The Book of Romans

Part One: God’s righteousness is revealed in His just wrath

against mankind’s sin. (1:18–3:20)

***Sinners? Oh, you mean them, right?***

***Romans 2:1-16***

The end of Romans one (1) leaves us reeling in the indictment of our humanity. We have left God, abandoned Him for idols, worshiped Creation rather than the Creator, and have been swept into a downward spiral of sin. That spiral was so deep that it drew us into unnatural sin, and so wide that it included every kind of sin imaginable: sins of head, heart, body, mind, relationships, attitudes, omission and commission. From gluttony to greed, from lust to murder, from hatefulness to heartlessness, it seems that Paul has covered all possible sins (1:26-31).

Except for one, the sin of all sins, self-righteousness. It’s even worse than outright unrighteousness, because even criminals know they are doing wrong. But the self-righteous person not only pretends that he does not sin “like *those* people,” but that he somehow overlooks in himself any sin at all.

These people were targets of Jesus’ most scathing rebukes, and the Apostle here seeks to arouse them from their spiritual slumber before it is too late. Luke 10:25-29; 11:37-54; 16:13-15; 18:9-14; *etc.*

***Judging others proves only that you are hard-hearted, not that you are righteous.***  vv. 1-5

Jesus declared the principle this way: “Judge not lest you be judged,” (Matthew 7:1-5). This kind of judgment is not “discernment,” which we clearly are to practice. Jesus and Paul are showing that our own judgment of others blinds us to our own sin, prompting us either to presume on God’s grace or forget that we, too, will be judged. Our pre-sent moments should be spent in repentance of our own sin and seeking God’s favor rather than condemning others.

***Besides, God judges us on our obedience to the truth as shown by our life, not our words. vv. 6-11***

Here is one of many times the Bible says that we will be judged by our deeds. This does not mean that we curry God’s favor through them, but that we reflect His favor in them. The proper order is clear: grace comes, we believe, then we do good works. Ephesians 2:8-10; Titus 3:1-8; etc. Our works are not the works of the law, but works of faith. The self-righteous Paul is addressing are concerned about appearances, not substance. They want to appear holy, not to be holy.

***And having God’s Law increases our guilt, not our grace. vv. 12-16***

The history of Israel shows that the Law of Moses served only to make Israel more wicked. Our innate sinfulness is more exposed every time a new law is added, since it provides a new opportunity to rebel. Paul will have much more to say about the Jews and the Law (especially in chapters five through eleven) but here he lays out the principle that merely having the law means little if we are bent on breaking it, and if we understand that all human government is based upon principles we “just know” (such as it is wrong to take what does not belong to you, lie to give yourself an advantage, dishonor one’s parents, etc.)

***Applying God’s Truth to Life***

***Let’s focus upon our own lives, not someone else’s.***

It is easier to be critical of others than to change ourselves. If our thoughts rest upon the wrongs of others, we are missing the point.

***Let’s remember that only God is the Judge.***

Because only God knows everything, only He is able to judge, and judge He will, righteously and fairly. We safely leave judging to Him.

***Let’s live like every day matters.***

Our freedom to choose means that our choices can lead either to a wasted life judged by God or a fruitful life approved by Him.