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YES, RELIGIOUS PEOPLE NEED THE GOSPEL TOO

Romans 2:1-11

I. Paul Shifts His Attention to Religious People

- A. "Every one of you who judges" (v.1) is a reference to religious people who condemn others
- B. This is most likely a reference to Paul's fellow Jews who were very outwardly moral

II. Religious People (Falsely) Assume They are in Good Standing with God

- A. They Assume They are Good Enough
 - o The Jews figured they were on God's "side" when they judged other people's sin (v.2)
- B. They Assume God will show special kindness to them (v.4)
 - o Jews understood God's character was one of kindness and patience
 - o Jews assumed God would "take it easy" on them because they were part of the nation of Israel

****Key point:** Religious people rely on their own goodness and God's benevolence for salvation, instead of Christ, and regularly condemn bad behavior in others.

****But,** isn't it contradictory to want God to judge *other* people's sins, but not ours?

III. Religious People Who Don't Trust in Christ are Still Under God's Judgment

- A. Religious people clearly know the difference between right and wrong (v.1)
 - o Paul says the Jews have "no excuse" (v.1)
 - o Since the Jews condemn others, they can't say they didn't know the behavior God desires!
- B. Religious people often practice the very things they condemn (v. 1, 3)
 - o Paul says the Jews are guilty of the very sins they condemn in the Gentiles
 - o And the Jews refuse to acknowledge and repent of these sins (v.5)

****Key clarification:** when Paul condemns those who “judge” he is not saying that it is wrong for us to condemn sin. Instead, he is saying that it is wrong to think you will be saved by judging other people’s sin (when you still have your own!)

C. God “shows no partiality” when he judges (v.6-11)

- o God will render judgment on the basis of the fruits in our life (cf. Ps 62:12; Prov 24:12)
 - When Paul says God judges a person “according to his works” this does not mean we are *saved* by works
 - Instead, God judges a person “according to his works” because his works reveal who he really is; works reveal whether a person is a follower of Christ or a follower of self.
- ** Paul’s big point:** It’s not enough to be religious; You can’t just *claim* to follow God (the Jews did that!). Your actions are evidence that your faith is genuine.
- o Good fruit is evidence a person is saved and headed towards eternal life
 - Good fruit: “patience in well doing, seek for glory, honor, and immortality”
- o Bad fruit is evidence a person is unrepentant and headed towards wrath and fury
 - Bad-fruit: “self-seeking, do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness”

Discussion Groups

1. Do you think being religious makes people closer to salvation or further away? Why or why not?

2. In what ways have you perhaps trusted in your own status, or your own goodness, as the basis to stand before God?

3. Take some time to reflect upon the fruits in your life. While we all still struggle with sins, does your life exhibit a general pattern of faithfulness? If not, where do you need to repent?
