

**<sup>2</sup>And we know that God’s judgment on those who do such things is based on the truth.**

**<sup>3</sup>Are you thinking that you will escape God’s judgment, you who judge those who do such things and then do the same things yourself? <sup>4</sup>Or do you have so little regard for his rich kindness, his restraint, and his patience, that you ignore the fact that the purpose of God’s kindness is to lead you to repentance? <sup>5</sup>As a result of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath, when God will reveal his righteous judgment.**

**<sup>6</sup>God “will repay each person according to what he has done”—<sup>7</sup>eternal life to those who seek glory, honor, and immortality by persisting in doing what is good, <sup>8</sup>but furious anger to those who out of selfish ambition are disobeying what is true and obeying what is wrong. <sup>9</sup>There will be trouble and distress for the soul of every person who does what is evil—for the Jew first and for the Greek—<sup>10</sup>but glory, honor, and peace for everyone who does what is good—for the Jew first and for the Greek. <sup>11</sup>For God does not show favoritism. (EHV)**

Theme: Should we be Afraid Judgment Day?

1. God knows our many sins and lack of perfection.
2. We know his kindness, restraint, and patience.

Judgment Day. It’s a term that invokes fear in the hearts of many. A final judgment with no chance of appeal, with an eternal sentence, which results in never ending torment and pain. Plus, there is the complete and utter destruction of the world. In the eyes of many, the term, Judgment Day, brings about thoughts of revenge, payment, and justice as well as destruction, ruin, and pain. As for us—we know our sins and what we deserve—but do we have that fear in our hearts when we think of Judgment Day?

For others—sure, we say, “other people should be afraid of Judgment Day because they aren’t me. If only there were more people like me in the world, they would be much better off. If only people loved God as much as I do, if only they attended worship services, the Lord’s Supper, and Bible study like I do; and are as well-versed in Scripture as me. If only others watched what they said about other people, weren’t so greedy, voted as I did, and volunteer more of their time at Church and helping others. But because they aren’t like me, they should be afraid of Judgment Day.”

How often does this sound like you? Okay, maybe not to that extreme, but we do judge and condemn others quite often. We look down upon them, snub our noses at them, and otherwise judge them as not worthy of eternal life—maybe because they aren’t doing what God wants them to do but often it’s because they don’t do what we think they should do.

In our text for today Paul is addressing Jews who fell into the same self-righteous and hypocritical judging of others. At the end of chapter one Paul lists some sins that are common among unbelieving Gentiles: greed, quarreling, deceit, gossip, slander, mocking, and arrogance among others. He also mentions those who are heartless, disobey their parents, and hate God. He says, **Even though they know God’s righteous decree that those who do these things are worthy of death, such people not only continue to do them, but also approve of others who continue to commit such sins.**

So the Jews looked down upon them. They saw themselves as better than the Gentiles who commit such horrible and wicked acts. They condemned them, first of all, for not being Jews—

God's chosen nation, and second of all, for living a life not according to their own standards, not to mention God's.

But they were nothing by hypocrites. Paul writes in the first verse of chapter two, right before our text, **you are without excuse, every one of you who judges someone else, because by judging the other person you also condemn yourself, since you, who are judging, are doing the very same things.** If the Jews condemned any one of the Gentiles for committing such sins, they were condemning themselves, since they were committing the same sins.

Paul goes on to say in verse three, **Are you thinking that you will escape God's judgment, you who judge those who do such things and then do the same things yourself?** They expected the Gentiles to be condemned eternally, but the same should happen to them as well—they weren't going to escape God's judgment. They may have been able to fool others, but they can't fool God who knows everything—including our own personal thoughts and secret sins that no one else know about.

The same stands for us when we self-righteously and hypocritically judge and condemn others. Yes, we are told to look down upon sin and point out the sin of others. We should hate it and correct those who are greedy; we should stop gossip and slander; we should discipline those who disobey their parents and are heartless to those in need. But we don't do it thinking that we are better than others. Because we aren't. In fact, we often commit those same sins, how often have we been heartless, greedy, and arrogant? How often haven't we been hateful toward God by blatantly sinning against him? And so, if we condemn others for those sins, we are condemning ourselves.

So when we do point out the sins of others we do so only in a spirit of repentance, not in a spirit of haughtiness, or with a self-righteous attitude. No, we realize that when we are pointing out the speck in someone's eye that the plank in our eye is much bigger. And so, as we point out the sins of others we realize that all of us are sinners who need forgiveness.

And since we are all sinners, we all deserve to be condemned. That's the point Paul is making in the second half of our text. At first, verses 7 and 10 seem to give us some comfort—they do say that those who do good receive glory, honor, immortality, and peace in contrast to those who do evil and fail to obey—they will receive God's furious anger which results in eternal distress on the Last Day.

But notice who Paul says who receive eternal blessings: those who persist in doing what is good. We must be perfect if we want to earn eternal blessings for ourselves. But we aren't good; and we are far from perfect. These words were meant to show the self-righteous Jew that not only could they not condemn the Gentiles for their sins since they do the same things; but they also cannot save themselves. And the same stands for us—we are all sinners who cannot save ourselves. We can't get eternal life on our own because we are not perfect.

But Jesus is! The perfect life that God demands of us that we cannot live was lived by Jesus in our place. He is the one who not only sought good or tried to do what was right—he actually did it! He persevered in his perfect life even to the point of death! It was Christ who went to that cross willingly so that he could suffer and die in our place, paying for our sins, which condemn us, and removing our guilt as far as east is from west.

And the perfect life that Christ lived, it was given to us. So that when the Lord looks at us, he doesn't see us as imperfect sinners who fail to obey his commands, but he sees the perfect life of his Son and declares us not guilty. Through Christ then it is as if we have lived a perfect life; it as if we always sought what was good and persistent in what was right! As Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5 about Jesus, **God made him, who did not know sin, to become sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.** Since Jesus took our sins upon himself and gave us his perfect life we are considered righteous in his sight!

In verse four of our text Paul mentions the Lord's rich kindness, restraint, and patience. The Lord doesn't treat us as our sins deserve, he doesn't repay us according to what we have done. God could strike us down after each sin that we commit, but he doesn't; just as he could have started over again when Adam and Eve fell into sin—instead, he promised them a Savior. God is patient with us and kind toward us that he sent his Son down to this earth to take our place and he punished that Son with the eternal punishment that we deserve!

Paul's point here in this verse is that we shouldn't interpret God's patience with us as an excuse to sin, or as proof that he is overall pleased with our lives. He's not, but he has patience with us anyway. Why? So that we would have time to repent. He doesn't strike us down in our sinful actions, but extends our lives, our time of grace, so that the law and the gospel would have time to work in our hearts, so that we would have time to turn from the error of our ways, and to him in faith. As the Lord said through his prophet Ezekiel, **I take no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies, declares the Lord God. So repent and live!**

So we think about Judgment Day. And no one wants to be judged—especially when they are guilty, especially when the judge knows every single wicked thought, word, and deed! And yet we're not afraid of this judgment, instead we have peace and comfort. How? Because our judge is also our Savior! He is not some revengeful and hateful judge, who is going to throw the book at us; but is the one who suffered and died in our place. The guilty verdict and the just punishment was already suffered by him on the cross. Our Judge is the one through whom we are justified, or declared not guilty.

And since our righteous judge is also our merciful Savior, we know that our sins won't be counted against us. They were counted against him. Our Lord isn't coming to condemn us, but to bring us to heaven. On the Last Day, he is going to come in his full glory, with the trumpet call of God with all his angels, to judge the living and the dead. And all knees will bow down to him and call on his name. For all those who rejected him and fail to believe in him, they will get what they deserve—wrath and eternal punishment. But to those who do believe in him, they will receive what they don't deserve—eternal life with our Savior!

So we think of that term, Judgment Day, and for us it doesn't bring about feelings of dread, terror, and angst as it does for so many. Yes, we are guilty of sin. Yes, we haven't obeyed the Lord perfectly as we deserve; we deserve God's furious anger—eternal trouble and never-ending distress. Instead, because of God's rich kindness, restraint, and patience: glory, honor, peace, and immortality await!

This is the glory of Christ, his divine glory which we'll see and which he will share with us eternally. Honor is given to those who are highly valued. And who deserves greater honor than those in heaven! Through Christ we have peace—that is the peace of forgiveness and the sure and certain hope of eternal life in heaven. And finally, through Christ we have immortality! Eternal life with our Lord, instead of eternal death as we deserve! That is the gracious gift that we have by the kindness of the Lord, a gift that we'll fully realize on the Last Day.

Judgment Day—we have nothing to fear about that day. Instead we long for that day, we look forward to it with eager anticipation and speed it's coming by spreading the gospel! And while we live on this earth, this world full of sin, and the effects of sin, we can't help but long for the glorious eternal life to come. And so, at the end of Revelation Jesus reminds us, **Yes, I am coming soon.** And we respond with the Apostle John, **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!** Amen.