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The Recipients of the Wrath of God: The Moral Religious, Part 4

Romans 2:1-5, "Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things.² We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things.³ Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God?⁴ Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?⁵ But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed."¹

Romans 2:17-29, "But if you call yourself a Jew and rely on the law and boast in God¹⁸ and know his will and approve what is excellent, because you are instructed from the law;¹⁹ and if you are sure that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness,²⁰ an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth—²¹ you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal?²² You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?²³ You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law.²⁴ For, as it is written, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."

¹ *The Holy Bible : English standard version*. 2001 (Romans 2:1–5). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

²⁵"For circumcision indeed is of value if you obey the law, but if you break the law, your circumcision becomes uncircumcision. ²⁶ So, if a man who is uncircumcised keeps the precepts of the law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision? ²⁷ Then he who is physically uncircumcised but keeps the law will condemn you who have the written code and circumcision but break the law. ²⁸ For no one is a Jew who is merely one outwardly, nor is circumcision outward and physical. ²⁹ But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. His praise is not from man but from God." ²

Proverbs 30:12: says, "There is a kind [of man] who is pure in his own eyes, yet is not washed from his filthiness."

I can think of no more accurate description of the people portrayed in our passage, the morally upright condemned. Paul is discussing God's wrath as it relates to the morally upright/the Jew/those who were "pure in their own eyes." Thus far we have seen an analysis of how a morally upright person could be the recipient of God's wrath because of their pride and hypocrisy. The morally upright are quick to condemn the nations, and yet slow to apply the Biblical standard of judgment to themselves!

Romans 2:3, "And do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment upon those who practice such things [that is, you who discern that the Gentile is under God's wrath on account of their sin] and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God?"

See, the Jews to which Paul is referring here were indeed "pure in their own eyes," and yet clearly "they were not washed from their own filthiness." At this point Paul digresses in his treatment of the morally upright into a discussion of two more aspects of God's wrath, Romans 2:6-16; which actually is a continuation of his teaching in Romans 1:18. We'll deal with this section later.

Now, we are going to skip ahead to Romans 2:17-24 where Paul returns to his discussion of the morally upright condemned with an illustration of everything we have seen thus far. From Romans 2:1-5 we've seen the theory. Now, Paul, show us an example of their hypocrisy. Paul begins stating their position...

Their Position, Romans 2:17-20

In this section, Paul is not criticizing the Jew. He simply is describing the position they enjoyed as children of God.

Romans 2:17, "but if you bear the name Jew."

Literally this reads "and if you call yourself Jew." At this time in Judaism the nomenclature "Jew" was a badge of honor. Its uniqueness is seen in that it was a title that stood for the "people of God." Thus to say that you were a Jew at the time of Christ was to say that you were the covenant people of God! A parallel in our day would be the title, "Christian."

Romans 2:17 "and rely upon the Law."

This literally reads, or "to rest upon law." For the Jew, the law was an ally. Recall the Psalms.

² *The Holy Bible : English standard version*. 2001 (Romans 2:17–29). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

Psalms 19:7, 10-11, "The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple... They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them Thy servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward."

Truly, the Jew saw in the law NOT condemnation BUT the proof of their special favor in God's eyes. And this is equally true for the Christian today. Yes the law condemns (Romans 7:7-10), but it also contains the basis upon which we can say we are children of God. How do you know if you are saved? The law of God teaches us the basis for the assurance of salvation! Where only can you go to discover the glorious message of salvation, the hope of eternity and have comfort in the midst of trial? The law of God which is His word!

In this context, the Jew was right to "rely upon the law." They also gloried in God.

Romans 2:17, "and boast in God."

This carries the idea of a deeply felt pride/"exalting." Because they worshipped the one and only true God, the Jew gloried or boasted in Him as a source of honor and happiness- and we ought also to do the same. Paul describes the outlook that all Christians should have.

Romans 5:11, "And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation."

Romans 2:18, "and know His will."

Paul is stating a fact. Because the Jews were in possession of the Law, they possessed God's mind and will when it came to this world and next. Accordingly unlike the philosophical schools of their day, the Jew could emphatically state what God's plan was/is for this world!

Romans 2:18, "and approve the things that are essential being instructed out of the Law ."

The Jew did not take things at face value, but having been "orally instructed" out of the Law they were able to test all things; this is the idea behind "approve." It is a test which determines the quality of something or someone. The result? The Jew actually knew that which was excellent in God's eye.

Romans 2:19, "and are confident [that is, convinced, sure, or certain] that you yourself are a guide to the blind."

This is a calling housed in the Abrahamic covenant (Genesis 12:2, 3) and hence the calling of all of God's children.

Isaiah 42:6-7, "I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I will also hold you by the hand and watch over you, and I will appoint you as a covenant to the people, as a light to the nations, to open blind eyes, to bring out prisoners from the dungeon, and those who dwell in darkness from the prison."

Truly on account of the covenant promise, God's people have been placed on this earth to be a "guide to blind" people. That is our calling. Yet it doesn't stop here.

Romans 2:19, "a light to those who are in darkness."

Herein we see another purpose that God gave His people from the very beginning. Listen to the exhortation God gave to His people.

Isaiah 60:1-3, "Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For behold, darkness will cover the earth, and deep darkness the peoples; but the Lord will rise upon you, and His glory will appear upon you. And nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising."

This is why Christ said this:

Matthew 5:14-16, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do *men* light a lamp, and put it under the peck-measure, but on the lamp stand; and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

Thus, the Jews were correct in thinking of themselves as "a light" to this fallen world.

Romans 2:20, "a corrector of the foolish."

This means that they were "an instructor of the unenlightened," that is, those lacking the ability to think things out spiritually. In the Bible, "fool" is not a derogatory term, but the description of the non-believer and his position. Now don't miss it. Because of the fall, mankind has become "darkened in their understanding." (Ephesians 4:18)

The world has become foolish as the fool in Proverbs. Though God has given His word as a means to enlighten the lost, nevertheless in their fallen condition the non-Christian thinks upon the word as foolish (1 Corinthians 1:18; 2:14) and so does not read it! Thus if the non-believer is going to be saved, they need correction.

Now the primary means by which God has deigned to "correct the foolish" is the teaching and so ministry of the child of God.

Romans 10:14, "How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?"

Romans 2:20, "a teacher of the immature."

The Jews were literally "a teacher of infants, little children, babes." This is what the book of Proverbs calls the simpleton. The idea here is that of spiritually immature people. So not only is it God's plan to use the child of God to evangelize the lost, but it also is God's plan to edify and build up the immature believer. Accordingly, the Jew of Paul's day understood their calling both to evangelize the lost and edify the believer.

Romans 2:20, “having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth.”

The Jews had in the law the “outline” or “form” of knowledge and truth; the very goals of philosophy and false-religion! Thus, the Jew did not view himself as having one of the many religious manuals of his day. Rather, he possessed THE Manual of knowledge and truth! Accordingly, he was enabled to minister in the Kingdom of God in all the ways thus referenced!

All of this constitutes those things in which the Jew rightly took pride and so rejoiced. Now it is important to note that Paul does not disagree with these things! The child of God in the Old Testament and the New Testament has been assigned a position which involves...

- Being a people in covenant with God.
- Possessing truth and so relying upon it.
- Boasting in God.
- Knowing His will and so being able to discern between truth and error.
- Ministering both to the lost and the spiritually immature.

This is the position which all that are in covenant with God have been entrusted! That’s the positions that all in Christ hold! So what is the problem? Having been entrusted with truth and commissioned to minister this truth, notice their transgression.

The Morally Upright’s Transgression, Romans 2:21-22

Paul illustrates their transgression by asking four rhetorical questions; questions which progress from bad to worse.

Romans 2:21, “you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself.”

Now we are seeing the problem. It is NOT the God-ordained position to which they have been called or the fact that they rejoice in the Lord that they have been called and equipped so to serve. RATHER, it is that the Jew failed to submit to the ministry to which they themselves had been called! Christ put it this way:

Matthew 15:7-9, “You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, ‘This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.’”

The Jews of Paul’s day had the word of God alright, and they used it to minister in God’s Kingdom. Yet rather than submit to it themselves, the Jew twisted the word to fit their own passions and desires. Christ indicted them this way:

Matthew 23:15, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you travel about on sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.”

Hypocrisy was and is a major problem amongst the people of God. The Jews of Paul’s day were no

exception. With this, Paul gives three examples of their hypocrisy.

Romans 2:21, “you who preach that you should not steal, do you steal.”

The Jews were ones who proclaimed “authoritatively that you should not *covertly steal*.” The word Paul uses for “steal” refers not to blatant robbery, but to a deceitful taking of something that doesn’t belong to you. Obviously stealing is wrong, and the Jews of Paul’s day preached against it such that they even addressed covert stealing- like...

- Robbing God of his honor.
- Taking credit for something you didn’t do.
- Not only accepting but longing for the praises of men.

All of these acts would be covered by the idea behind the word for “stealing” here. Yet sadly as is the case in our day, so it was in Paul’s; the Jews were guilty of violating the very command! For example, how many sermons had Paul heard on stealing while studying in Jerusalem? Seated in the temple court, he no doubt heard rabbis wax eloquently on the subject, giving details examples of stealing in all its forms. Yet in the very same court were a set of benches placed there by the priests which for a fee the workers exchanged secular money for Jewish money (The priesthood prohibited God’s people from offering Roman or Greek money to God. The secular money would defile the temple. As such, only Jewish money could be offered). The transaction fee therefore reduced the “tithe” amount intended by the worshipper with the money-changer pocketing the difference.

By this priest-sanctioned practice, money intended for God was taken. That is why after Christ chased the money changers out of the temple, He said this:

Matthew 21:13, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer’; but you are making it a robbers’ den.”

Preaching is easy; living is not! The Jews preached long and hard against stealing, but they were guilty of the very sin before God!

This brings us to Paul’s second example.

Romans 2:22, “you who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery.”

As in our day, adultery was widely practiced in Paul’s day, a sin which the Jews not only vehemently opposed, but also lamented! And yet, as much as they opposed adultery, amazingly they were guilty of it!

For example, at the time of Paul, there was a debate in Judaism concerning the grounds for divorce and the meaning of what Moses wrote in Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy 24:1, “When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts *it* in her hand and sends her out from his house.”

So the question was, “What is the ‘indecent thing’ for which Moses allowed divorce?” Now there were two camps on this one at the time of Paul. One sect of Judaism said that the “indecent thing” was adultery. Another said that the “indecent thing” was anything that displeases the husband.

Now of the two views, which one do you think was accepted and practiced by the general populace? The latter one! Because if a wife burnt the evening meal, the man was legally permitted to divorce his wife on the grounds that she displeased him! With such liberal laws, divorce at the time of Paul had become legalized adultery. One day you could marry a woman, enjoy a night on the town, and in the morning divorce her! All of which would have been legal at this time in Judaism!

So while the Jews lamented the moral decadence among the Gentile world in which they lived, they nevertheless were just as guilty. Accordingly, the very ones who condemned the immorality which could be found amongst the Gentiles in their day were just as guilty. The difference was that the Jews looked better doing it! This brings us to the third example.

Romans 2:22, “you who abhor idols, do you rob temples.”

One of the major planks in the Jewish religious platform was their hatred of idolatry! In a sermon to the people of God prior to their entering the Promised Land Moses gave this exhortation:

Deuteronomy 27:15a, “Cursed is the man who makes an idol or a molten image, an abomination to the Lord, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and sets *it* up in secret.”

Indeed! The idol and the idolater were hated in Judaism. Yet that didn’t mean that many a Jew didn’t profit from the practice legally. For example, at this time in Rome, various and sundry altars were erected in the middle of nowhere upon which idols would be placed. Now unscrupulous people might happen upon one of these and rob it if the idol was made of gold or silver. We see this reflected in the words of the town clerk of Ephesus when an accusation was brought against Paul.

Acts 19:37, “For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of our goddess.”

Well the practice in Judaism in the event that a Jew stumbled upon one of these altars was to destroy the wretched altar, but then take the idol, bring it to the Gentile market, and sell it for large sums of cash! In this way the Jew might proclaim the evil of idolatry in the morning, but then go to the market-place and engage in its traffic in the afternoon. And once again, all of this was justified in both the Babylonian Talmud (cf. *Abodah Zarah*~ “strange worship”). While they opposed idolatry, the Jew of Paul’s day nevertheless prospered through its trade and so became a participant in the very sin they professed to hate!

Their Condemnation, Romans 2:23-24.

The condemnation of the morally upright is twofold.

Roman2:23, “you who boast in the Law, through your breaking of the Law, do you dishonor God?”

This was a major violation. The word for “dishonor” means to treat someone shamefully or to insult them. When used of God it means to

1. Deprive God of the honor due His name,
2. Insult His majesty, or
3. Rob Him of His worship.

Such is the sin of hypocrisy. And yet notice that this sin went beyond the sin of the Gentile. In Romans 1:21 Paul said that the violation of the Gentile was their refusal to “glorify” God (the word used there is the word for glory). Hence, the Gentile’s sin was they refused to give God something. The morally upright go beyond this, they not only withhold glory, they do damage to the name of the Lord.

Now get this! The Jews were quick to pass judgment upon the nations for their refusal to worship God (cf. Romans 1:21-23) agreeing that death is right for such an offence. And yet, those who arrived at such a conclusion when it came to the Gentile went beyond in their sin. How did the Jews do this? Notice the next verse; it is even more serious.

Romans 2:24, “for “the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you, just as it is written.”

Paul explains his accusation with a quote from Isaiah 52:5 which in essence implies that the Jews of his day were no different from the Jews in times past who killed the prophets and so were condemned by God. How were they guilty of blasphemy? As was it was in the Bible times, so it is in our own. How we live and what we do is directly attributed to the god/God we worship.

- If a people were weak, then their god was weak.
- If a people were strong, then their god must also be strong.

We see this reflected in 2 Kings 18 when Sennacherib laid siege to Jerusalem, listen to the threat that was made to Hezekiah.

2 Kings 18:33-35, “Has any one of the gods of the nations delivered his land from the hand of Assyria? Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivvah? Have they delivered Samaria from my hand? Who among all the gods of the lands have delivered their land from my hand, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?”

See, the Assyrians interpreted their victories to mean that the god’s of the people they conquered were not strong! We see it in Israel’s captivity:

Ezekiel 36:17-18, 20, “Son of man, when the house of Israel was living in their own land, they defiled it by their ways and their deeds... Therefore, I poured out My wrath on them for the blood which they had shed on the land, because they had defiled it with their idols... When they came to the nations where they went, they profaned My holy name, because it was said of them, ‘These are the people of the Lord; yet they have come out of His land.’”

When the people who represent the one and only True God commit the crimes listed in this text, the

right and necessary conclusion of the nations was that the God of the Jews must be of the same character. Thus we conclude these things:

- The conduct of the Jews was a sermon on the nature of God.
- Every time the Jew lied, stole, committed adultery, etc..., they proclaimed that God is a God who approves of lying, stealing, and sexual perversion!
- That is Blasphemy; that is an injury to the reputation of God!
- And the penalty for Blasphemy, of which every Jew was aware, was death (cf. Leviticus 24:16; John 10:33)!

I hope you see the problem! While the Jews enjoyed the privileged position of being the covenant people of God, they violated their position through their hypocrisy. This resulted in their bringing shame upon God, rather than honor; a sin which the Jews agreed merited condemnation when among the Gentiles.

Romans 1:18, 21: “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness... For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks...”

Their Condemnation is Just!

Spiritual privilege does not absolve us of guilt, it only aggravates it! In light of this, we who are involved in a morally upright religion are faced with a very important question: Are we living in light of the standard with which we judge?

Matthew 7:2, [Christ said], “For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.”

The Jews of Paul’s day didn’t live by the standard by which they judged the Gentiles. The obvious standard was Romans 1:21 and the fact that the Gentiles failed to honor God. Yet when it came to their personal living, as we’ve seen they did not apply this standard to themselves.

When we come to the New Covenant with its emphasis on grace, an entirely new abuse arose.

Now, let me ask you what did an unregenerate person look like in the Old Covenant? They delighted in the standard: honoring God. And they willingly violated the standard. But they used Abraham as a cover for their sin, “Why aren’t we condemned? We have Abraham as our father!”

What would an unregenerate person look like in the New Covenant with its emphasis on grace?

- They’d delight in the standard, which in the New Testament was articulated as perfect righteousness (cf. Matthew 5:48; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 5:1).
- They’d willingly violate the standard.
- And they’d use grace as a cover for their sin!

The New Testament warns against this standard.

2 Corinthians 6:1, "And working together *with Him*, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain."

Amazing! It is possible to receive the grace of God to no end. Clearly this was a struggle in the New Testament church. Paul expressed much the same view in Colossians.

Colossians 2:5-6, "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so walk in Him.*"

It is not enough to say, "Grace has changed my destiny." The question is, "Has it changed your life?" After giving a description of the fruit of grace in the life of the child of God Paul exhorts us this way:

Galatians 5:25-26, "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another."

Paul exhortation implies that there will be a tendency amongst morally upright people to exalt in the life they have received in the Spirit, but then live as Gentiles. The same problem arose in church history during the ministry years of C. H. Spurgeon. There were some under his ministry which used grace as a cover for sin. Spurgeon battled against this over a century ago:

Some there are amongst us- we grieve to confess it- who are not so fond of his precepts as of his doctrines. They will hear the preaching that sets forth the precious doctrines of grace, and the sweet promises of the covenant, with very great delight, as I hope we all do, but at the mention of the precepts and practical obligations, they are offended, and afraid that there is more of a legal twang than of a gospel tone in the sermon... We should always be ready to suffer the word of exhortation, and be as content to do for Christ that which he enjoins, as to get from Christ that which he freely bestows. (Spurgeon, 1978 , pp. No. 3, 440, page 6)

This is why there was the emphasis in the New Testament on the transforming power of grace.

Titus 2:11-12, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us [teaching with correction, hence "disciplining us"] to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age..."

To be saved by grace is to be placed in the school of grace, a school which gives very specific instruction as to the passion and goal of our lives. Truly, to the one claiming grace as their comfort and joy in the face of their sin, they must see that this grace does not come without expectations. This saving grace was operative in Paul's life:

1 Corinthians 15:9-10, "For I am the least of the apostles, who am not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me."

Behold the impact that grace had on Paul; it made him a diligent servant of Christ. So it will be with everyone claiming grace. In fact, if such effect is missing, so we are apt to question whether or not the person has been saved by grace.

Titus 1:15-16, "To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. They profess to know God [they profess the saving grace of God], but by *their* deeds they deny *Him*, being detestable and disobedient, and worthless for any good deed."

From this let us at least conclude that a mere profession of faith in Christ is not what saves. Accordingly, it is possible to profess faith and so claim grace, but not be saved! From these passages we conclude that if your life doesn't reflect a growing passion for the service of Christ, walking with the Lord, and living unto the Lord and His glory you are not living by grace no matter how much you may be professing it!

Now if that is the case, then either you are you don't have grace [you are not saved], or you don't understand grace [you are immature in your faith]. To the Unsaved: If I am describing you here...

- Turn from your sin and your false-notions of grace.
- Confess your lawlessness and passion for autonomy.
- Go to God and ask for forgiveness.

Real saving grace can still be enjoyed today. It is not too late! Heretofore grace has freed you to sin. Now may it free you from sin!

To those of you who are saved, to the one who genuinely is saved by grace and yet has not submitted to its instruction (cf. Titus 2:11), what ought you to do?

- We must remember our purification from our former sin (2 Peter 1:9). To do this we must be in the word. We must there gaze upon the cross and consider the grace of God which has saved a wretch like you and me. Indeed! The love of Christ must control us (2 Corinthians 5:14)!
- Let us never forget that a grace that costs little requires little. Indeed! Let us behold the cross and consider the cost that Christ underwent to save us! And may this result in us giving our lives in return!
- We must be quick to confess our sin and thus our brokenness. You and I have seen Paul's treatment of the morally upright condemned. What is it that sticks out about them? On account of their arrogance, they do not submit to the standard of judgment by which they judge. Where ought grace to lead us who are genuinely saved? It gives us the confidence to be real with God, fearing no condemnation.

Accordingly, David wrote this after committing heinous acts before God:

Psalms 32:5-6, "I acknowledged my sin to Thee, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord'; and Thou didst forgive the guilt of my sin. [Selah]. Therefore, let everyone who is godly pray to Thee in a time when Thou mayest be found; surely in a flood of great waters they shall not reach him."

Grace led David to prayer, to confession, to brokenness. And that is where grace must lead us! In the above depictions of the unsaved person claiming grace as a cover for their sin, the key is that they willingly sin. They are not committed to the service of God. They are apathetic and so uncaring when it

comes to the presentation of their bodies a living and holy sacrifice. Now there couldn't be a greater contrast between the genuine believer and the sham Christian. The genuine believer mourns over his sin (Matthew 5:3, 4). Grace enables him to!

Truly, as saved individuals, let us understand that mourning over sin, repentance, brokenness isn't just an activity of redemption; it is where we live. For as we live here and so gaze upon the cross of Christ, we are moved to a life-invigorating gratitude! We must set our hearts to labor diligently in the Kingdom of God (we should expect of ourselves nothing less!]. Paul put it this way:

1 Corinthians 15:10, "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me."

The grace of God in Paul's life made him a diligent servant in the Kingdom of God. Such must comprise our expectation when it comes to our salvation. Christianity is a call to battle! Let us get on with it! But let us understand that the battle will involve a war against the corruptions in our own being! As such the man who confessed his utter inability to do any good in Romans 7, is the same man who wrote this:

1 Corinthians 9:24-27, "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but *only* one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then *do it* to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I buffet my body and make it my slave, lest possibly, after I have preached to others, I myself should be disqualified."

If you are living by grace, such will be your passion!

Bibliography

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About the Preacher

Greg Thurston preached this sermon on March 28, 2010. Greg is the preacher at Bethel Presbyterian Church.