



## When Religion Can't Rescue

### Recap: Romans 2:1-16

In Romans Chapter 2, Paul shifts the focus from the moral failings of those who reject God, to addressing those who identify as followers of Jesus. At the end of Chapter 1, Paul lists various sins of people who serve creation instead of the Creator, using the third-person plural to describe "them." Humans often read this and easily point fingers, saying "look how bad they are," but Paul, knowing this human tendency, warns against an "us vs them" mentality. He challenges believers not to judge others without recognizing that they too struggle with the same issues (2:1-3).

Paul emphasizes that God's kindness, patience, and tolerance should lead to repentance, not complacency (4). If people fail to repent because of stubborn hearts, they will face God's just judgment (5). In verses 6 and 11, Paul stresses that God is an impartial judge. He highlights both positive examples (7, 10) of those who do good and negative examples (8, 9) of those who do evil.

Paul continues by making the case that all people, regardless of whether they have the law (the Torah) or not, fall short of perfectly fulfilling God's law. Those without the law still possess an internal moral compass (14-15). In verse 13, Paul stresses that merely knowing or hearing the law is insufficient—what matters is actually following it. This is bad news for humanity, as no one perfectly obeys the law. Consequently, all are heading towards judgment and God's wrath. Thankfully, Paul's letter doesn't end at 2:16, leaving hope for redemption beyond judgment.

## Study: Read 2:1-16 (45 Min)

Icebreaker: Have you ever had a superstitious habit? What are some examples of common superstitions you see today?

1. After reading Romans 2:1-16, what negative qualities does religion produce in people?

2. Go back and read Romans 1:26-2:3. Are you quicker to see yourself in 1:26-32 or in 2:1-3? Explain why you answered the way you did.

3. How have you defined hypocrisy in the past? How does it align, or differ, from Romans 2:1-3?

4. In what ways can you mimic God's kindness (vs. 4) in your interactions with those who may have wronged you?

5. Why is it important to remember, even as we're warned of God's judgment, that he desires for us to repent?

6. Do you struggle with hypocrisy in your life? If so, how does it manifest itself?

7. How do you differentiate hypocritical type judgment versus wisdom and discernment type judgment?

8. How would you respond to someone who refuses to believe in Jesus or go to church because it's "full of hypocrites?"

9. Is it a cause for concern or a comfort for you to know that God judges impartially? Explain why you answered the way you did.

10. Read 2:13. How would you explain this verse to a non-believer?

11. Why is merely hearing the law not enough to make us righteous before God? What does it mean to be "doers of the law"?

12. Who are the people in your life most impacted by the way you represent God?

### **SUPPORT/PRAYER (15 min)**

This section of Paul's letter to the Romans was designed to make sure all of his readers (regardless of their "history with sin" or their ancestry) would recognize their "works" will lead to their judgment by a just God. This means you too! Is there anything you need to repent of? Share and pray together!

Lastly, spend your last few minutes together giving thanks to God for the gift of Jesus whose work on the cross and on Resurrection Sunday is what the Father sees when He looks upon all of us who are "in Christ," rendering us all justified in the eyes of the Just Judge.