

God's Great News for Humanity's Great Problem

Paul's Letter to the Romans

Exhibit B in the Hospital of God: The Judgmental Moralizer

Romans 2:1 – 16

Exegetical Outline

- ¹Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment,
for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself;
for you who judge practice the same things.
²And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things.
- ³But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things
and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God?
- ⁴Or do you think lightly of the riches of
His kindness and
tolerance and
patience,
not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?
- ⁵But because of your
stubbornness and
unrepentant heart
you are storing up wrath for yourself
in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,
- ⁶who will render to each person according to his deeds:
⁷to those who by perseverance in doing good
seek for glory and honor and immortality,
eternal life; WHO SEEK GOD
ETERNAL LIFE
- ⁸but to those who are selfishly ambitious and
do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness,
wrath and indignation. WHO ARE SELFISH
WRATH & INDIGNATION
- ⁹There will be tribulation and distress
for every soul of man who does evil,
of the Jew first and also of the Greek,
¹⁰but glory and honor and peace WHO DOES EVIL
to everyone who does good,
to the Jew first and also to the Greek. GLORY, HONOR, PEACE
WHO DOES GOOD
- ¹¹For there is no partiality with God.
- ¹²For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law,
and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law;
¹³for it is not the hearers of the Law who are just before God,
but the doers of the Law will be justified.
- ¹⁴For when Gentiles who do not have the Law
do instinctively the things of the Law,
these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves,
¹⁵in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts,
their conscience bearing witness and
their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them,
¹⁶on the day when, according to my gospel,
God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.

Introduction: How We Use Morals Against Others

The mission of InterVarsity's Asian Christian Fellowship is to call the whole campus to be transformed by Jesus as we are being transformed by him. So welcome to this, our large group meeting. As part of our mission, over four weeks, we are addressing the question, 'Does humanity really need Jesus?' And tonight, we're looking at the question, 'Do "good people" need Jesus, too?' You may have asked this question yourself. If you think of yourself as a 'good person,' you may be wondering why it is you need Jesus. Or maybe you have friends here on campus who think of themselves as 'good people' and you're wondering why it is that they too need Jesus. So it is relevant to us all. I've asked Bruce Liu – a consummate 'good person'! – to share with us his story.

Bruce's story: How we use 'morals' against other people when they hurt us, but we fail to see how we ourselves really do fall short of our own standards.

Context: The Courtroom of God

That was a preface to the subject of judgmentalism. This week in Romans we are still in the Hospital of God. We are examining the way God heals humanity. But before we get to that, we have to look at what sickness we have. What is the diagnosis? The apostle Paul is one of the patients narrating his experience, and he is also examining samples and bringing out an analysis. Last week, we looked at Patient A in the Hospital of God, the Control Freak. We discussed how turning away from God leads to insecurity, which leads to a desire for control, which leads to worshiping the self, which leads to a self-centered sexuality and self-centered relationships. That was Paul's description of the worst case of humanity, the person symbolized by the downward spiral. This week, Paul is moving to consider, not the worst person, but the so-called good person. We are studying Patient B, the Judgmental Moralizer. This man or woman is characterized by the pointing finger of judgment. And here we're going to talk about the relationship between moral judgmentalism and true goodness of character. Turn to Romans 2:1 – 16.

The New Audience: v.1a

Paul begins this section with the words 'Therefore you are without excuse.' And right away, Paul's words leap out at us because he changes from the third person to the second person. When Paul Patient Exhibit A, the Control Freak, he did it in the third person. He said, 'For even though *they* knew God...' It was always *them*. Paul examined *them* under the microscope, calmly and coolly dissecting this ugly specimen, the bad man of humanity, the bad woman of humanity. And surely there would have been a certain kind of person in the audience nodding his head in full agreement with Paul. His finger would have been pointing. 'Yes, that is a bad person.' If you were here last week, you might have also thought that. But what about you???

Now, what are the characteristics of this finger-pointing person? The first characteristic is that he passes judgment. Look at verse 1. 'Therefore you are without excuse, every man of you who passes judgment.' That is why I'm calling this person 'the Judgmental Moralizer.' He judges the other person's guilt, meanwhile thinking that he himself is innocent.

Now, who was Paul thinking about when he dictated Romans 2:1 – 16? Probably his own contemporaries, upstanding citizens who hated violence and crime. Perhaps he thought about the Spaniards Martial and Lucan, the great masters of art and poetry. Perhaps he thought about Quintilian, the great Roman orator. And he most certainly thought about Seneca, the leading Stoic philosopher, the tutor of Nero, and the Prime Minister of the Roman Empire. These men of renown and self-proclaimed virtue, who condemned the barbarians, who loved Roman law and order, would have looked at Paul's description of the selfish Control Freak and cast their two cents in, saying, 'HANG 'EM!!!'

Who is the Judgmental Moralizer in our day? He is everyone who judges another for being self-centered. Perhaps he is an elderly person condemning the young rebels of our generation. 'We weren't that selfish when we were their age!' Perhaps he is a woman who judges men, saying, 'All men are selfish,' or maybe he is a man who judges women, saying, 'All women are selfish.' Or maybe it's one of us, who thinks, 'I'm not really as bad as other people.' And all these people think they are totally well. They don't have the disease of sin.

But Paul takes the Judgmental Man by surprise. He changes to the second person singular, and turns around to face this person in the audience, and he says, 'Therefore you...' And now, those people who thought they had a clean bill of health. Instead, the diagnosis says that they are S-I-N positive.

The Trouble With Judgmentalism: v.1b

Now, why is the Judgmental Moralizer in trouble? Because he shows symptoms of the disease. Read verse 1: ‘For in that you judge another, you condemn yourself, for you who judge practice the same things.’ Now that’s another verse that is difficult to understand. It is not intuitive, in my opinion, so I’m going to substantiate that a lot. What does Paul mean, ‘you who judge practice the same things.’

Now the phrase ‘pass judgment’ is a singular word in Greek, the word ‘krino.’ That word is translated most often ‘to judge’. It also means ‘to go to law against.’ We can think of that word as ‘rendering a guilty verdict, while we sit in the jury box, or even in the judge’s bench.’ That is the fundamental attitude of judgment. It makes us feel powerful, innocent, and above accusation, while certain other people are lame.

Illus: That happens in prisons. Studies show that a hierarchy develops among inmates. At the bottom were those criminals who had done ‘the worst’ things, like child molesting. At the top were criminals who did less ‘worse’ things, like robbery. The inmates at the top thought they were better than the inmates at the bottom and didn’t associate with them. Why? Because they saw them as having a lower moral standing. What’s important to remember, though, is that they were all in prison!!! This really helps us understand how morality is based on selective vision, and judgmentalism is based on self-deception.

Illus: When I heard about that, it struck me because I’m a pretty judgmental person by nature. When I was a sophomore in college, I became good friends with a group of four women who all roomed together. So me and some guy friends hung out with these girls and we all did things together, like have meals together or go to movies or study. Most often, though, we just hung out in their room and chatted about life. During junior year, though, I noticed that I was always the one to call or come over. All the time! I thought they were really passive, and that they weren’t putting any effort into our friendships. I tried not to think about it, but I was feeling more estranged from them as friends. So I decided to talk to one of them about it, and the conversation went okay, but basically nothing changed. Later I just got mad and said to myself, ‘Forget it! They’re being really passive and selfish. That’s not friendship!’ And I felt powerful because it was them who had violated that standard of friendship. I was innocent, they were guilty! I held that view for a long time, until one day years later when another friend of mine who I hadn’t kept in touch with since we graduated said to me, ‘Mako, I feel like I’VE been the one always trying to get a hold of YOU.’ Ouch! That sounded familiar!! But my first reaction was to think, ‘Yeah, but you just have to understand how complex my life is, how many commitments I’m trying to balance, and on and on.’

Apart from Jesus, each of us will find our identity in some other self-centered way. It might be friends and our place among other people, or family and our place in our family, or success, or just plain self. What happens is that as we try to build an identity of our own, that we often judge other people who are doing is in some other way. If you’re family oriented and someone else is self-oriented, you judge that person and vice versa. Suddenly it’s you that lives a balanced life, and everyone else is off-kilter. You can see the self-centeredness in someone else, but you don’t see it in yourself. Or, sometimes your sins are just more socially acceptable. In American culture, it’s okay for you to be greedy and not give a crap about the global poor. So the way you medicate yourself is by shopping or spending or ignoring, but in the larger scheme of things, that is a real problem.

Illus: The problem is that being judgmental makes you not only self-centered, but self-deluded. During my high school days, I felt this way towards some people in student government. In the back of my mind, I thought that every single person who ran for student council or club president or whatever was doing it because they wanted to build their resume for college. I looked down at those people who ran around desperately trying to get to know everyone in time for the elections. I felt innocent of all that, and powerful in my high moral stand. But at the end of my junior year, I ran for office and won. I became the school’s Public Relations Commissioner my senior year. Now how do you think I felt about myself? I thought, ‘Well, I’m not like everyone else. I’m not motivated by selfishness. I’m the exception!’ I was also pretty self-deluded.

That is the problem with the Judgmental Moralizers. They are self-deluded. And are we like that? Do we tend to see other people and their problems as straightforward, simple, obviously rooted in self-centeredness? While on the other hand, do we tend to view ourselves and our own problems as deep and complex? Do we say, ‘Other people should be able to change easily. But for me... Everyone just has to understand me!’ Maybe that is so, but God takes issue with the judgmentalism involved.

I think the best way that I’ve found of warning myself about judgmentalism is to remember a visual picture. Take your hand and point your first finger out at someone. That is the attitude of judgment: finger-pointing. But the thing

to remember is that when you do this, your thumb is pointed up at God, because ultimately you're accusing God of something ('You caused these circumstances, You gave me these people, etc.) and tucked away in the palm of your hand, three fingers are pointing right back at you.

That is a long explanation of why the Judgmental Moralizer does 'the same [selfish] things' as other people. In fact, when we compare the Judgmental Moralizer to the Control Freak of chapter 1, we see another striking similarity. The Control Freak removes God as the object of worship and then worships himself. He says, 'I'm going to look out for number one, ME!' The Judgmental Moralizer removes God as the rightful judge and then installs himself on the bench. He says, 'I'm going to judge everything according to a universal standard, ME!' So the Judgmental Moralizer is guilty of the same thing that the Control Freak is guilty of: Self-Centeredness. They both replace God as the ultimate authority with themselves.

God's Judgment: v.2 – 4

Now at this point, the Judgmental Man or Woman might have one objection. He says, 'Okay. Maybe I can't be the judge after all. Who can be the Judge?' Paul says that God can, and this is what Paul says in verses 2 – 4. Verse 2 says: 'And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things.' Now that's another thought that requires a little bit of chewing on. God's judgment isn't something we like to talk about nowadays. But what is God's judgment? Paul is drawing up a contrast between man's judgment and God's judgment. I think we can read into this verse a little bit and list at least 4 things to compare.

(1) First, man's judgment is bogus because he judges others for what he himself does. We see a prime example of this in the life of King David. He admired Bathsheba from afar. So he called her to his bed, in spite of the ring on her finger. Then Nathan the prophet said, 'What would you say about a rich guy who stole from a poor man the only lamb that poor man had?' David's sense of justice burned inside him, and he slammed his fist down, 'Let him be condemned to death!' Nathan turned and said, 'You are that man.' David then put his foot back into his mouth. In contrast to man's bogus double-standard, God is sinless, and He judges sin fairly. (2) Secondly, man's judgment is bogus in that he judges others for what he is comfortable judging. Maybe we're comfortable judging a murderer. But we kill relationships with unkindness all the time. Where we draw lines in between is totally arbitrary and tends to suit our convenience. In contrast, God judges everything. (3) Thirdly, man's judgment is bogus because his standards change over time, also to suit his convenience. When I was in high school, my friends and I looked down on people who drank a lot and womanized. We developed a moralistic attitude, and they felt superior to others. But then we went to college, and those standards changed!! We tend to start out with high standards in life, saying, 'Oh, I'd never do that!' But then we do, and we change what we believe. In contrast, God's standards never change over time. (4) Most importantly, people judge others to distance themselves from other people, to protect themselves, or to define themselves as different. But God does not distance Himself, He never protects Himself, and is not interested in defining Himself that way.

Those are just four ways in which man's judgment and God's judgment are galaxies apart, and that's the contrast Paul is making in this verse. So in light of these differences, the natural question is: How can anyone play Judge? That's the question Paul pointedly asks in verse 3: 'And do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment upon those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God?' That is a powerful question. Look at the way Paul reminds us of our humanity. First, look at the little phrase 'O man.' That is who we are. We are human, and we are not in God's place.

But while man's judgment is utterly bogus, God's judgment is utterly righteous. So we would expect God to send a lightning bolt and strike us when we sin, right? No! Look at verse 4, because there, Paul points out another surprising thing about God's judgment. 'Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?' That is the surprising thing about God's judgment. God doesn't leap to judge. He waits. He is patient. What a big difference that is from us. When we judge, it's so quick and immediate. Someone does something wrong, and we leap to judge! On the other hand, God leaps to restore. Jesus demonstrated this. He accepted a kiss from Judas Iscariot, and even called him, 'Friend' at the last second, hoping to win him back, even though the massive machinery of betrayal was already set in motion. God offers every opportunity for people to turn around and repent. He is slow, offering unexpected kindness where there could have been judgment.

The Basis of Judgment: v.5 – 6

But in spite of this, the Judgmental Moralizer is still on the loose, judging. Look at verse 5. Paul says that this man will one day be judged if he doesn't change. 'But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.' Uh-oh.

Now we're going to study the interesting question: How will God judge the Judgmental Moralizer? The answer to this is amazing. First of all, God will judge everyone based on their deeds. Look at verse 6: 'who will render to every man according to his deeds.' That is the unalterable basis of God's judgment: what you have done in life. It's a quote from Psalm 62:12 and Proverbs 24:12 and it is valid not only for Israel but universally. There is one singular, unchanging way God judges: by all the things you have done in life. He is not selective. He takes all the data.

Now for the Judgmental Moralizer, that first sounds like a great thing. Eternal life is yours if you live a perfect, immaculate life. Let's say you never harbor anger, and you never speak an unkind word. But not only do you not do the wrong things, you always do the right things. You care when another person needs it, and you help the needy. You're absolutely perfect in deeds. Then, when you die, you can march right up to the throne of God and say, 'Move over, now there's two of us!' Is that what's going on here? I don't think so.

Who Seeks What? v.7 – 11

We don't get what we DESERVE. We get what we WANT. Look at verses 7 – 11 to see this comparison. What we find here is a classical Hebrew literary structure called an inverted parallelism.

To those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but	WHO SEEK GOD CONSEQUENCE
To those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.	WHO ARE SELFISH CONSEQUENCE
There will be tribulation and distress For every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek	CONSEQUENCE WHO DOES EVIL
But glory and honor and peace To every man who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.	CONSEQUENCE WHO DOES GOOD
For there is no partiality with God.	<u>SUMMARY</u>

What Paul is doing here is drawing out the reality of how God judges. There are two categories. There is the one who SEEKS GOD. The words 'glory, honor, and immortality' do not refer to things that exist apart from God, as if Achilles' quest for 'glory, honor, and immortality' in the movie Troy was the same thing as what Paul had in mind here, or your quest for 'glory, honor, and immortality' was the same thing. In Romans 1, clearly Paul's understanding is that 'glory' is connected to God alone, as he refers to the 'glory of the incorruptible God' in 1:23. That person gets eternal life: the life that exists IN God, the life OF God, because that is in reality what they wanted their whole lives.

Then there is the second person, the one who is selfishly ambitious and does not obey the truth. Again, 'truth' in this context refers to the 'truth of God' which Paul has already discussed in 1:25. So these are the people who listen to 'THE LIE' because they are self-centered and obey self-centeredness. That person gets wrath and indignation, because God is love. You see, God is not loving to some people and angry with others. He is love, all the time, and towards all. But whether we experience God's love as love or as wrath depends on our posture.

Illus: Let me illustrate. When I came to Jesus, I was a junior in high school. I had agreed to go on a spring break trip to Mexico with a Christian friend and the church I had been going to with him. When we got there, we hung out with kids and told them bible stories. I had thought we would build buildings with Habitat for Humanity or something. So I felt a bit awkward. It the most intense poverty I had ever seen, and that was also challenging. What was the most challenging for me was that these little Mexican kids didn't care about who I was. I wanted people to know that I was a straight A student, was captain of the Varsity water polo and swimming teams, and that I hoped to play for Stanford. I wanted people to know that I worked harder than other people, that I had a future, that I was a good kid, that I had self-discipline. But all the kids cared about was whether I would come back tomorrow. Each day they asked, 'Are you coming back tomorrow? Are you coming back tomorrow?' They had no idea what

Stanford was. They didn't know that I had this brilliant future ahead of me. They didn't love me because I worked harder than other people. They just loved me. And God's love, I realized, is similar to that. He doesn't love the façade that I put up, the persona that I built. He just loved *me*. But because I loved the façade, the persona, it felt infuriating. I wanted God to love *that*. But He didn't. He ignored it.

That reality is described by C.S. Lewis' book *The Great Divorce*. In this story, there is a short, rather ugly man in hell. He was and is still an actor, a tragedian. He walks around carrying a mannequin-like thing, which is actually the façade of himself which he loves. This mannequin is tall and handsome and debonair. It's what the actor would like to be. Whenever he interacts with people, he insists that they speak to the mannequin, as if that was really him. What gets him really mad is that God and people in heaven don't recognize the mannequin. And what outrages him is that the people in heaven love the real person, not the façade he puts up.

So many times, *you* fall in love with the façade of yourself, and you insist that other people, including God, love the façade of yourself. Let's say you really cannot love someone else, because of some pain you suffered or because of racial prejudice or some kind of pride in yourself. The issue is that God loves that other person with a transforming love that wants His very best FOR them and His very best THROUGH them. God wants to embrace that person. Yet you want to judge that person. And God loves you, your true self. He says, 'I don't love your hatred, your pride, your sense of superiority – I don't even recognize that thing. It's a falsehood. I love the true you, the real you, short and ugly though you are.' But that can make you furious because you love the false self that you've constructed. And when God refuses to love the false, it feels like He is killing you, but He's really killing the thing you pretend to be. *In that way, the love of God feels like torture, wrath, and indignation, and it is!!!* You think you're a 'good person' and God rejects that self-image because He loves the real you, warts and all. You may not like that, but that is the reality, and God is always calling us to embrace reality. Hell is not a place where God throws people as much as it is a state of being where people keep trying to remove themselves from the love of God.

Now is this true for everybody? Yes. Paul makes that very clear by adding one very important phrase: 'to the Jew first and also to the Greek.' That is Paul's way of saying that this is universally true for everyone. It doesn't matter whether you had been exposed to Israel or not; or if you are the 'person who never heard'; God judges impartially because His judgment is the revealing of who we truly are. Perhaps this is why Jesus said in John 3:16 – 21, 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through him. He who believes in him is not judged; he who does not believe HAS BEEN JUDGED ALREADY [Fascinating! By who? Himself or herself!!!], because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested [revealed] as having been wrought in God.' Makes sense, since Jesus was talking to Nicodemus, a Pharisee, who condemned himself by his own standards. So, God's judgment looks at deeds. He compares it to words. Through these things, He looks piercingly into what we have SOUGHT, WANTED all our lives. God applies this rigorously and universally, therefore He is a righteous Judge.

The Basis by Which Deeds are Measured, Jew and Gentile: v.14 – 16

At this point, the Judgmental Moralizer might protest again, saying, 'Well, relatively speaking, I'm still better than other people. Can't I get partial credit?' What will God's response to this be? GOD ACTUALLY HONORS THAT. He is such an amazing and thorough Judge, He will say, 'OK. Let's see whether you've lived up to your own standards!'

In verses 14 – 16, Paul opens a window for us so that we can see what Judgment Day will be like. Verses 14-16 answer for us the question, 'Against what will our deeds be judged?' If you are a professing Jew and claim to uphold the Law of Moses, you will be judged by the Law of Moses. That's why Paul considers the Jewish person as Exhibit C in the Hospital of God in Romans 2:17But if you are a Gentile, you will be judged by your own standards. Verse 14 is the summary statement: 'For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law (those are the Gentiles) and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law (those are the Jews)'

Notice that this is the first time the word 'sin' appears in the book of Romans. In this case, the word 'sin' in Greek is 'hamartia', which is a term from the world of archery. It means 'to fall short of the mark' or 'to miss the mark'. And that is what sin is. Now, we're going to see how sin will be judged. Then in verse 15, Paul goes into more detail.

He mentions the Jews again: ‘For not the hearers of the Law are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified.’ In other words, if you are a Jew professing to live up to the Law of Moses, your deeds will be held up to the Law of Moses. And you have to live up to it in every respect. You cannot fall short.

But what about the Gentiles who do not have the Law? This is very important for us because all throughout life, we are going to have people ask us, ‘I’m a moral person!! I do a lot of community service. Aren’t I good enough?!’ How can we answer them? I think that on the basis of this passage, we can say, ‘You will be judged by holding your deeds against your own standards.’

‘For when Gentiles who do not have the Law
do instinctively the things of the Law,
these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves,
in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts,

Since the Law is really the setting of boundaries between individuals, every person and every society has to formulate some series of laws. Of course morality is different across cultures. But on an individual level, each individual has right now OR has had at one time a personal morality. That is what Paul is asserting and I think it’s very credible. We have all put down someone else in our heart. It might have been our brother or sister, our parents, or a friend for doing something selfish, but we have done instinctively the things of the Mosaic Law, and then we became a law to ourselves.

Here is the outrageous irony that is always overlooked. At some point in our own lives, we have really broken the standards we lay on others. Those standards reveal and restrain people’s selfishness, including our own. BUT, we have been as selfish as we accuse other people of being.

This sounds hard to believe, so the question is, where is this record kept? Is this documented anywhere? Paul’s answer is: Within us. In our conscience and our thoughts. Look at the rest of this amazing section:

their conscience bearing witness,
and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them,
on the day when, according to my gospel,
God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.’

For every one of us, our conscience will be brought to the witness stand. Each person’s conscience will have a meticulous record of the times that we’ve stood up against someone in judgment and said, ‘That’s wrong!!’ But the conscience will also have a record of the times where we were guilty of the same selfishness.

Then our thoughts will be called to the stand, Paul says, and our thoughts will waffle, too. Look at what Paul says: ‘their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them.’ I think that has got to be one of the most psychologically insightful statements in the Scriptures. Right now, we have so much inner conflict. I saw this battle in a friend of mine in college. He asked himself the tortured question every day, ‘Am I doing this because I think it’s good, or because I like the prestige and the money?’ Sometimes we feel guilty and sometimes we feel innocent, because our thoughts always go, ‘Maybe I’m right, but maybe I’m wrong.’ Even Luke Skywalker knew there was a dark side of himself, and that’s what we see in *The Empire Strikes Back!* And this dark side of ourselves will be revealed by God on the Day of Judgment when God is the judge, and these secrets are laid bare in the courtroom.

Conclusion

How disturbing!! This is what you can tell your friends about Judgment Day: YOUR FACADE WILL SURELY BE JUDGED BY YOUR OWN STANDARDS. God won’t even have to use His standards. He will judge your self-righteous self-image using your own standards in a poetic reversal. Even if you believe in cultural relativism, it doesn’t matter, because God accepts that starting point. Whatever culture you are from, whatever circumstances have surrounded your life, God knows the standards you have used, and He will simply turn your standards around and apply them rigorously and perfectly to YOU ALONE. THAT IS HOW GOOD OF A JUDGE HE IS.

And this is why you need Jesus. YOU NEED TO BE FREE FROM YOURSELF, from the three fingers tucked away in your hand that point right back at you. Jesus is the only human being to have loved God perfectly. He sought God 100% of the time. So God gave him eternal life. That judgment God said He would carry out, He

already rendered. He rendered a judgment on Jesus, and that judgment was ‘eternal life,’ and God transformed Jesus into a new type of human being, a resurrected human being. But that is because Jesus crushed the self-centeredness in the humanity that he wore. He took hold of it within his own self and *forced it to repent*. He forced it to change. That is the holy judgment of God – that in the love of God, the wrath of God was poured out on Jesus’ humanity, only to heal and transform it into a fresh, new humanity. If we are ever going to stand in God’s presence, we need to be joined to this Jesus, who will help us struggle against our own self-centeredness, and he will place his own love for God into our hearts to help us love God. That is the only way we can be free.

So ends the health exam of Patient B, the Judgmental Moralizer. And now we have found the Judgmental Moralizer to be infected with sin. And then he summons a third person, a third example of humanity. You see, a week ago, Paul dealt with the bad person. This week he’s dealt with the good person. Next week, he’s going to deal with the best man, in human history, the Jewish person. And this court is going to find that all are under sin.

Now, what shall we say in conclusion to this study of judgmentalism? I think this passage should have made us all profoundly uncomfortable. It runs roughshod over one of the most powerful desires all of us have: the desire to be innocent! Maybe you’ve screwed up in life and you want to be innocent again. In that case, come to Jesus Christ because he will pour out his innocence into you, to heal you and transform you. But maybe we’re like this Judgmental Man, and we try to protest our innocence by comparing ourselves to other people who are ‘worse’ than us. How do we know we’re doing this? We invent morality to make other people look guilty so we can feel more innocent; we’ll change our own morality as it suits us so we can feel more innocent; we’ll stifle our conscience so we can feel innocent. We go through all this to try to be innocent! But we are not innocent. And if you are like the Judgmental Man or Woman, or if you know someone like the Judgmental Man or Woman, know this truth. We must admit our guilt to Jesus Christ. Then, he will come to us. He will defend us. He will come in to us by his Spirit, and he will say, ‘Now, in relationship with me and only in relationship with me, you are not guilty; you are innocent!!’