



THE SIN OF SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

Series Context

- Paul writes to a divided Roman church (Jewish & Gentile believers).
- Paul seeks unity: one new humanity in Christ.
- Chapter 1: Gentile sin = idolatry, worshiping creation over Creator.
- Chapter 2: Paul turns to the Jews—showing *they too* are guilty and need grace.

Main Theme

- **Paul levels the ground:** all people—Jew and Gentile alike—stand under God’s judgment.
- No one can claim moral superiority.
- The real issue: **self-righteousness**—a sin that blinds us to our own need for grace.
- Paul’s warning applies to the church today: long religious history doesn’t equal righteousness.

Three Signs and Solutions to Self-Righteousness

1. Hypocrisy – Judging others while excusing ourselves

- We often condemn others for sins we commit ourselves (“Judgment for thee, not for me”).
- Israel had the law but broke it too.
- Story of woman judging neighbor’s laundry → “the problem was her own dirty window.”

- **Vs. 1–4:** God’s kindness and patience are meant to *lead us to repentance*, not pride.
- **Solution:** Acknowledge our own sin; extend to others the same patience God shows us.

2. Presumption – Expecting a pass because of special status

- Entitlement = assuming our position exempts us from accountability.
- Jewish believers assumed God’s favor; Christians today risk similar presumption.
- **Vs. 5–11:** God judges all by truth and deeds, not background or belief alone.
- Salvation is by grace through faith—but faith is active, expressed in love.
- **Solution:** Stop presuming upon grace; stay soft-hearted through Spirit-led good deeds.
- God shows *no favoritism*—our actions reveal our faithfulness.

3. Pride – Knowing truth without living it

- **Vs. 12–16:** It’s not what you *know*; it’s what you *do*.
- “Merely listening to the law doesn’t make us right with God—obeying does.”
- God will judge every “secret life”—he sees our hearts, motives, and deeds.
- Knowledge without love is empty; theology without obedience is hollow.
- **Solution:** Let grace transform your heart into loving action.

Conclusion

- God’s kindness → leads to repentance.
- God’s impartial judgment → keeps hearts humble.
- God’s all-seeing love → frees us to live honestly and graciously.
- Stay soft, stay humble, stay grateful—because we are all beggars showing each other where to find bread.

Connect Group Discussion

Warm up:

1. What do you love most about the current season of life you are in right now?
2. What stood out to you from Sunday's sermon?

Study & Discussion:

1. How can we tell the difference between resting in God's grace and presuming upon it? What are subtle ways the church today might act entitled to God's favour rather than living faithfully in response to it?
2. Paul emphasizes that God "will judge everyone according to what they have done." How do we hold this together with the truth that we are "saved by grace through faith"? What might a healthy, grace-filled pursuit of "doing good" look like in everyday life?
3. How can knowledge of Scripture and theology become a source of pride rather than transformation? What does it mean for our faith to move from "head" knowledge to "heart" obedience?
4. Paul says faith and deeds belong together. What are some tangible examples of "faith expressing itself through love" in your community right now?

Practice for the Week: "Mirror and Mercy"

3 Options:

1. Daily "Mirror Moment"

- Each day this week, take 5 quiet minutes to pray Psalm 139:23–24:

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.

See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

- Ask the Holy Spirit to gently reveal where hypocrisy, presumption, or pride might be at work in your heart.
- Instead of defending yourself, simply name what you see and bring it before God in humility.

2. Respond with Mercy

- Each time you catch yourself judging or criticizing someone this week—pause and pray:
"God, you've been patient and kind with me; help me show the same patience and kindness to them."
- Look for one specific opportunity to extend mercy where you'd normally express judgment—a conversation, a social media post, a family situation, etc.

3. Practice Humble Action

- Do one quiet act of service this week that no one will see or praise.
- Let this hidden act remind you that what matters most to God is not appearance or knowledge, but a heart shaped by love.