

## “Treasuring Up Wrath”

### Romans 2:1-11

October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019

You’re likely familiar with the typical introduction for those participating in Alcoholics Anonymous; my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I’m an alcoholic. If you’re like me, you qualify for Hypocrites Anonymous. My name is Daren, and I’m a hypocrite. Sometimes, I claim that I’m more, or different, than I actually am. Sometimes, my actions do not match my words.

According to *Miriam-Webster Dictionary*, **hypocrisy** is “pretending to be what one is not or to believe what one does not; behavior that contradicts what one claims to believe or feel.” An illustration is always helpful.

The story is told of a zoo that was noted for its great collection of different animals. One day the zoo’s gorilla died, and to keep up the appearance of a full range of animals, the zookeeper hired a man to wear a gorilla suit and fill in until another gorilla was found.

It was his first day on the job, and the man didn’t know how to act like a gorilla very well. As he tried to move convincingly, he got too close to the wall of the enclosure, tripped and fell into the lion exhibit. He began to scream, convinced his life was over...until the lion spoke to him: “Be quiet, or you’re going to get us both fired!”

And, so it goes for people trying to be what they’re not actually – apes and lions.

*How about a true to life example?*

He made free use of Christian vocabulary. He talked about the blessing of the Almighty and the Christian confessions, which would become the pillars of the new government. He assumed the earnestness of a man weighed down by historic responsibility. He handed out pious stories to the press, especially to Church newspapers. He showed his tattered Bible and declared that he drew the strength for his great work from it as scores of pious people welcomed him as a man sent from God. Indeed, **Adolf Hitler** was a master of outward religiosity—with no inward reality!

Hypocrisy is the theme of the opening verses we come to in the second chapter of the New Testament Book of Romans this morning. This is the fifth message in a sermon series on which we embarked the first day of September – a series I’ve entitled *Christianity Explored*. “Romans” was a letter the Apostle Paul wrote to the Church in the city of Rome. As it is the Word of God, the book we call “Romans” also addresses the Church in Aledo today.

#### **Romans 2:1-11:**

“Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. <sup>2</sup> But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. <sup>3</sup> And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? <sup>4</sup> Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? <sup>5</sup> But in accordance with your hardness and your

impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, <sup>6</sup> who “will render to each one according to his deeds”: <sup>7</sup> eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; <sup>8</sup> but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, <sup>9</sup> tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; <sup>10</sup> but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

<sup>11</sup> For there is no partiality with God.”

The opening chapters of Romans are not for the faint of heart! God, through the Apostle Paul, addresses the plight of sinful humanity in these chapters. It hasn't been pretty, nor will it get there for a while longer. Hang in there; **Romans 3:21** is a-comin'!

In these opening verses of **Romans Chapter 2**, Paul confronts **spiritual arrogance** (verses 1, 3, 5, 8 & 9). He also affirms **spiritual humility** (verses 7 & 10). Since **spiritual arrogance** appears first, we'll start with it. Verse 1 reads, “Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.” Hypocrisy is evident here; Paul's readers condemn others, yet they practice the very same things these others do.

In verse 3, Paul asks if his readers think they'll escape the judgment of God. That's arrogance. I'm pretty good at justifying my sin, and I'm standing before a congregation of people who may be just as good at masking their own sin. But, to think we can sin and get away with it; that we can continue in the sinful thoughts, words, and actions without being “called on God's carpet,” so to speak, is sheer foolishness.

Verse 5 shows that the hard-hearted, unrepentant sinner is “treasuring up for him/herself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God “

As for “Treasuring up wrath,” the late James Montgomery Boice uses a helpful illustration in his commentary. There is “the image of a greedy individual, a miser, who has been storing up wealth which, contrary to his expectations is destined to destroy him. This man has been storing up a great horde of gold coins, placing them in an attic above his bed where he think no one will find them and where they will be safe.

He keeps this up for years, amassing a great weight of gold. But one day, while the miserly man is sleeping, oblivious to his danger, this great weight of gold breaks through the ceiling of his bedroom, comes crashing down onto his bed, and kills him. He thought of his wealth as salvation, but it was death.” (Boice, 220)

Slowly, this happens every time we sin. We add an indictment against ourselves with each sin, treasuring up wrath for the day of wrath. The late Dr. RC Sproul reminds us, “There are various degrees of punishment in hell because hell is where God manifests his perfect justice, and the punishment always fits the crime. If someone commits 30 sins, he is going to be punished 30 ways. So long as our hearts remain hardened, we add to the indictment moment by moment.” (Sproul, 61-62)

By and large, we are a people who are light on our own sin. We think we're pretty good, at least we're better than those around us. We are deceived into thinking we can continue to sin with abandon, and if we ask God to forgive us, He will do so. Be careful. Don't presume upon God's kindness to you; He is no fool, dear ones. He will not be mocked. It's time you get serious with the sin you are playing with, whether in your own mind or your Kingdom of One, or whether you're in union sinning with others. You must clean up your talk and your walk and strive to live as a Godly man or woman.

Finally, **spiritually arrogant** people are described in verses 8 & 9 - "those who are self-seeking (self-glorifying) and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil," This is who we are naturally.

**Spiritually humble** people, on the other hand, are described in verse 7 as – "those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality. Their reward is eternal life." *Want to know if your heart is right with God?* Then patiently continue in doing good. That means keep on, or start, living in a godly way.

"Glory, honor, and immortality," are qualities that come from life with God. Keller notes here, "The person who is right does not do good deeds for their own sake. He or she does them because he/she wants to become like God in His character. We are wired to enjoy these three things – glory, honor, immortality are good things to seek." (Keller, 47)

We note in both cases – **spiritually arrogant** and **spiritually humble** – that they are described as "doing things." In verse 7, the spiritually humble are doing good in seeking for glory, honor, and immortality. In verse 6, we read of those who "will render to each one according to his deeds": Some may think heaven is gained by doing; many of us like to think we get things in life because we earned them, we deserved them or we achieved them. That's impossible for those who are conceived in sin and born with corrupt natures, as is the case for each single person born since Adam and Eve's sin in Eden...with the single exception of Jesus Christ, the eternal God-man.

"Our justification (right standing with God) is by faith alone, but our rewards in heaven will be distributed according to our works." (Sproul, 62) In his letter to the churches in Galatia (**Galatians 2:16**), Paul put it this way – for we "know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified."

The outworking of the saving faith we cling to in Jesus Christ are the good things we do to increase our love and commitment to Christ and His Church, and the good things we do for each other. These deeds are not what save us for eternity, but they are the proof that what we think and say about ourselves is genuine.

*How does Jesus feel about spiritual hypocrisy?* Jesus speaks in regard to spiritual hypocrisy in Matthew's gospel account, Chapter 7, the Sermon on the Mount. There, Jesus tells His followers we shouldn't judge others (**Matthew 7:1**). The reason for this is the same Paul uses in

**Romans Chapter 2**, “For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.” (NIV)

Even so, we must not become paralyzed in ministering to others; you see, not passing judgment on each other doesn’t at the same time mean that we should do nothing at all!

There are two kinds of judgment mentioned in these passages. In Romans, Paul speaks against condemning other people simply because they have faults, and we all have them! Jesus speaks of a discerning judgment that distinguishes between unbelief and belief. Jesus doesn’t expect us to ignore a sinning brother; His point in the Sermon on the Mount is that we must humble ourselves, realizing we, too, are prone to sin – and we must take care of the sin we know is operating in our lives. But also, we must help our sinning brother or sister overcome the sin in theirs, too.

So, friends, we work out the salvation that Christ gives (**Philippians 2:12**) freely to everyone who believes in the context of His Church. As people come to be born again and experience new life in Jesus, we are to join with the people of God to make our calling and election sure (**2 Peter 1:10-11**). As we witness about Christ and what He has done, we must align our lives in holiness to God’s Word, the Bible.

Stuart Briscoe tells the story that when he was in business; he had to deal with a coworker who had embezzled a large sum of money from the bank for which they both worked. The reason for the embezzlement was that he had two wives and families and was trying to run two homes!

When he was apprehended and fired, the man stunned everyone by saying, “I am very sorry for what I have done, and I need to know whether I should fulfill my preaching commitments on Sunday in our local church!”