

Romans: The Moral One

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[0 : 00] I'm in trouble. I need help. About three days ago, one of my kids walked by me and there was an odor emanating from their body.

And as any father would say, I said what I would normally say, dude, you stink. Go take a bath. To which my wife responded to me and said, you know, that's not very encouraging.

Think of a more encouraging way to say it. And the only thing I can say is, take a bath. This morning I woke up, and I wake up fairly early on Sundays, and I was going out into the hallway, and my youngest child walked out and had her arms open wide and said, Dad, good morning.

I've worn these clothes for three days straight, and I've slept in them every day.

What do I say? I said, oh, that's great. Get dressed for church today. You know, sometimes in parenting, I just don't know what to do.

[1 : 24] In some ways, my family was a little dysfunctional. We weren't churchgoers per se. And so when I try to reflect back today to then, I don't get a lot of input of what I need to be doing.

Sundays was not a church day. We worshiped ourselves. Ourselves was God. In my family's life, we didn't believe in God. And so Sundays was the day that we slept in.

We went at 5 o'clock. We went to this fried chicken place. I don't know why it was always fried chicken, but it was Pinson's fried chicken. We ate fried chicken. And then we caught up on homework. At 6 o'clock every night, we watched the wonderful world of Disney and watched the latest Disney, Huckleberry Finn, or something going down the raft.

And then we took a bath. Whether we wanted to or liked it or not, we always took a bath. I don't know what it is because I hated taking baths.

I mean, I just, I hated taking baths. And I hated being clean as a kid. And after the baths, my mom would literally line us up because we were a military family.

[2 : 29] You know, my dad was a pilot. And we were just kind of like, I don't know, sound of music or something like that. We were in a line. We had this inspection. So we stuck our hands out. My mom checked our fingernails and everything.

Then my mom checked behind our ears. My mom always said the same thing. Did you use soap? And then she said, were there bubbles in the tub? Bubbles, bubbles, bubbles. A lot of bubbles. Because for some reason, my mom just thought bubbles meant being clean.

And if there weren't bubbles in the tub, then you just weren't clean at all. And so she would ask those same questions. And usually we got sent back into the house and we had to, or into the tub, and we'd have to add more bubbles and get more soap and get clean again.

And I just hated it. And I realize now growing up that probably every kid from the age of 1 to 16 hates, they hate being clean.

And I find myself asking my kids the same questions that my parents ask me. It's kind of like, you know, your parents say, one day you're going to get a kid just like you are. And then you're going to see.

[3 : 27] And that happens sometimes. Sometimes God gives us kids just like we are. And so God gave me four kids just like I am. And sometimes I check their fingernails and I check the back of their ears.

And the worst thing is when you check the belly button, right? Because that's really humiliating, right? Because you don't know what's growing down there at all. And then I asked the question, did you use soap yet? And were there a lot of bubbles? Bubbles, bubbles, bubbles.

Were there a lot of bubbles in the tub? Yeah, okay, so you're clean. And last week I had this conversation with one of my kids. And I got to be very careful because three of the four are sitting here, which I didn't know was going to happen, which is the terrible thing about being a pastor, right?

Because your best illustrations are at home, but you can't necessarily always use them. But the kid looked at me and they were not very clean because they had taken a bath two days ago and they had played a lot of basketball.

And I said, do you, I said, all three of the kids play basketball, okay? So you're not going to figure out who they are. And I said, do you, you need to go get clean. He goes, Dad, I'm clean.

[4 : 27] I'm clean enough. I mean, your standard for cleanliness is different than my standard for cleanliness. I mean, everybody has different standards for cleanliness. And my standard is good for me and I'm clean enough.

And I thought about that a lot. But what does it mean to have standards of cleanliness? What does it mean to be clean? What does it mean to be right? What does it mean to be good? And I did some research. And, you know, there are whole organizations and departments in the U.S. government that deal with these ideas of cleanliness and what is clean and what is good and what is right.

And so I did some research. And so hopefully you didn't eat too much before you came here today. But I did some research just to figure out what these standards are and do we really have just many multiple standards or do we just have one standard?

The organization that I watched was the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. And you can go on their website. It's pretty amazing. It probably will freak you out. You probably don't want to go on their website. But you can go on their website and check out cleanliness standards for food.

I dare you. Okay? So I did that. And I did it again. So I was looking through this again. I did it again. I just couldn't believe it. And so I want to read some of these standards for you just so that we can figure out what is the standard for cleanliness?

[5 : 42] What is the standard for being right? What is the standard for being good? And the U.S. FDA, that's a long thing, it says this.

In selling food to the public, okay, so this, I couldn't find a 100-gram container. So this is a 200-gram container, okay? So we're just going to use this as the illustration here. So it's this 200-gram container.

It says, when selling food to the public, butter passes inspection if it has four or less rat hairs per 100 grams. So this thing right here has 200 grams.

So the only reason I'm holding this is because it passed inspection because it only has eight rat hairs in it, okay? So it has eight rat hairs per 100 grams. Or if it has five or less whole insects in it.

If it's five or less whole insects in it, then the FDA says it's good. If there's more than five, bad. More than four rat hairs, bad. But if it's less than four or four or five or less whole insects.

- [6 : 41] So in here, that means there's at least ten whole insects or eight rat hairs. And the only reason I can handle this is because there's eight rat hairs.
- And they sold it to me. So I'm going to go home today and spread rat hair on my butter, my bread today. Applesauce, which if you're a German family, man, I grew up, we just ate applesauce every meal. I had something about Germans and applesauce.
- Applesauce passes inspection if there are 15 or less insect heads per 100 grams. And so if this is applesauce, this is actually cranberry sauce, which I'm addicted to cranberry sauce.
- But if this was applesauce, the only reason I'm holding this is because it had 15 or less insect heads per 100 grams. So there's 200 grams here. That means there's at least 30 insect heads in here.
- The question I had to ask myself is, what is it about heads? What about the rest of the parts? It doesn't say anything about the rest of the parts. It just says heads, which I wonder.
- [7 : 42] So the only reason I'm holding this 200-gram jar is because there are 30 or less insect heads in it. Coffee beans.
- I don't know if you drink coffee today. I walk by the Starbucks out there, and there's this sign there that says, brewing with excellence in care. And so coffee beans, according to the FDA, they only fail inspection if 10% or more of the beans are insect infected.
- So if 9% of the beans are insect infected, they sell it, and you make coffee today. So what that sign should really say out there is brewing coffee with excellence in character in beans infected by less than 9%.
- Because that's the truth. That's the standard of cleanliness. Peanut butter. Okay, so every morning I just put a big slab of peanut butter on, and I just slap it on the bread, and it's my life.
- Peanut butter is okay as long as it contains less than 30 insect parts per 100 grams. So there's 100 grams in here. So this morning I ate 30 insects, or at least their parts.
- [8 : 55] And according to the FDA, I am clean, I'm good, I'm good to go, and it's all great. I probably should stop here, shouldn't I?
- I mean, I thought about doing it with the Hong Kong government and all the standards and things like that, but I figured maybe that would be taking it too far.
- But what I've seen in my conversations with my kids and what I've seen in my conversations with the Internet over the FDA is that cleanliness and rightness and what is just and what is good is dependent upon the person.
- And it's not just about food, but what we see, if we're honest, that it's also about our words. In our minds. In our actions.
- In our sexuality. In our relationships. In our hearts. All these things, we determine what is clean, what is right, what is good in and of ourselves.
- [10 : 02] In our hearts. And the passage says that we play games with ourselves. I play games with myself.
- I mean, I try to convince myself that I'm okay, that I'm really clean, I'm not that bad off. I only have 10 bug heads per 100 grams. Or at least I'm not as bad as that person.
- Because that person is really, really bad. I'm not as bad as they are. And so if I get to heaven, and if there's a God, because if there is a God, then surely I'm going to get to heaven because I'm good.

God's just going to look at my life, and he's going to take my life through a little sieve. And he's going to sieve out, or he's going to audit my life, or whatever profession you're in, he's going to audit it, or he's going to inspect it, or he's going to, the scripture says, he's going to judge it.

He's going to sieve it. But he's going to sieve through my life, and he's going to find some junk there, but it's not going to be as bad as other people. And God's going to say, Tobin, you're great.

[11 : 08] Come on in. Come on through. I remember I was teaching in China in 1991. And we're doing Christmas, and we're talking about the Bible and scripture.

And one of my students did a very daring thing. I think that he was trying to trick me. He said to me, will Mao be in heaven? And I just, you know, I was like, whoa, what's, you know, who's listening, and what's going on, and what kind of party members are your parents?

And so being the good, evasive Christian that I am, I said, I don't know, what do you guys think? And there was a lot of silence there.

And finally, one girl stood up, and she goes, I think he will, because Chairman Mao was 51% good. Did you hear that?

He will, because Chairman Mao is 51% good, and 51% is good enough. And I've thought about that a long time.

[12 : 16] What is good enough? What is right? What is pure? What is holy?

We're looking in the book of Romans. We've gone through one chapter in two weeks. So far, I think we have a slide for it on our screen. So far, we have learned. Now, whether we accept it or not, that's another thing between you and God.

But what we've learned, we've learned about Paul. His name was Saul. He was a Jew. He was one of the most brilliant minds in the Old, New Testament time. He was trained by the greatest teacher of the day, Gamaliel, in Hebrew Scripture.

He was a mover, and he was a shaker. And on this road, as he was persecuting Christians, he met Jesus, the resurrected Jesus. And he realized that he was doing the wrong thing, and he came to Christ.

He became a Christian. We've learned about the gospel, and we said the gospel is just the good news. The good news is that God saves dead, lost people. We've learned that righteousness, righteousness means to be put into right standing.

[13 : 25] It is both a legal and a relational term. We learned, now again, whether we believe it or not, we learned through Scripture that God created us. He created us to worship and to serve him.

He created us to live unselfish lives. He created us to live an amazing life with him. We learned last week through Graham that sin entered into creation, and sin entered into us.

And we learned that sin disorders our worship. Chapter 1, verse 22 and 23, they went from worshipping God, the creator, to worshipping the worm, they went from worshipping God to the worm.

They had this slide, and so sin disordered our worship. We learned that sin disorders our beliefs and our thinking. Chapter 1, verse 21, although they knew God, they did not give him honor or presence or thank him as God, and their foolish minds were darkened.

We learned that sin disorders our desires and our actions. We've had a lot of questions about that this week. People were, whoa, when they looked at chapter 1, verses 22 through 29.

[14 : 44] But the Bible says that sin comes in and it changes us. It causes us to treat people poorly. It causes us to do things that God had not designed.

We also learned that sin, when it does all these things, it causes disorder, and this disorder angers our righteous God. We talked about wrath, however you want to say it.

I noticed he only said it once correctly. The rest of the times he said he digressed. But we talked about how this disorder angers our righteous God.

So today I want to look at chapter 2 really briefly. There's so much here that God wants to teach us. There's so much things. Please promise me that you'll go back and read chapter 2, verses 1 through 16. It will take you about three minutes today.

You have it in the little books that we made for you, the Romans book. You need to pick one up on the way out. Because I think there's some things that God wants to teach us today. There's some things that God wants to teach us about rightness. He wants to teach us about cleanliness.

[15 : 47] He wants to teach us about what does it mean to be clean, and how many bugs can we have in our life, and what does it mean to have bugs, and what does it mean to not have bugs. And the first thing I think he wants to teach us is found in verses 1 through 3.

Therefore you have no excuse. Every one of you passes judgment. For then that you judge another, you condemn yourselves. For you who judge practice the same things. And don't you know the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things?

Do you suppose this, O man, that you pass judgment on those who practice such things, and you do the same yourself, you escape the judgment? The first thing we learn in verses 1 through 4 is that it's really easy for you and I to recognize and to judge and to see selfishness and sin and brokenness in other people's lives, but it's very, very, very, very, very difficult for us to see it in our lives.

It's very, very difficult for us to call it what it is in our lives. I mean, we see it in other people's lives, but we don't see it in our lives because the Bible says that we're blinded.

We're blinded to our blindness. I mean, think about it. I went to a party last night with some great friends. We've been trying to hang out with them for a while, and whenever I walk in, I just have this bullseye painted on my chest, and they go, oh, the vicar's here.

[17 : 03] And so I'm the vicar, and I'm the priest, and I walk in there, and everybody comes, and we talk about life, and I hear these conversations, and as I hear them, I think about myself. This has been an incredibly convicting sermon for me.

Incredibly convicting. Because I realize that almost in every, not almost, God has something to teach me in this passage.

When they break their promise, when they tell things that are not true, we call them liars. But when we do it, we just say that we've exaggerated a little because we want to do it for effect.

When they are abusive to their kids, we go, wow, but when we do it, we just say that we're disciplining our kids according to the proper way at the proper time.

When they do it, they spread rumors. They spread gossip. They hurt people with their words. It's an arrow that flies out there and stabs them, and you can't take it away.

[18 : 08] But when I do it, it's just a prayer request. Or I'm asking about somebody because I'm really concerned, and I really want to know. I mean, they're cheaters, and they're unethical.

But when I do it, I just bend the rules a little. Because the rules are not really black and white, especially in certain areas of my work. I mean, sometimes it's different.

I mean, when they see them yell, I say they have a mean spirit. They're angry. But when I do it, you know, I'm really tired. And I'm sick.

And I haven't eaten yet. I look at them, and I say they're insensitive and aggressive.

But when I do it, I'm real, and I'm honest, and I speak bluntly. I don't miss people. I'm goal-oriented.

[19 : 15] She, she's sleeping her way through the office and trying to work her way all the way up to the top. But me, I just want to have sex before I date just to make sure that the date, the sex is good.

We see people differently. They get angry, and they lose their temper, and I just have just anger because my anger deserves to be angry because I deserve to be angry because that person really pissed me off, and I deserve it.

I deserve it. He, he sacrifices his family and his friends and his community and his church. He's sacrificing all these things for his work.

But when I do it, it's just a special time. It's a special season. It's only going to happen for a little while. And in the end, everybody's going to benefit from it.

They act like a goober. Now, I have to give you a definition here. Goober, G-O-O-B-E-R. G-O-O-B-E-R. Some of you go, G-O-B-E-R.

[20 : 17] G-O-B-E-R. What is it? A goober. It means kind of like a jerk, but it's endearing. It's, you know, there's such a goober. I mean, he's just, he's a jerk, but he's, he doesn't know he's a jerk. He's just, he's just kind of funny jerk.

But when I do it, I'm just having a bad day. When I watch how they handle their money in their resources, they're greedy.

But when we do it, we're being financially responsible and we're providing for our future. And Paul, in this passage, says that all this behavior, all this behavior is a self-righteousness.

And in the Gospels, Jesus, remember, Jesus talked about this all the time. The only time he really got angry at people was the Pharisees because he looked at them and he realized how self-righteous these were.

And he basically said that what they are saying is that they're good enough. They're good enough for God or at least they're not as bad as the other people. And so that when they come before God, God's going to give them a pass.

[21 : 23] Because they really don't need a savior. We only need somebody to fill our 49%. So Paul says in verses 1 through 3 that the moment we recognize or we judge brokenness in other people, he says what we actually do is we condemn ourselves.

And when we do the same things, it even gets heaped upon us even more. I mean, maybe we say, well, I would never be like chapter 1. I would never do those things. I'm not like this person in my office.

I love people. I'm nice to them. And Paul says, hey, you know, we're probably more like people than we care to admit.

Paul goes on in the passage and he talks in verse 5 and look what he says. He says, because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart, you're storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteousness judgment of God.

What he's basically saying is, hey, as long as you refuse to admit your brokenness, as long as you refuse to admit your problem, as long as you refuse to admit your addictions, as long as you refuse to admit that you have sin, as you do that, you're just building judgment upon judgment upon judgment.

[22 : 43] And then when you face God, it's even going to be worse. I remember hearing this story one time as a little kid about this guy who was really good in business, but he often cheated people. And he came home every day and he had gold coins to show for his business and people kind of looked at him and go, man, don't you fear God?

You're cheating people. And he goes, I think I'm doing the right thing because God's blessing me. He's allowing me to get all this gold and I just keep getting it. And so if God were really angry, he would stop it.

And every night, he'd put the gold above his bed in the ceiling. And every day, he'd come back and he'd cheat people and do business and every night, he'd answer the same question. Well, I think I'm doing pretty good because if I weren't doing good, then God wouldn't allow me to have this gold and I'm doing pretty good.

And he put the gold up on the ceiling. And one day, he put the gold up on the ceiling and he went back to bed and the ceiling collapsed and killed him with all the gold that he was storing up there.

Sometimes we think that because we don't experience heartache or troubles that we're doing okay. And what Paul says here in verse five is he says, and remember, he's talking to people in the church.

[23 : 51] He's talking to people in the church and he's saying, be careful because if you don't deal with what's going on in your life, judgment upon judgment upon judgment.

I mean, he says here, the words are very specific, stubbornness and unrepentant. They're actually words that mean heart disease. And it says, as long as you don't deal with what's going on in your heart, this is the word for sclerosis, that your arteries are hardening.

The words there also are used in Deuteronomy for idols, in idol worship.

And so what Paul is saying there to the people of God, what he's saying to you and me is that we look outwardly at people, but we don't look inwardly. We want to present ourselves well on the outside, but we don't want to present ourselves well on the inside because no one else is going to see it and maybe God doesn't even see it.

And so we look well on the outside. We don't kill people. We don't hit our kids in public. We don't yell at people.

[24 : 57] We treat people kindly, especially our employees. We don't steal. We don't sleep around. Everything looks great outwardly. And Paul says, be careful.

Be careful. We went to a dinner party last night for our neighbors upstairs. It was her birthday party. Don't tell them, but I stole the fork. I was, it was just, something came over me.

I was going through the dinner table. It was Mexican food. It was amazing and it was great. And I saw this silverware. I said, that's the coolest silverware. I mean, it was plain and it's simple and it looks good.

And then I picked it up. I said, I really, but then I picked it up and you know what I realized? It's hollow. I mean, it looked so good on the outside.

I was like, wow, where'd they get this? This is amazing. But when I picked it up, when I judged it, when I felt if it was true, when I felt as if there was anything to it, any substance at all, I realized it was hollow.

[26 : 12] And this is what Paul says in verse five. He says, be careful because you look on the outside and you say, I'm not like people in chapter one. But what he says is inwardly, you have these idols that you cling to.

You cling to security. You cling to power. You cling to influence. You cling to honor. You cling to recognition. You cling to wealth. You cling to stuff. Sure, you're not like the people in chapter one.

But you have problems. You know, I think the problem with me, I think the problem with us, if we're honest, is that when we read words like sin, what we usually think of is outwardly.

We think of things that we do. We think of things, maybe if we're really in queue, we think of things we don't do, things we shouldn't do. But we think of outward, external behavior, and we compare our behavior to other people's behavior, and when we compare other people's behavior to our behavior, our response is, I'm not so bad.

I'm not as bad as they are. But when Jesus looks in this passage, and when Paul talks these words, what he's looking at is our heart.

[27 : 29] and he's trying to see, are we hollow? Are we plastic?

Or do we have substance? Are we real? There's an amazing passage, it's one of my favorite passages in 1 Samuel, is after Saul loses the kingship because his actions are not what God wants him to be, God calls Samuel to go to anoint the next king, and he goes, and Nathan, Nathan goes in and anoints the next king, and he walks into the camp, and he sees all of David's brothers hanging around, and he sees the oldest one, and he's tall, and he's beautiful, and he's handsome, and he's a stud, and he says, oh, surely that's God's anointed.

That's who I'm supposed to bring into the kingship, and God says, no. He says, basically, that man's hollow. On the outside, he looks really good, and he's doing all the right things, and he says all the right things, but inwardly, he's not right.

His heart isn't right. I have somebody different for you. I have my servant, David, who is a man after my own heart. So we see in this passage that Paul, and this passage is heavy, guys.

I mean, this doesn't bother you. I mean, it bothers me teaching it. The first three chapters of Romans are like, whoa. And you ask the questions, well, why is Paul bringing us into this depth? And it goes back to the song we just sang.

[29 : 10] Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now I'm found. Paul's saying in the book of Romans chapters 1, 2, and 3 that we're never going to understand grace, that we're never going to understand God, we're never going to understand mercy unless we understand how bad off we are.

If we just think we're 51%, then God's grace means this. And we didn't really need Jesus to come die for us. And so Paul teaches us through Romans this long passage, it's intense and full of hardness and I feel like I'm sloshing through the mud of my life.

He teaches us this way because he wants us to realize how bad we are off and how bad we are and how amazing God is. The passage is this is like if God were a venture capitalist.

God has given you everything you need to do your business and he just keeps pouring on everything and everything in your life. And Romans 2 says that one day the venture capitalist comes back and he's going to see what you did with all the resources you gave him.

You're going to be called account to how well you handled his money. In verse 5 it says that there will be a day, a specific day that we will come before the Lord.

[30 : 43] Verse 2 says that it's going to be according to the truth that no hollow people are going to be able to make it because God's going to be able to look at our life and he's going to be able to look at our heart and he's going to know exactly what's in us.

Verse 16 says that at that moment look what he says he's going to open up our hearts he's going to see the secrets of our hearts. There's going to be nothing in our lives that are going to be hidden in God's court.

Everything, everything is going to be seen before the Lord everything is going to be seen. Verse 9 through 11 says that it's going to be impartial. He uses this word impartial it means no favoritism it actually means not to give the face.

It means not to show facial differential don't defer to that person because they're so good. So when we come to it in verse 9 and 11 and he talks about that day that you and I come before the Lord he's going to be totally impartial it's going to be just us no favoritism it's going to be based on what we did who we are and God will judge everybody the same.

God's not going to judge whoever the wealthiest person you is know differently than yourself but he's going to judge us all the same. None of us are going to be able to bribe God.

[31 : 57] Do you know that? None of us will be able to bribe God. Finally in verses 6-8 he says this he says God's judgment is going to be objective.

Listen really carefully because you're going to misunderstand what I say because I thought about it for many years before I could understand it. What this passage says and what the rest of the Bible says is that when you come before the Lord you are going to be judged based on what you did or did not do in your life.

Did you hear me? When you come before the Lord you are going to be judged by what you did or did not do in your life. Good works will be the test on judgment day.

What he's saying is that our works are going to reveal our heart. And whatever is happening in our heart right now it just can't be held there.

It's going to get out. And so whatever our hands do that's what's in our heart. Now listen to me I'm not saying that good works is the basis for your salvation.

[33 : 16] I'm not saying that good works are the basis for your salvation because as we're going to see later in chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 all the way to 16 in Romans and the rest of the Bible that Jesus Christ faith in Jesus alone is the only thing that's going to provide your salvation.

Faith in Jesus alone is the only thing that's going to give you new life. But the passage says that our good works of righteousness are going to prove that we have real faith.

He's saying that the fruit of our lives as we walk down in life and we look at people's lives that the fruit of our lives are going to show us that we're on the right track. How do you know if you're on the right track?

Look at the fruit of your life. If your fruit is what this passage says if it lines up to what we're talking about here then you know is your fruit selfish ambition?

Is your fruit not obeying the truth? Is your truth number verse 8 obeying unrighteousness? Is the fruit wrath and indignation? Then you know you're on the wrong path. Verse 7 Are you persevering to do good works?

[34 : 26] Are you seeking glory and honor? For the Lord immortality eternal life? If you do those things do you know that you're on the right track?

Jesus over and over throughout the gospels and we've read Luke for three years now he says over and over and over Matthew 25 In the end day the Son of God will come he'll come with his angels he'll separate every one of us into two groups the sheep and the goats and he'll say to the sheep well done my good and faithful servants come into my kingdom you fed me when I was thirsty I'm just paraphrasing well when did we feed you when you were thirsty?

Well whenever you did it to the least of these you did it to me works good works right they're identifying what path they're on he looks at the goats and says hey depart from me you never fed me you didn't know me when did we didn't feed you when did we we didn't know you when did we didn't visit you in prison well when you did it to the least of these when you didn't do it you didn't do it to me Matthew 7 a good tree produces good fruit a bad tree produces bad fruit a bad tree cannot produce good fruit and a good tree cannot produce bad fruit and so what he's saying in this passage in this judgment that we're all going to come before the Lord and on that day again good works are not going to save us but good works are a result of our salvation they will happen in our lives if we're God's people chapter 2 says that when we come before the Lord and we say that we're God's people he's going to see good works there so the question

I have to ask us is what kind of works do we have what kind of works are flowing from our heart if the day of judgment happened today would we be happy with the things that come forth from our heart or will we be sad would it make a difference would it show that we're on the right track and that we came to faith through Jesus Christ alone and that Holy Spirit is in us and he's producing these good works and we see these fruits happening in our life gentleness joy patience kindness love self-control are those things being made manifest more and more or are they not do we have changed hearts why is Paul bringing us down heavy hard everyone is condemned no one is 51% everybody's a 0% good why is he doing that

I mean I'm so glad that it's just chapter 2 because if he's doing it in chapter 16 I'd be like oh but he's doing it in chapter 2 because he wants us to see that until we see ourselves right we'll never see God right until we stop comparing ourselves with people around us and in our work and making comparisons and putting if we keep doing that we're never going to understand grace we're never going to understand Christ's sacrifice on the cross it will be just something we think about and we read but it hasn't impacted our lives and it hasn't changed our hearts it hasn't produced fruit that is good until we understand the first two chapters of Romans and the rest of scripture until we see just how desperate we are God will always look so small to us and the gospel will mean very little to us and we'll talk about grace but we won't give it to our neighbors because they're worse than us but Paul is taking us to Romans and he's an amazing writer he's brilliant it's the best

[39 : 04] Greek if you want to read Greek and Hebrew it's the best Greek to be reading he's perfect he's flawless and he's laying out this law document and basically what he's doing is chapter one guilty chapter two guilty chapter three guilty everyone chapter four Jesus chapter four grace chapter five God is amazing and Paul is taking us through this process because he wants us to understand our guilt before a holy God and until we understand that we'll never ever be the people that God wants us to be we'll never be the church that God wants us to be we'll never ever understand grace and love we'll never be able to forgive people because we still don't believe that

God's forgiven us am I getting heavy my wife just smile what do you call the person who has an accountant or a banker or however you want to invest your money and that person continually gives his accountant he continually gives his banker he continually gives his investor millions and millions and millions of dollars and that investor squanders his wealth that investor shows him nothing for his return and after 80 years that person has given everything that he has and the investor has ripped them off what do you call that person if you're in Goldman's you call him a Muppet right what Paul says is we call that person

God God you call that person God chapter 2 verse 4 God continually gives his graciousness God continually gives his mercy God is long suffering God gives his love God gives his patience God gives us all that we have why the verse says so that we might amongst all these amazing blessings we're receiving we might see the Lord we might see our sin and that we come before him as his people and to confess our need for him to confess our need for him how we doing what do you think of

God's kindness what do you think of God tolerating you and your behavior what do you think of God giving so much patience and love to us how does that impact us today how does that impact us in our workplace how does that impact us with our enemies how does that impact us with people who really make us angry and mad I mean we're not talking about a bubble bath with a lot of bubbles cleaning us up we're not talking about an FDA inspection that's 51% good or bad or whatever like that but we think of his patience and his long suffering and his kindness and his perseverance what does that do inside of us Paul says I hope and I pray that it humbles us and shows us how amazing

God is and that every moment of our life we live in just adoration and worship realizing that we were lost but now we're found and it had nothing to do with us it has all to do with God hang in there it gets better but Paul wants to take us to the truth of our hearts before we can understand God's love and grace and mercy to us father we thank you for this day we thank you that you are amazing we thank you for your word that is living and active we thank you that you are just and righteous and that you judge people with a clean eye and that you don't give face to people who have advantages but in the courtroom of you everybody is treated the same father we thank you for these words of

[44 : 26] Paul and I'm convicted I am convicted when I judge and pass judgment on people when I say things about them and then immediately immediately do the same thing father I just we just I I ask your forgiveness and I repent I pray for our family here our church family we just ask your forgiveness and we repent help us not to be self righteous help us not to allow our self righteousness to hide the beauty and wonder and truth of your word and who you are and the type of life that you want to give us and the way you want us to treat other people I mean it seems incredible and impossible but it's what your word says and it's what you've desired and it's what will be one day what I pray for those of us in here right now who are who's struggling with even just the idea of being a god I pray Lord that you would speak to them that you would show them through the community and through people whose lives are different whose works are different and for different reasons pray that they would ask the questions is there a possibility that there is a god and if there is a god how do I how do I respond to him what should I do do I act like the person who's 51% together or do

I act like the person who has all together or do I act like the person which your word says has none of it together but I pray for those of us who who've entered into your family and we wonder if our fruits are good and are we producing the fruit that is of you maybe we've lost focus of you maybe we've allowed sin to come into our life and to shade our vision of your beauty and your wonder and your grace father please forgive us help us just to lay these things before you now as you speak to us through your spirit father help us to realize that we are really really bad off and it doesn't get any better once we come to know you but we need you moment by moment and that badness we struggle with our whole lives and there will never become a time when we're 51% unbad and we're okay we don't need you we don't need to pray but your word says that we will always go through this journey and this pilgrimage and that's why it's so important that we do it together as a family to encourage and to lift up when things are hard and difficult but help us to be people who are real help us not to be plastic people who look good on the outside but when we experience tension and pressure and persecution maybe one of our idols is taken away like our job or our family or our health we just snap

Lord help us to see your mercy and your grace and your patience and how they're new every day Father and I pray for our church that we would be a church that would walk in good works so that the world around us would see those works and they wouldn't point to us but they'd point to your son who's amazing we love you we pray these things in your son Jesus name amen amen amen children and and ma'il hebben an amen