Messiah into the world. And thus they were very proud of the fact that God had delivered to their fathers, the Law, God's Law.*

<sup>19</sup>*and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,* (You have the light of God. You have the knowledge of God. And it's a very heady thing. God has spoken to me! God has revealed His will to me! I've been instructed by God.)

Thus you look at yourself as <sup>20</sup>*an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law.* Thus, their position, as instructors of God's laws. An instructor of righteousness. James sort of warns us against this. He said, be not many masters, knowing that you will receive the greater condemnation. To teach God's truth again brings an awesome responsibility. To say that I am bringing to you God's Word, which I feel that I am because I'm going straight through the passages. But to be a teacher places me under a greater responsibility before God as I teach you what God has said that we should do or should not do. And I'm declaring to you the truth of God, then if it isn't being fulfilled in my own life, I stand in a greater judgment because I know the truth. I am a teacher of the truth.

<sup>21</sup>*You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself?* (And let me say this, yes! So often a person will come up to me after a sermon and say to me, that was just for me. And I'm thinking, no, it was just for me! Oftentimes I am convicted of God as I am ministering the truth of God, it'll strike my own heart and I will feel the conviction of God. And often times as I am speaking, I am repenting. You teach others, but don't you teach yourself?

*You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal?* Do you sometimes take that which is not rightfully yours? Are you stealing from your boss by not giving him a full eight hour day? You see it can be in so many forms.

<sup>22</sup>*You who say, "Do not commit adultery," do you commit adultery?* Are you as Jesus said, looking at a woman and desiring her in your heart? We say oh no, you shouldn't commit adultery. That is one of the works of the flesh. And we know that they which do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But am I guilty of looking lustfully at a woman and desiring her?

*You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?* We look at idolatry and people making little images, Budda and other images. And we say isn't that ridiculous? And yet so often in your heart, there are idols in your heart. You've never formed one out of wood or stone. But within your heart there is idolatry because of your love for other things that exceed your love for God. Your God is the chief love in your life. Whatever you love more than anything else is your god. And He said Thou shall love the Lord Thy God with all thy heart. The love for Him has to be first. You who abhor idols but do you commit sacrilege?

<sup>23</sup>*You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law?* They were boasting, that we have the law of God. But just having the law isn't sufficient. And in the breaking of the law you actually are dishonoring God and bringing disrepute to God. The sin of David with Bathsheeba. When he was faced by the prophet with this sin, one of the by products of David's sin, according to the prophet was, you've caused the enemies of God to blaspheme. In other words, they know, David, that you love God. They know, David, that you have the law of God. They know, David, that you are a man of God. And yet, by this sin, now the enemies of God, those that hate God, you've given them a opportunity to blaspheme God. Look at David, he's supposed to be, you know, and look at what he had done. And that's the tragic by product of our sin so often, is that here we are taking the name of Christ, we're known as Christians, and then if we take advantage of someone. If we cheat in a business deal, if we are deceptive in our practices, it causes people to blaspheme Jesus. They say, he's supposed to be Christian, but do you know what he did? And the name of Christ is disgraced and blasphemed many times by the things that we do. So the prophet is rebuking David because of his actions that brought disgrace and blasphemy to the name of God.

<sup>24</sup>*For "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you," as it is written.* Written in the prophet of Isaiah.

<sup>25</sup>*For circumcision* (He said, which was the badge of the covenant which was given to Abraham. Abraham you will be My people. I will be your God. I will bless you. I will multiply you. Nations and kings shall come from you. I'll give to your descendants the land in which you dwell. Now as a sign of this covenant, you are to be a spiritual people, you are to be the father of a spiritual nation. You are to be a father of those who believe in Me. People who live and walk after the Spirit and not after the flesh; therefore the male children that are born,



your descendants are to be circumcised. The flesh is to be cut off, indicating that they are not to live after the flesh but they are to live after the Spirit. So it is a ritual even to the present day among the Jews. The badge of a Jew is this circumcision, the covenant of God. He speaks of the covenant of God to Abraham. When a person wanted to proselytize into the Jewish faith, one of the requirements was circumcision. An acclimation that I'm going to live after the Spirit. I'm not going to live after the flesh. Now when the Gentile church began to spread, there were certain Jews that felt you can't be saved unless you are circumcised. And they began to create problems in the Gentile church in Antioch, saying unless you are circumcised and keep the law of Moses, you can't be saved. And the first church counsel was convened to order to deal with this very issue. Of whether or not circumcision was essential for salvation. Paul later in writing to the Galatians got a little testy on the issue. Those that were coming and troubling the Gentile believers, saying you've got to be circumcised and getting a little testy, he said I wish they were castrated, they that trouble you like this.

But here Paul is declaring that circumcision doesn't profit you. *It is indeed profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision.* It's just like you weren't circumcised. So it is, the ritual, doesn't save you. The law doesn't save you. Having the law doesn't save you. It doing the law, but we can't. Keeping the ordinances of the law, circumcision, that doesn't save you. For if you are circumcised and still you don't keep the law, it's as though you weren't circumcised.

<sup>26</sup>*Therefore, (If that is true, then, reversing that) if an uncircumcised man (the Gentiles) keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision?* Because, you see, it's an issue of the heart. That's what God is interested in. Thus with baptism in the Christian faith, one of the rituals of the Christian church. Same thought, the baring of the life of the flesh to live a life of the Spirit. The water representing the grave, the old life, governed by the flesh, buried. I rise up out of the water in newness of life in Christ Jesus to live after the Spirit. But if I rise up out of the water and still live after the flesh, then the baptism is totally meaningless. It doesn't count. But if a person is living after the Spirit though he has not been baptized, the issue is that in his heart is where the true baptism takes place. It's in my heart that I determine to live after the Spirit and to walk after the Spirit. And I believe that there will be many people in hell who have been baptized. And by the same token, I believe that there will many in heaven who were never baptized. That is, as a physical going under the water. Yes, I think it is important. Yes, I think you should. Yes, it is obedience to the command. But I don't believe that it's essential to salvation. The physical action of baptism. Certainly the Spiritual in a person's heart is essential.

<sup>27</sup>*And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, (That is those Gentiles who are called the uncircumcision.) judge you who, even with your written code and circumcision, are a transgressor of the law?*

<sup>28</sup>*For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh; <sup>29</sup>but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.* The Jews were in conflict with Jesus often. And in one of their conflicts, recorded in John's gospel (John chapter 8), they made their boast of being Jews. We are the children of Abraham. Jesus said if you were the children of Abraham then you would have believed me. But you are of your father, the Devil. Now they said they were Jews, but not all that say they are Jews are true Jews. Because it isn't a thing of physical descendancy. It's what is in a person's heart. A true Jew is a thing of the heart not of the flesh.

Jesus said in the letters to the seven churches in Revelation, He said, I know those who say they are Jews, but are the synagogue of Satan. Now Paul here is talking about the true Jew is not one outwardly. Not a person who is just one outwardly. That doesn't make you a Jew. The circumcision is not an outward action. A Jew is one inwardly. One who had dedicated and committed his life to God. And it's the circumcision of the heart that counts before God. A man who walks after the Spirit in truth and not in the letter. And the praise is not of man, but he receives the praise of God and the acknowledgment of God! And thus we should seek the praise of God, the acceptance of God. Not of man, I'm not worried about that. But I'm right before God. My heart is right before God.

So Paul continues this very same thought as we go into chapter three. He is going to show that we are all of us guilty, Jew and Gentile alike. And thus we, all of us, need a Savior, which God has provided in Jesus Christ. So a tremendous, tremendous, presentation of the gospel, showing that all of us, Jew and Gentile alike, have come short of the glory of God. There's none of us who are righteous, no not one. So all of us need a Savior. And

Jesus Christ is that Savior. That we will get in chapter three as we move on in this glorious presentation. This presentation of Paul of the gospel and the way he presents his case is so classic that it used to be in the law school at Stanford University, the requirement for graduation in a law course was the memorizing of the first eight chapters of Romans. It's such a clear, powerful presentation that it was used as a sample of how to present a case. And the law students had to memorize it. I imagine things have changed by now. But it is just inspired of the Spirit. Just a classical presentation.

Father, we thank You for Your Word and we ask Lord, that You will help us. That we might leave judgment, Lord, to You. And rather than looking at others, may we allow You, Lord, to look at us. To see us, Lord, and may, Lord, You reveal to us those things in our lives that are displeasing, unkind, unlike You. For we desire, Lord, to be like You. So Lord, move in our hearts and in our lives. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.