

“Secrets Revealed”  
Romans 2:16  
(Preached at Trinity, July 29, 2007)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Last week I set before you **Verses 11-16**.
  - A. In **Verse 11** Paul writes that in the day of judgment God will show no partiality. **Romans 2:11** – “There is no respect of persons with God.”
  - B. The Jews might boast because they were the children of Abraham. They were the special people that received God’s law on Mt. Sinai when the other nations did not. They received the written law and will also be judged according to the demands of the law. The law demands perfect obedience. **Romans 2:13** – “For not the hearers of the law *are* just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.”
  - C. The Gentiles on the other hand did not have the Ten Commandments, yet God wrote them upon their heart. They did not know the written law, yet their consciences convicted them to do the law. **Romans 2:14-15** – “For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: <sup>15</sup> Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and *their* thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another”  
The Gentiles will also be judged by the law. They will perish even though they did not know the written law. But they will be judged less harshly than those who sinned against greater knowledge.
2. **Verses 13-15** serve as a parenthetical statement. The KJV helps us out with this passage by actually placing the parenthesis. There is no way that **Verse 16** follows **Verse 15** in thought. Men will not be accusing and excusing one another on the Day of Judgment. Rather **Verse 16** follows **Verse 12**.  
“For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law;--- In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.”
3. This morning I want to focus on **Verse 16**.  
Paul’s purpose in the early chapters of Romans is to make it clear that all men stand condemned before God. All have sinned. None can be justified by the law. All are in need of God’s justifying grace through Jesus Christ.
4. Paul writes these things before the backdrop of God’s judgment. All men are under His wrath. Paul wants us to understand several things.
  - A. First, there *will* be a Day of Judgment. Paul writes here in **Verse 16** “in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men.”  
This is the second time in this chapter Paul has referred to “the day”  
**Romans 2:5** – “But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;”

The day of eternity is quickly approaching. The Day of Judgment will come most unexpectedly for many.

- B. Second, the Day of Judgment will be conducted by Jesus Christ. We will stand before Him.

**Romans 2:16** – “In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ”

1. Jesus Christ is coming in judgment. He will judge two groups: Those raised to life and those raised to damnation. Those who have done good and those who have done evil. **Romans 2:6-8**

2. Only those who are found righteous in Christ will be justified.

- C. Third, the Day of Judgment will be according to the Gospel. Paul calls it “my gospel.” This doesn’t mean, as some would presume, that we all have our own Gospel—you have your testimony, I have mine. Paul’s Gospel was the Gospel he received by Divine revelation—the only Gospel.

**Galatians 1:6-8** – “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: <sup>7</sup> Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. <sup>8</sup> But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”

1. How is it that the judgment will come according to the Gospel? Because the Gospel is Christ.

**Acts 4:10-12** – “Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, *even* by him doth this man stand here before you whole. <sup>11</sup> This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. <sup>12</sup> Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

**John 14:6** – “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

**Mark 16:15-16** – “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. <sup>16</sup> He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”

2. Ultimately, the only determiner on the Day of Judgment is what we’ve done with Christ.

5. Paul says something else here about this Day of Judgment.

**Romans 2:16** – “In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.”

1. The word for “secrets” refers to that which is hidden or concealed. Paul uses it again in 1 Cor.

**1 Corinthians 4:5** – “Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.”

2. On the Day of Judgment all things will be brought to light. The hidden things will be revealed. Every secret will be made known.

6. This morning I want to focus primarily on this phrase – “God shall judge the secrets of men”

I. The secrets of your heart

A. Jesus knows those who belong to Him – He knows His bride

**2 Timothy 2:19** – “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.”

1. Multitudes are going through this life deceived presuming all is well with their soul – we need to heed the warning of Jeremiah

**Jeremiah 17:9-10** – “The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it? <sup>10</sup> I the LORD search the heart, / try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, *and* according to the fruit of his doings.”

2. Jesus gives us the ultimate warning

**Matthew 7:21-23** – “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. <sup>22</sup> Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? <sup>23</sup> And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

3. Jesus says that many will be excluded because they had no relationship with Him

B. There are many things people have trusted instead of a relationship with Christ

1. Many are content with mere religion – church attendance, church fellowships. They don’t really feel a commitment to the church or to God’s people. It’s just a sideline in their life.

2. Many are content with theological knowledge

There are many who have a vast understanding of Scripture and may even teach others, while they themselves do not know Christ.

**Thomas Watson**: “Some bless themselves that they have a stock of knowledge, but what is knowledge good for without repentance? It is better to mortify one sin than to understand all mysteries. . . Learning and a bad heart is like a fair face with a cancer in the breast. Knowledge without repentance will be but a torch to light men to hell.”

*The Doctrine of Repentance* (Edinburgh: Banner, 1987), p. 77

3. Many are content with good intentions

Good intentions are no replacement for a relationship with Christ

C. Jesus will judge the secret things of your heart

1. It is difficult for us to judge our own heart

Remember, self-examination is a good thing

**2 Corinthians 13:5** - “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?”

2. Has your heart been turned to Him? You need to examine your attitude—the desires of your heart

a. What is your highest desire? In this examination you are examining your life’s purpose, your desires, your interests

b. You are examining the purity of your life

c. You are examining your attitudes towards sin

The true believer hates sin and flees from that which he hates

- d. You are examining your attitude towards this world
3. What is your highest desire? Is Jesus your most precious treasure?  
**Matthew 13:45-46** – “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: <sup>46</sup> Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.”
  - a. Is Jesus your greatest desire?
  - b. Don’t answer yes if you seldom think about Him.
  - c. Don’t answer yes if you don’t crave being nearer to Him
  - d. Don’t answer yes when you find yourself seeking other things before Him and His church.

D. God looks upon the heart  
**1 Samuel 16:7** – “. . . man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.”

## II. The secrets of your mind

- A. On the Day of Judgment Jesus will expose the secrets of your mind
  1. Our mind is the one place we have most private but God knows your thoughts  
**Psalm 139:1-4** – “O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. <sup>2</sup> Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. <sup>3</sup> Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted *with* all my ways. <sup>4</sup> For *there is* not a word in my tongue, *but*, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether.”
  2. There are secrets that no one else knows - your secret thoughts and desires
  3. Jesus will lay all things bare  
**Hebrews 4:13** – “. . . all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.”
- B. What are the secret things you harbor in your mind?
  1. Do you enjoy the unsavory details in the news – because you enjoy hearing about it?
  2. Do you harbor secret lusts in your heart?
  3. Are you holding on to grudges, jealousies, pride

## III. The secrets of your life

- A. Paul is stating clearly in this passage that God takes notice of our actions
  1. **Chapter 1** describes the wickedness of our actions  
**Romans 1:18** – “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men”
    - a. It’s the things we do!
    - b. **Romans 1:28** And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, **to do** those things which are not convenient;
  2. Paul continues to describe this in **Chapter 2**  
**Romans 2:1** – “Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest **doest** the same things.”  
**Romans 2:2** – “But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which **commit** such things.”

**Romans 2:3** – “And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and **doest** the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?”

**Romans 2:6** – “Who will render to every man according to his deeds:”

3. How does God know about all these things? You’ve kept all secret right?
- B. God will judge everything that is true about us.
1. God knows you as you are, not as you try to appear to be
  2. Everything about us has been recorded – a book of your life
  3. God has recorded your deeds, your actions, your words
- Matthew 12:36-37** – “But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. <sup>37</sup> For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”

#### Conclusion:

1. For many the Day of Judgment will be a shameful thing. Everything about them will be exposed.
2. When Adam and Even were created they stood before God naked, yet they were not ashamed. They had nothing to hide. After they sinned they were ashamed before God. They tried to hide. They tried to sew fig leaves to cover their shame but they could not escape the all knowing eye of God.  
They were also ashamed before each other. We don’t want others to look upon our shame either.
3. On the Day of Judgment multitudes will stand before God naked and exposed. It will be the ultimate time of humiliation as everything in their lives will be exposed.
4. This is why men hide from God today.  
**Romans 1:28** – “And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge”  
They can’t stand His gaze upon their sin. But you cannot escape from the presence of God.
5. Good News!  
Through Christ our sins can be covered.  
**Hebrews 10:16-17** – “This *is* the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; <sup>17</sup> And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.”
6. We need to be clothed with Christ.  
**Romans 13:14** – “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ”  
Perhaps I should read the entire passage. If you’ve put on Christ you will want to honor Him.  
**Romans 13:11-14** – “And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep: for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed. <sup>12</sup>  
The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. <sup>13</sup> Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. <sup>14</sup> But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfil* the lusts *thereof*.”