

Good News To Hear  
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Romans 2:1-11; 3:21-26

Why do people watch TV shows like Hoarders or the dysfunctional people on Dr. Phil?  
Compared to those people we don't feel so bad about ourselves.

Nancy Tracy writes:

*Reality shows like "Hoarders" and "Hoarding: Buried Alive" are like fun-house mirrors, magnified reflections of our neurotic foibles that make us feel better about our own dysfunctional behaviors. The morbidly obese man on "Oprah" who is literally stuck to his recliner, the bickering couple on "Dr. Phil" who make Jon and Kate Gosselin look like dewy-eyed honeymooners, the compulsive packrat who has accumulated so much stuff she can't walk from the living room into the kitchen without cutting a swath through the clutter—all of these super-sized versions of ourselves make us feel relationally superior because we have fractionally greater self-control than those people we see on TV.*

It's sort of like being given the choice to put on your bathing suit or trunks and be forced to go to either the French Riviera or the Splash Country water park at Dollywood. We'd probably feel better about ourselves at Splash Country!

- We all have a tendency to judge our own morality compared to other people
  - "I'm no Mother Teresa or Billy Graham, but compared to Hitler or Charles Manson, I'm not so bad."
  - What's the problem with that kind of thinking?
  - We said last week that there are two ways people avoid coming to Christ:
  - "I could never be good enough" or "I'm not so bad"
  - Question: What does it mean to "grade on a curve"?
  - God doesn't grade on a curve!
  - One of the verses we study today, Romans 3:23 says: "...all have sinned and fall short of the Glory of God," You know what ALL means? ALL!
  - But there's good news!
  - All have sinned, but we don't have to be GOOD ENOUGH based on human standards
  - God has made a way through Christ that ALL can be REDEEMED.
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- Last week we left off at 1:18. And though our lesson doesn't cover those verses, I can't leave you hanging.
  - In the last verses of chapter 1 Paul wrote to the church at Rome about the WRATH OF GOD
  - He said: The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness.
  - And then he goes on to describe these wicked GENTILES:
  - They neither glorified Him as God or gave thanks to Him
  - Their thinking was futile their hearts darkened

- They exchanged the glory of God for images
- They exchanged the truth of God for a lie
- They worshiped created things rather than the Creator
- God gave them over to shameful lusts like homosexuality

Paul wrote:

Romans 1:29-32

29 They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, 30 slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; 31 they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. 32 Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

- The Jews in Rome were bound to be saying, "Those GENTILES...what EVIL PEOPLE!"
- "Man, I'm glad WE are not like THEM!"
- But, Paul is leading up to "ALL have sinned."
- Through these verses he's been saying THEY, THEY, THEY...then he turns 180 degrees
- Look at verse 1 of Chapter 2...YOU
- He points the fingers at anyone who is feeling self righteous and he says...

Romans 2

God's Righteous Judgment

1 You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.

- What do we call someone who passes judgement on someone and they do the same thing? Hypocrite
- What Paul is taking them to task about is SELF RIGHTEOUSNESS
- "We are not free to judge others for their sins because we too are sinners, at times committing the very sins we condemn or worse." (Leaders Guide)

John MacArthur writes:

"Self-righteousness exists because of two deadly errors:

1. Minimizing God's moral standard usually by emphasizing externals; and 2. underestimating the depth of one's own sinfulness."

- Does this mean we're never to call someone out for sinful behavior? No, verse 2 gives us a clue:

2 Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. 3 So when you, a mere human being, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment?

James 4:12

12 There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you—who are you to judge your neighbor?

Lovingly holding a brother or sister accountable for sin based on GOD'S TRUTH is different from feeling we are so SELF-RIGHTEOUS that we are qualified to look down our noses at someone else.

(Verse) 4 Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance? 5 But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed.

Chuck Swindoll writes:

*When we feel resentment toward God for not eradicating evil in the world, we forget that eliminating all evil would mean the end of us too! So, from now on we'll have to say what we really mean. "Lord, get rid of all evil that's worse than what's inside of me." The judgment of God falls on every person because the standard of righteousness is perfection. So why are any of us alive? Why have we not been reduced to a cinder by God's wrath? "The riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience"(2:4). In other words, grace.*

Bottom line: We're ALL MESSED UP and will have to answer to a righteous God. None of us has a right to feel SELF RIGHTEOUS. Thank GOD that because he wants all to REPENT he is PATIENT with us and gives us more than enough time to TURN TO HIM.

Romans 2:6-11

6 God "will repay each person according to what they have done." [a] 7 To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life. 8 But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. 9 There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; 10 but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. 11 For God does not show favoritism.

- The point is in that last verse...verse 11: God does not show favoritism.
- In the context of the times in which this letter was written, and the previous verse (verse 10), Paul was making it clear that whether Jew or Gentile, salvation is available to ANYONE
- But I don't want anyone to misunderstand verses 6-8

- We know that in Chapter 1:17 Paul said "the just shall live by faith"...verses 6 -8 might make someone think it's not BY FAITH but BY WORKS.
- But look again at verses 6-8 (read)
- Question: If we're not saved by GOOD WORKS...what do verse 6-8 mean?
- We're not saved by our GOOD WORKS but believers WILL be held accountable for what we did and did NOT do in this life.
- At the judgement seat of Christ there will be an EVALUATION.
- Good works will not save us; but if we're TRULY SAVED there will be good works.
- Put another way: Works determine our EVALUATION not our SALVATION.
- That brings us to our final section of scripture in this lesson.
- After all this BAD NEWS about the WRATH OF GOD and OUR SINFUL NATURE, Paul circles back to the GOOD NEWS...God has made a way for us to be RIGHTEOUS in His sight...nothing we've done...it's all HIM.

Romans 3:21-26

Righteousness Through Faith

(Jump to notes below)

21 But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. 22 This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

- Verse 21: Apart from the law..."Entirely apart from obedience to any law" (MacArthur) the righteousness of God has been made known
- It TESTIFIES back to the LAW and everything the OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS said
- But...verse 22...This righteousness is GIVEN THROUGH FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST TO ALL WHO BELIEVE
- Why was it given to ALL who believe?
- Verse 23: Because...ALL have sinned. What does ALL mean? ALL!
- And (verse 24) "all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus."

25 God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood —to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—

- Why did God do this?

26 he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

- God HAS to be JUST or He wouldn't be God.

- But he CHOSE to JUSTIFY those who have faith in Jesus!

So, What's the Takeaway?

- We have a LOT TO BE GRATEFUL FOR in these verses:
- We can be GRATEFUL that God is patient and gives everyone an opportunity to avoid His WRATH
- We can be GRATEFUL that God doesn't play favorites..
- And best of all, we can be GRATEFUL that though we ALL have sinned, God CHOSE to make a way for us to be FORGIVEN and RECONCILED TO HIMSELF by believing in Jesus Christ through FAITH.