

Hypocrisy Confronted by Sovereignty # 5

Romans 2: 1-10

Today we begin a new chapter in our study of Romans, but it ties directly into the previous verses. In our last study we considered the depths of depravity to which humanity has the ability to sink. Paul now seeks to remind us that apart from Christ we are all hopelessly lost. In fact, the born again are nothing more than sinners saved by grace. Paul dealt with those who could easily point out faults in others, but could not see the great need within their own lives. They were quick to condemn sin in others, but failed to realize the sin in their lives and the need for repentance. To be quite honest, Paul is speaking of the hypocrite.

We are all familiar with hypocrisy, and likely have engaged in it at some point or another ourselves. I believe the hypocrite is in worse condition than the rank sinner. A sinner will often admit his need, but hypocrites seek deception, pretending that all is well within their lives, refusing to repent and seek reconciliation.

Some believe this passage is reserved for the pagan Gentiles surrounding Paul. Others tend to think he is writing to the Jews who viewed themselves as superior to all others, claiming association with Abraham and being the chosen race. I agree with both points of view. I believe it was written to all who practice hypocrisy. Let's look at the [certainties](#) Paul reveals as we consider: [Hypocrisy Confronted by Sovereignty](#).

I. The Deception within Hypocrisy (1-5) – Our text begins by dealing with the deception within hypocrisy. Notice:

A. The Ridicule of Hypocrisy (1a) – [Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest.](#) Paul reveals a truth we are all well aware of: the hypocrite is a harsh judge. They are quick to point out the faults of others, seeking to expose their sin for all to see. The hypocrite usually possesses a critical spirit, never seeing any benefit in the actions or endeavors of others. Such activity and accusations are inexcusable before God. John Phillips said, “The sin of the hypocrite *is* that of being *indignant* at other people's shortcomings and of being *indulgent* of his own.”ⁱ

B. The Rebellion in Hypocrisy (1b, 3) – [for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.](#) ^[3] [And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?](#) Here we discover the distinctive attribute of the hypocrite. They are quick to point out and judge sin in the lives of others,

and yet they often engage in similar sin themselves. They champion the idea of the righteous judgment of God upon all sin, somehow supposing God will overlook their sin and they will never face the accountability they hold others to. They refuse to see their condemnation of sin in general also condemns the very sin in which they too are engaged.

- Hypocrisy is often a delusional effort to make one feel better by amplifying the failures of others. This may bring temporary satisfaction (and that is even debatable,) but it will not escape the all seeing eye of God. He knows our lives and the very intent of our hearts. We may be able to disguise our lives and hide our sin from others, but God knows where we stand with Him and the lives we live.

C. The Resentment in Hypocrisy (4) – Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? Paul offers another valid argument against hypocrisy. Not only do they rebel against God in refusing to deal personally with their sin, they also resent the very goodness and grace of God that leads to repentance and faith in Christ. Rather than recognizing the conviction in their lives, they convince themselves that their blessings are a sign of God's approval, even while knowing God is displeased with their sinful ways. They squander the season of grace, using it as a time to indulge their lusts rather than turning to the Lord.

- While I stand confidently in the security of believers, I am also aware that grace is not a license to sin. God's forbearance and longsuffering in our lives flows from His good grace. We must be careful how we respond to His offerings of grace! [Rom.6:1-2 – What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?](#) ^[2] [God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?](#)

D. The Rebuke of Hypocrisy (2) – But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. God is holy and righteous, One who is right and just in all His dealings. The hypocrite enjoys ridiculing others while indulging in the very acts he condemns, but his actions are not unnoticed. God will deal justly and accordingly with those who refuse His grace and continue in their sin. Those around the hypocrite may never know the secret life he leads, but God is aware and He will bring righteous judgment. Their lives have been lived in deceit, but we are sure that God will one day bring them to light, exposing the error of their ways.

- Our lives will not be judged according to the behavior or actions of another. They will not be judged based on the perception others had of us, but according to what God knows about our lives. [Rev.20:12 – And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things](#)

which were written in the books, according to their works. Rev.22:12 – And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

E. The Retribution for Hypocrisy (5) – But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Sadly the hypocrite has lived his life apart from reality. He contributed greatly to this by his own self-denial and failure to heed the grace of God. He viewed the grace he enjoyed as the approval and favor of God, but in reality he will face the righteous judgment of God. Time and again God offered grace, while time and again the hypocrite refused God's grace, hardening his heart and refusing to repent. This has not brought favor unto him, but rather the wrath and judgment of God. The same condemnation he declared others would face will meet him as he stands before God.

- This stands as a grave reminder that we cannot live as we please, ignoring the guidance of the Lord, without consequence. If one hardens his heart toward the mercies and grace of God, judgment is all that remains. Those who refuse to repent and seek the Lord are only storing up wrath that will one day be poured out. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.
- This has challenged me to live a life pleasing to the Lord. Others may not know the life we live, but God does. Others may not know we have rejected the pleading of the Spirit in our lives, but God does. We are accountable for the truth we have received. I rejoice that my sin has been atoned and I will not stand before God accountable for sin, but we all will give account of the lives we have lived while upon this earth!

II. The Discernment within Sovereignty (6-10) – Paul now discusses the discernment our Lord has concerning all men. Consider:

A. The Righteous Standard (6) – *Who will render to every man according to his deeds:* This refers to God dealing with men according to the standard He has set forth. There is no double-standard, a certain criteria for some and something different for others. God declares that He will render to every man according to the deeds he has committed within this life.

- Clearly the ultimate standard is the standard of holiness. In order to be acceptable to God, one must be counted righteous. It is impossible to obtain such a righteous standard apart from salvation in Christ. Those who deny Christ, and His saving grace, will face utter rejection and condemnation from God. We cannot overlook the standard by which all will be judged. God promised to judge each of us according to our deeds. We have spoken about this already, but it serves as a reminder that we will give account to God of the lives we have lived.

B. The Redeemed Saint (7, 10) – To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: ^[10] But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: Paul reveals the discernment of God concerning those who are born again. He speaks of those who patiently sought to live right before the Lord and other men. These seek to honor the Lord and bring glory to Him. They sought eternal life in Christ by believing on Him in salvation.

- The life of the righteous may not be appreciated by the world, but it is never overlooked by God. He promises peace and honor to those who seek Him, living an upright life. We may never realize in this life the full benefit of salvation and a life lived for Christ, but God is keeping a record. The saved by grace will one day enter the heavenly reward to enjoy life eternal in the presence of our Lord. This isn't reserved for a select few, but all of the saved.

C. The Resistant Sinner (8-9) – But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, ^[9] Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; Here we discover another stern warning to those who deny God and resist the truth, seeking unrighteousness, indignation and wrath toward others. These will face tribulation and anguish. This speaks of the great affliction and distress these will face as they stand before God in judgment. They may face a measure of that in this life, but the great tribulation and anguish will come as they are cast out of God's presence in final judgment.

- Many today refuse to accept the grace of God. They seek to travel their own path without regard to God's holiness or the needs of others. They live as if their lives are of little consequence in the eternal scope of things. These are greatly deceived. God will have the final say. There will be no arguments offered as they stand before God. These verses reveal that God will have dealt with them in grace and mercy, but it was refused. They will face the judgment of God due to their rejection of Him.

Conclusion: This has been a sobering passage to consider. Many today live their lives according to their lusts and desires, but will one day face God. In fact, we all will. The façade of hypocrisy will be stripped away as men stand before the light of truth. Our only hope is in Christ and in Him alone. Our works will never provide redemption. We must be made acceptable through Christ.

I trust you know Jesus as your Lord and Savior. If not, I urge you to respond to the grace He extends and come to Him by faith. If you are saved and struggling in life, seek the strength He gives in order to live pleasing to Him!

ⁱ John Phillips Commentary Series, The - The John Phillips Commentary Series – Exploring Romans: An Expository Commentary.