
EQUIP

**What is a Christian – Small Group Session Three
Week beginning 27th November**



EXCUSES

Everyone Means Everyone

We want God to produce a harvest in our lives and we have already seen the way that will happen is by listening to the gospel again - the gospel that is God's power to save. Last week, Paul started to outline this gospel. He began by showing us why we need saving and what we need saving from.

Everyone is under God's wrath (1:18) because they have rejected the creator, refusing to glorify him (1:21). Instead, in our foolish following of lies, we decide in our hearts to worship things that have been created by God (1:23) rather than God himself. God's wrath against us is seen now as God hands us over to our sins, an ever increasing downward spiral (1:25-31). This analysis is devastating. The evidence of God's wrath is all around us, we are helpless and need a saviour. But...

...it is possible that some people might want to exclude themselves from this verdict. Some people think that they are not sinful, or less sinful, that they are better than others. Others might think they are excluded from this verdict because of their religious background. The Jews in Paul's day would have thought that they were not under the wrath of God but were the inheritors of God's promise. So now, Paul turns his attention to showing us that there are no exceptions. Everyone means everyone.

In our culture most people think that there are spiritual powers and forces in our world. Most people think that, in the end, after death, there will be some kind of bliss or happiness or spiritual peace. What reasons do people like that give for having such confidence? Why do people think they will not face the wrath of God now or in the future?

Now pray as you come to Romans chapter 2. Ask that, by seeing clearly that there are no exceptions, God might bring forth a harvest in our lives.

"You, therefore, have no excuse..."

Romans 2:1

Three Excuses

1 Don't judge

So let's start thinking about the excuses which people might give to avoid the consequences of being under God's wrath. Some people might respond to chapter 1 by saying, "I am not as bad as those sinners." Read Paul's reply - Romans 2:1-5.

What is Paul's verdict on those who think themselves better than others?

How does this response show even greater contempt for God?

2 The nature of God's judgment

Paul now outlines what God's judgment will be like. Time for a list, we have not had one for a while. Read Romans 2:6-16. What are the main things we learn about God's judgment? There are four or five significant truths.

How should these truths impact us?

But now, imagine another excuse, "I should not face this judgment because I don't know what God's law says. How can I be judged for not following his law?" From the passage, how might we respond?

3 But we are different

Time for one last excuse. You can imagine that God's historic people, the Jews, responded that they are different; they have been circumcised and they have the law of God, they are the children of God. Now finally read Romans 2:17-29.

What is Paul's argument against the privileged Jews? According to Paul, what is a true child of God?

These are big truths we have looked at in this session - and really relevant. It is commonplace for people to make their excuses. People think that they live 'decent enough' lives or that they are 'spiritual' or that 'a God of love will let them into heaven in the end.' How does Paul's teaching here challenge those attitudes?

How does this teaching on God's judgment challenge our attitudes? What should we pray in light of all we have seen this week?

