

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Questions and Answers on Romans 1-2

Scripture: Romans 1-2

Code: 45-21

One of the things that I love to do is answer questions about Scripture because I get excited to know what you really want to know. We've done this through all the years that I've been here, now we do it regularly about every month on Wednesday night, so if you don't get your question answered tonight, soon they'll be a time on a Wednesday evening when you can come and ask the question there. And if you do have questions, let me also emphasize that you should feel very free to write to us and express your questions in a letter and that way we'll be able to answer you personally, which we'll be glad to do.

I think we ought to begin with our questions on the book of Romans, since Romans has been our study. And you might open your Bible to chapters 1 and 2. For several months we've been studying Romans 1 and 2 and I know many folks have had questions in their minds, and I wanted specifically to answer some of those related to the book of Romans.

The first question comes out of chapter 1 verse 7. It says in 1:7, "To all that be in Rome beloved of God called saints." And the question is: what did Paul mean in Romans chapter 1 verse 7 concerning to all that be in Rome called saints?

I think probably the confusion comes that so many people are raised in a Roman Catholic background where they are used to hearing the term "saint" in reference to some very unique individual who has been quote/unquote "canonized" by the Catholic Church and you think of St. Soandso or St. Soandso and that's your identification. If you go into a Catholic Church and you go down what is known as the apse of the church as opposed to the nave, all the way down the apse of a large Catholic Church, you will see along the sides stations occupied by certain saints.

I'll never forget the story of Dr. Kipper(?) who expressed...they took his friend into the great cathedral in New York, St. Paul's Cathedral and his friend wanted to visit that. He was a Roman Catholic visiting in the city while Dr. Kipper was attending Columbia University. And he had particular interest in St. Joseph who was his own private saint, if you can have one, and he wanted to go and worship at the shrine of St. Joseph and they both went there together only to find a sign hanging around the neck of St. Joseph which said, "Do not worship here, this saint is out of order." And apparently...apparently there was something wrong with the mechanics of the lighting and other things that went on there. And Dr. Kipper said that was the greatest opening to witness about who

really is always in order that he ever had in his life.

So, I don't think we want to be confused about who is a saint. The simple answer will come to you if you simply open your Bible to 1 Corinthians chapter 1 and look at verse 2, and then you'll know for all time what a saint or who a saint really is. In 1 Corinthians 1, Paul identifies himself as the author and he identifies the recipients as the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, or set apart, called saints with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now there you have a definition of the saint, one who is sanctified in Christ Jesus and who calls upon the name of Jesus Christ. In any place, in any city, any one who has been sanctified in Christ Jesus through salvation who calls upon His name as Lord is a saint. The word means set apart or holy, hagios is the Greek word, any one who is a Christian is a saint, anyone. And you find that that term is used in many many places to address Christians.

In 2 Corinthians 1:1, there is a greeting with all the saints who are in Achaia and this is a typical Pauline expression as it was throughout the life of the early church. Ephesians chapter 1, "To the saints who are at Ephesus." It is simply a term used to describe any Christian. So I hope that helps.

The second question comes also in regard to chapter 1 and 2 of Romans. You've explained that Romans 1 deals with God's righteous judgment concerning the unsaved degenerate man who are given over to a depraved mind. That's right. You've explained that Romans 2 concerns the basically religious or moral man but who is still without Christ. Here comes the question: how does, or how will God deal with the backslidden carnal Christian?

Now we know how God will deal with the unregenerate whether they're immoral or moral, whether they're irreligious or religious, right? Judgment. But how does God deal with backslidden carnal Christians? I think there are four Scriptures that answer that for us and I'm going to give them to you rapidly. Number one, I believe God chastens. First Corinthians chapter 5 provides an illustration for us. It says there in verse 1 that there is an individual in the church who is having a sexual relationship with his father's wife, that probably is a term that refers to his stepmother or it would say his mother, so it was his stepmother, nonetheless would be considered not only immoral in the general sense but in the specific sense of incest. And not only was this going on but you're puffed up, verse 2, and you haven't mourned over such sin but rather you look at it as if it was a notch in your belt. And so because of this he tells the church, verse 4, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ when you're gathered together in my spirit with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such and one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Now the text says that this is a saved individual because in the end, in the day of the Lord, the spirit is going to be...what? Saved. So this is a believing person. But for the time, he is to be delivered to

Satan for the destruction of his flesh. And this is to be done by the church, verse 4, "When you are gathered together and my spirit is present with you and the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ," power and authority, same thing, "When you're gathered together and you have the authority of Christ as the duly constituted church and you come across a sinful member, put him out of the church." That's the first way God deals with a backslidden carnal believer. The church is to turn that individual over to Satan and there will be a chastening in the physical dimension, ultimately the spirit or the soul being saved because it is a believer.

Now there's a second factor that we need to talk about relative to chastening and that's in Hebrews chapter 12. Hebrews chapter 12 verse 5, and this is the element of chastening that is not so much the design of the corporate body of the church but is the individual attention of the Spirit of God Himself in a personal chastening. It says in the middle of verse 5, "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. And if you endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons, for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? And if He doesn't chasten you then you are a bastard and not a son at all." It's like a father who corrects us in the flesh and we give them reverence. "Shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits and live?" And he goes on to talk about it.

So there is in the life of a carnal and disobedient Christian and carnal may not be the best term to use...the disobedient Christian, I think, fits better biblically. But when you have a disobedient backslidden is a word Jeremiah used, so that's a good word, backslidden Christian, you have one, the responsibility of the church to put that person out if in fact they will not repent of such sin. Two, the Spirit of God personally gets involved in the life of that individual in a chastening manner.

Now turn for a moment to 2 John verse 8 and I want to show you a third thing that can occur in the life of a backslidden disobedient Christian. Verse 8, 2 John, "Look to yourselves that we lose not those things which we have wrought but that we receive a full reward. And what this indicates is that a believer could come to the point in his life where his disobedience cause the forfeiture of that which he had already gained as a reward previous to his disobedience. The Lord has given you a promise that there will be reward for faithfulness. If you're faithful He has given the reward but He reserves the right to take it back in light of unfaithfulness. So there definitely will be chastening by the Lord, there should be chastening by the church, there will be a loss of reward, an emptyhandedness, if you will, at the time of rewards, the Bema Seat.

And under those things we could talk about a lot of other things. Of course you forfeit blessing and joy and assurance and all kinds of things that occur, but I guess we could sum it all up by saying there is a loss of the meaning and the meaningfulness of salvation. When a person is backslidden and disobedient and sinful they not only lose the sense of their salvation and their assurance, that's why 2 Peter 1 talks about making your calling and election sure by adding certain things to your life. They

not only lose the sense of their salvation but they lose the meaningfulness of it...that is the blessedness of it.

Now I have to add another thing after those four. The one other thing that happens that God does to a backslidden disobedient Christian, are you ready for this one?, is to forgive them in spite of their sin. Aren't you glad to hear that? And the text is 1 John 2:1, "My little children, these things write I unto you that you sin not," and of course we know he's referring to believers whom he calls his little children. Don't sin, obviously, don't be disobedient or backslidden. "But if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the covering, the propitiation, the mercy seat, the hilasterion for our sins and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world." So that if we do sin, Jesus Christ as our Savior is our covering for our sin. And He has forgiven us all our trespasses, Ephesians 1 tells us.

So, where there is sin and disobedience in the life of a believer, there will be chastening by the Lord. There should be chastening by the church. There will be a loss of reward and a certain emptyhandedness at the time of rewards. There will be a loss of the sense of being saved and the blessedness of being saved. And that's why, you see, John says we write these things unto you that your joy may be...what?..full. But on top of all of those things, we also have the promise that God will in spite of our sin forgive us because Jesus Christ has already paid the price, even for the sin we haven't committed. And since the price is paid, His death for us becomes a covering. Isn't that a great grace that God has given us?

That's why it's so important to affirm what we call eternal security because the lack of eternal security strikes a blow against the efficacy of the death of Christ. And we'll say more about that in a little while.

A third question that comes out of Romans: what is God's purpose for judgment and wrath? What is God's purpose for judgment and wrath? And I think I can answer that just very simply. Number one, it is to punish those who reject Him. And that's simply what the Bible says. God's wrath is set to punish. Romans 1:18, the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness. God will punish them for that. There is a price to pay for the rejection of the truth. So the first purpose of God's judgment and wrath is punishment...punishment.

And then I would add a second purpose. I really believe that secondly, and this is in a large theological framework, I believe God's purpose for punishment is the ultimate elimination of evil from His Kingdom once and for all and forever. In other words, I think God throughout the history of man in allowing sin allowed it in order that He might destroy it. You understand what I'm saying? If there's an up, there's a down...if there's an in, there's an out...if there's a left, there's a right. In other words, we live in a world of opposites and if there's a good there was always potentially an evil. And eventually that evil was made manifest and it was as if God allowed it to happen so that He could once and for

all destroy it. And He allowed it to run its full course with its full power and its full impact and shows in the end that He can utterly destroy and eliminate it from His eternal Kingdom. And all of this is happening in a brief span in the midst of eternity. And once evil is finally...has finally run its course and God has finally set it aside, it will never again exist throughout all of forever.

And so, I believe there's a sense in which there's an individual perspective that God is angry because He is punishing individuals for rejection. And then on a broader scale, God is exhibiting His wrath for the purpose of ultimately destroying evil and setting it in the place it belongs, outside His Kingdom forever and ever.

Another question: who is judged at the Great White Throne? Turn in your Bible to the twentieth chapter of Revelation. And I really haven't put these in any other order than just to throw them in the Romans pile and I got a little pile here from Matthew and some about prophecy, you always get a few of those and some over here on dating. All of those of you who would like a date, see our college pastor Alan Hadidian, he may have another list of people who are waiting for someone like you and we can match you all up. Or our singles group might, too. But this question comes out of Revelation 20 and it has to do, of course, with what we studied about Romans, the judgment of the evil.

In verse 11 of Romans 20...or of Revelation 20, I'm sorry, it says, "I saw a great white throne and Him that sat on it from whose face the earth and heaven fled away and there was found no place for them." Of course, this is God sitting on His throne in ultimate judgment. Christ is there as well because all judgment is committed unto Him and He sits in the Father's throne, and so forth from earlier in Revelation we know that, as well as the gospel of John. "And I saw the dead small and great stand before God." Small and great doesn't mean short and tall, it means insignificant and significant. "And the books were opened." And people often ask the question, well doesn't God know who's saved and who's not saved? What does He have to have books for? Because God is just and God will not judge a person without manifesting the objective criteria for that judgment. So there's no question in the mind of anyone. God has kept the records and He knows every thought and every word and every deed ever done by every human being who ever lived. And it's all down so that judgment is in the basis of their works and He'll have the record.

And He'll also have the book of life. "And the dead were judged out of those things written in the books according to their works." You see, works are the objective criteria which God uses. "And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, death and Hades delivered up the dead that were in them and they were judged every man according to their works." And there you are again, you shouldn't have a problem with that, judgment is on the basis of works ultimately. "And death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire, this is the second death and whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

Now I believe that this is a judgment of unbelievers. I do not believe that we see here believing people, but I think...people say, "Then why is the book of life here?" Simply because that is another criteria by which God judges. One, He will open all the books which give all the records of all the deeds of all the ungodly. And then He will open up the book of life and not only will all their deeds manifest their ungodliness but their absence in the book of life will be the subjective criteria added to the objective of the list of the works of their life that will condemn them forever.

Now the reason I don't see believers here is because believers have already been judged by this time. The judgment of works that we know as the Bema judgment, 2 Corinthians 5, Romans 14:10 and 11, that judgment has already occurred before the millennial period began, a thousand years prior to this. But this is the resurrection of the ungodly of all time. Now you say, "Does that mean that it's a literal resurrection?" Yes, John 5, Jesus said that there will be a resurrection not only for those who will be raised to life but those who will be raised to death as well. All people who have ever lived will be resurrected. They will receive a new body. Ours will be fit for heaven and God's eternal Kingdom, theirs will be fit for hell. And people have said, "Is hell literal fire?" That's a very difficult question to answer. Jesus used that expression many many times. I don't know how literal the fire is, I tend to think there will be some kind of very literal torment because there will be a real resurrection. And whatever kind of body they have, it will be a body that can exist forever and it can exist in a tormented state forever and never perish. And I believe this is the judgment of those unrighteous dead who will all be gathered at one moment in time in the Great White Throne and the record will be laid out and they will not have the works to make it and they will not be in the book of life and if you're not in the book of life, the only way you could get in would be to have a perfect works record, right? And nobody can do that. For by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be...what?...justified. So I believe this is the unrighteous dead who are then cast into the lake of fire. Believers already have had their judgment.

Now let's go back to Romans 1. And we'll get back to the believer's judgment in a moment. In Romans 1 and 2 we talked about homosexuality, the sin that is mentioned in verse 26, 27 of Romans 1, and this question is: I agree that homosexuality is a sin. That's good because there's little doubt about that. But is it the most heinous sin as you said? How can a physical sin be worse than the sin of Romans 1:21 of not honoring God? Isn't not honoring God a worse sin than homosexuality?

Well let me just say this. Not honoring God is the worse sin of all. Homosexuality is simply a result of that. In other words, you don't just...you can't line them up because they're not equivalent, they are sequential, you understand what I'm saying? First you make the determination in your life that you are not going to honor God and then you move into sinful living and the epitome of the expression of a life that doesn't honor God is homosexuality. And I believe that's what Paul is saying here. He goes through all of these things, the ultimate thing that a man can do is to totally invert the created intention of God. I mean, to totally invert it as homosexuality does is the worst physical sin, sure. And it is an expression of a life that does not honor God because it...it doesn't just pervert, it inverts the created

order. And I think that's why Paul uses it as the illustration of the utter sinfulness of man when he says this is how far he has gone, he has gone to homosexuality. That is the limit of Paul's conception of sinfulness.

Now also in Romans 1 and 2, I have a very interesting question. This gentleman says, "I am a Japanese national and my country is atheistic and materialistic. Most of our population have very little understanding of Jesus. After World War II, Japan was in great need. There were many children without parents. Fortunately some very caring people arose to start homes for these children. One woman I knew of was very selfless, giving and loving. She spent her whole life caring for these children. Many people didn't respect her for doing this but because of the love in her heart, she continued helping. I don't believe she was a Christian. Here's my question. There are many Christians who don't ever spend their life as she did. If one looked at their deeds, this woman would look like the Christian. They simply had an opportunity to hear the message of Christ and she didn't. How will God judge her? And how will God judge these quote/unquote `Christians'? This deeply concerns me."

Well, I don't blame him, that concerns me, doesn't it you? It is true that some of the philanthropy and the selflessness and the generosity and the sacrifice of the unregenerate outstrips Christians. There's no question about that. Some of the most caring people in the world aren't Christians. Some people who have totally given themselves to assist the hurting and the needful people of this world are not Christians. On the other hand, some Christians do not manifest that kind of care at all.

But listen, the basis of salvation is not how you treat children, it's whether you believe in Jesus Christ or not. And that is the substance of the gospel. You will be saved not on the basis of your philanthropy or on the basis of your good deeds and you will not commend yourself to God with those either because whatsoever is not of faith toward God is sin no matter what it is. But the basis of salvation is faith in Jesus Christ, that's why Acts 4:12 is the key verse, "Neither is there salvation in any other for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be...what?...saved." The plan of salvation says that it is not your good deeds, it is not your good works that save you. Now keep that in your mind because I think some of you have misunderstood what I've been saying. Your works do not save you. And that's basic...for by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified...not of works lest any man should...what?...boast. Then if salvation is by works, we have reason to boast and God cannot get the glory, it's us. We did it. But salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ. That's why the most wretched individual or the most gross life can come to Jesus Christ, put his faith in Jesus Christ, spend forever in eternity whereas the most philanthropic charitable person in the world who turned their back on Jesus Christ will spend forever in hell.

And it is wrong to assume in the case of this woman that she did not have an opportunity to hear the message of Christ because if there's anything we learn in Romans 1 and 2, it is that she did, right? She did. She held the truth in unrighteousness. It was there as evidence by her conduct, her very conduct toward these little children spoke of a law within her, didn't it? It was there. She was doing by

nature the things that God would have wanted her to do. Her conscience, her thoughts all reveal the inward law of God written in her heart. She just did not accept that as from God and live up to the light she had.

Now let me take a step further. There are Christians who do not manifest the same level of human goodness, at least outwardly and visibly that some of these philanthropic caring people have manifest. But listen carefully, while it is true that there are people in the world who do deeds of human goodness, it is not true that you can be a Christian and never do those deeds. If you're a Christian there will be some manifestation in your good deeds.

Now listen to me. There will be some manifestation in your good deeds. On the outside they may not look as magnanimous as the charities of an individual like this, but they do truly manifest the work of God in your life. That has to be the case for faith without works is what? Dead. And maybe if God were to be the judge, even though the world might not think your works were as significant, the most significant work of all is to glorify God and to praise Him and that is something that woman could not do at all. I hope you understand.

Yes there are human beings who show good relatively speaking human good. And that's commendable. But it can't save them. Yes there are Christians all of us who don't do everything we ought to do but there is going to be something there to give evidence that we are truly regenerate. That is without question the case.

Now let me see if I can just keep going along this line and follow it up. Here's a question that came in a letter. "Recently you appear to teach that such acceptable works...that acceptable works, I guess we could call them, will determine our eternal fate, that is heaven or hell. Do you really mean that?" Now that's been the crux of what I've been hitting at. Let me see if I can get it across another way.

I do believe, now listen carefully, that works reveal our eternal fate. I do not believe they determine it. What determines it is our faith in Jesus Christ. But what proves that that in fact has been determined is the evidence in our life. Now I said it last time, I'll say it again. The cause of salvation is faith in Jesus Christ plus nothing, right? No works. But the consequence of that is works.

You see, the point is this, works do not determine that you...determine your salvation, they just manifest that you really were saved. Do you see the point? It's...so that, look, so that when God judges men, He will judge them on the basis of their deeds because their deeds will manifest whether in fact they are regenerate or not. That's the issue. I do not believe in works salvation. Neither do I believe in a salvation that has no works that follow it. I mean, we've got a lot of people in that boat. People sometimes..."Oh I know so and so and I know they don't go to church and they're living an awful life, but I remember the day when they went down the aisle." Well you know what it meant when they went down the aisle? It meant that they went down the aisle. You know what that meant? That

meant they went to the front and it didn't mean anything more than they went to the front. Because if there's nothing there, James says, then don't tell me that's faith because faith that has no works isn't faith at all. I mean, if you believe the Bible says, "If any man be in Christ he is a...what?...new creation," then you've got to believe that has to be manifest.

Now some people are tough to figure out because it is possible for a Christian to fall into a lapse of disobedience. And it is even possible for a Christian to fall into a lapse of disobedience and never come out of it because the Lord takes them home, right? The Corinthians, some of the Corinthians died in the middle of their disobedience. Ananias and Sapphira were snuffed that fast right in front of the whole church, pshew...and you know what the word was, don't join that organization, one false move and you're dead. I mean, you better be serious about that bunch. And that was just after they had given the biggest offering of their life, the problem was they told God they were going to give it all and they didn't. Don't make promises to God you don't want to keep, I mean, we don't want to haul people out.

So, please understand that I do not believe that you're saved by your works but I believe God can look at your works as the objective proof that you've been saved. And He will look at your works and see the pattern of righteousness, not just relative human goodness, but true righteousness born of a love for God. And He will also see that your name is written in the book, subjectively and objectively you belong in His Kingdom. That's the issue.

Okay, the next question. I know that the works or service of Christians will be tested, but will there be any judgment on Christians for their sin? Now listen, here it comes, I will simplify this as much as I can. There are two elements of judgment in the life of a believer. One is past and one is present and future. Your sin will be judged, the wages of sin is..what?..death, that not only means the sins of the ungodly, it means yours too. Your sins require death. Now let me ask you a question. Who then died for those sins? Christ. So in your case, the judgment on your sin has been paid, right? In full. People say, "Well, I thought that was only the sins I committed up until I was saved." No, no, no, no, you were future tense when He died, everything was in the future. All of them were covered, Ephesians 1:7. Your sins were forgiven so the judgment for your sins is covered. That's why Romans 8:1 says there is therefore now no...what?...condemnation to them who are in Christ. Why? Because the wages of sin is death and that's it.

For example, if you committed a crime, let's say you committed a heinous crime, you massacred a family or something, killed a bunch of children and their parents. And they took you to court and they found you guilty, first degree murder on eight counts, or whatever. And they took you to the executioners chair and they said, "We're going to...we're going to electrocute you, capital punishment, and they hit the switch, you know, and you went. And then they came in the place and you just lifted your head up and stretched a little and said, "I'm back." They'd have to let you go because the law only requires you die once. If you're a Christian, dear friend, you died because the moment you put

your faith in Jesus Christ, Galatians 2:20 was fulfilled. "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless...what?...I live." Too bad...too bad for sin, too bad for the law, too bad for the enemy, you're alive and the law has no hold on those who have in Christ paid the penalty. So you have been judged, that's past tense.

But there is a sense in which you will also be continually being chastened and that's not final judgment, that's corrective discipline. I mean, it would be one thing to kill your child, it's something else to spank them. The Lord disciplines us to conform us to the image of Christ. And so those are the two elements so that there will never be a time...I've heard people when I was a little kid, I heard a sermon on this that some day all my sins were going to be flashed on a screen before all the world to see. Boy, that's scary. That is scary. And the Lord is going...it was 1 Corinthians 4 misinterpreted. God's going to rap my knuckles with His big ruler for everyone...that isn't in the Bible. My sins are already paid for by Jesus Christ and it's the law's tough luck, it has no hold on me. That's Romans 6, we'll get into that in real detail in about two or three years...haha, no....no, no, I'm going to speed up, I'm going to speed up.

So we...that's been taken care of, the Lord will shape us and chasten us and so forth. So now what happens when we go to the Bema Seat? Let's look at 2 Corinthians 5 for a moment. Now here we're talking about believers. Verse 10, well verse 9 is key, "We work or we labor, we serve the Lord whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him." And by this we don't mean saved, we're already saved. We already walked by faith not by sight, we are already confident that we're going to be present with the Lord, we already know we're saved, that's the whole process before we even get to verse 9. We know we possess the Holy Spirit, verse 5, we know we're talking about believers. So we come down here and so here we are working "In order that even as Christians we may be accepted." In other words, that which we produce in our Christian life may be something that gives Him pleasure. We want to honor God, right? Well done, good and faithful servant. Why? For we must all appear before the Bema, it was a platform for rewards, I've stood on the one that they say is the ancient Bema in the city of Corinth. They've got a little sign there, that's where they gave people rewards. And there we will all appear at the place of reward. That is not the Great White Throne, the Great White Throne is a long time after that. I believe this occurs immediately following the Rapture. Absent with the body, present with the Lord, and appear before His judgment...He Bema, not krino judgment or kata krino which is the final or furious judgment but here a platform of rewards. And we will receive for the things we have done. Now see what I'm...here we are back to this concept of works, we will be rewarded for what we have done as Christians. Now this isn't how we get saved, we're already saved or we wouldn't even be here, right? We've already been raptured, we're in the Lord's presence and He will reward this, watch this, according to what we have done, whether it be good or bad, that's the Authorized. That's a poor translation. It should be translated, "Whether it be valuable or worthless."

We will not be judged, now listen carefully, we will not be judged for evil. That's been done. We will be rewarded for that which was good. The evil is taken care of. Only the good remains. And the useless, you know, like mowing the lawn and throwing a frisbee and all of that stuff. Just the phaulos just stuff, watching the ball game, whatever, stuff...it's not bad but it certainly doesn't advance the Kingdom, it's just stuff. And we will be rewarded for the good that's remaining after the stuff has been burned up. And the burning of the stuff occurs in 1 Corinthians 3, go back to 1 Corinthians 3. Now we have laid the foundation of Christ in verse 11, we have committed our life to Christ. And in verse 12, "If any man builds on the foundation," so this is talking about whom then? A Christian, you have to have the foundation of Christ, right? So then as you begin to live your life, you're building on that foundation. "And some of us are building gold and silver and precious stones, and some of us are building wood and hay and stubble." Now there's all degrees. Gold, I mean, that's the best. And silver, and precious stones, and then it starts to decrease, wood...wood is okay, I mean, you could build a house with it or keep warm. Hay is good if you're a horse. Stubble is worthless...phaulos.

So God's going to evaluate what we've done. There's no evil here. It's just from stubble to gold and every man's work will be manifest, the day will declare it, then the fire will be lit and the fire is going to burn up, believe me, the stubble, the hay and the wood and leave the rest. And then he shall, verse 14, receive a...what?...reward. And if the stuff is burned up, he'll suffer loss but himself he will be...what?...saved. See, that's not even the issue here. This is simply for reward.

If you go over to chapter 4, follows the same theme. He says, verse 5, 1 Corinthians 4, "Don't judge anything before the time when the Lord comes, He'll bring to light the hidden things of darkness. He'll make manifest the counsel of the hearts." You know, when it comes to that judgment time, God's going to get down inside and find out who really did it. But look at this next line. "And then shall every man have...what?...praise from God." There will be nothing at the Bema but praise, praise, praise. It's just that some will have more than others, but none would be judged in a condemning way. You understand that? Because the judgment was paid for by Christ already. And the chastening that we go through in this life is only for this life. Hebrews 12 makes that abundantly clear. Chastening is only for this little while, we won't need chastening up there because when we see Him we'll be...what?...like Him.

And I believe then when a Christian is raptured he'll go to the judgment seat and at that point he will receive rewards. The stuff in his life will be burned up. The evil won't even be there, it's been taken care. The neutral stuff will be burned up. The good works will remain after the fire is lit. And for those we will receive a reward.

Now people always say, "Well what is the reward?" Well, the Bible talks about a crown of life, a crown of righteousness, a martyr's crown and so forth and all these crowns. And is that what it is? I remember speaking on crowns in a college deal one time and a guy came to me afterwards and he said, "I never heard such crassness in my life. What are you, the Imperial margarine man? You just

want another crown? Crowns, crowns, crowns," he said. "Well, I serve God out of love." I said, "I serve God out of love, too, He just told me He's going to give me a crown for it. That's His business."

You don't need to worry about that. If God wants to give us...people say, "Well why would God give rewards? That's favoritism." That's God's choice. You know, C.S. Lewis wrote a good little thing called THE WEIGHT OF GLORY in which he talks about this, he says there are some things that demand a reward, you know, they just demand it by their very nature. For example, let's say you love a girl which happens and some day you go to this girl and you say, "Girl, whatever, I love you." And you say, "I...I want to make you my own, I want to possess you, I want to care for you, I want to marry you." You don't expect her to look at you and say, "Crass...possessive, selfindulgent. It's not enough to love me, you've got to have me." Now wait a minute. I mean, there is such a thing as a natural reward for love, isn't it? And it's marriage. Or if a guy runs a great race in the Olympics and he wins. The announcer doesn't go up to him and say, "You again, you never let anyone else win. Why can't you be like this guy, he loses all the time. He's got a heart for others." Now wait a minute. If a guy throws a race, he's a bum. I mean, when a General comes home from winning a great battle the President doesn't say to him, "You're just never content unless you win, are you?"

So, there's a sense in which...there's a sequence, there are some things that by their nature demand a response and God has said that serving Him is one of those things. And so the day will come when we'll be rewarded and the only thing you'll ever see at the Bema Seat is a reward for every man will have praise from God. Isn't that a great promise?

The whole issue, beloved, of your sins is in the past if you know Christ. If you don't, the whole issue of your sins is still piling up Romans 2, awaiting the day of wrath. And you'll be at the Great White Throne judgment.

Well, I hope we've clarified some of these questions. And our time is gone and we didn't get very far. But I did cover the next five anyway without even knowing it. Let me just close with a couple that I think might be very helpful for us.

This kind of sums up what we've been saying. I want to ask why lots of people accept the Lord only when something drastic happens in their lives? You know, that's a good time to accept the Lord, isn't it? You know why people do that? Because they've run out of resources. I guess apart from little children who come to Christ in simple beautiful faith, and you know somebody asks the question, if you have to have a broken spirit and a contrite heart to be saved, how about little kids? And I guess maybe in a sense we don't understand that they probably do have a broken and a contrite heart. I hate to use my own kids as illustrations but they've been living in my house for so many years that I know them better than anyone else's kids.

One of ours when he was little, I was walking down the hall and he used to like to go to sleep in our bed, they've all done that. I've been hauling kids out of that room for years. So I went by the door and I heard this little conversation going on and I knew he was supposed to be asleep so I just kind of wondered what was going on. I stuck my ear in the door and he didn't see me and he was praying, he was about five...four maybe, or five. And I heard this, "Dear Jesus, I'm sorry, please come into my heart," and he said it over a couple of times.

Well, I got tears in my eyes. I don't...you know, I look back on that and that was a great step toward God that had to be confirmed, right, as he grew older to show that it really was genuine cause the works have to follow. But the thing that I thought about so often as I looked back at that was that, and later I asked him about that and he had been a naughty boy and there was a sense of sinfulness and wanting to get that right with the Lord, even in that little heart. And I think that we may not see great weeping and tears and contrition that we sometimes see and not even with adults, but sometimes, but I think there will always be a sense of sinfulness even a heart of a child if they truly understand the gospel. Don't you think? Because they have to understand they need to be saved. It's easy to point out to a child that they're sinful, they don't argue that. Have you ever noticed that? They don't argue, they admit it. You just ask them, are you always good? No. Are you sometimes bad? Yep. They'll just tell you that. And that's kind of fertile soil.

But I think there has to be a recognition of sinfulness. There has to be a contrition in the heart. There has to be an affirmation of the lordship of Christ where you're willing to take His yoke and learn. And I think sometimes that does not happen until someone is desperate and that's why that question is easy to answer. I mean, why do people come only in desperate situations? Because sometimes it takes that. I've even prayed that for people. God, make them desperate. I've even told people that. You're not a Christian because you don't have enough desperation yet. I'm going to ask God to bring you more desperation so that you'll want to come to Jesus Christ.

But don't underestimate the contrition in a little heart. I'll never forget over in the family center in the prayer room one night and this little kid came in, just a little guy. And he wanted to become a Christian. And I was in there and he started out his prayer, he must have been six, "Dear Jesus, I know I'm a rotten sinner..." That's what he said. "And I want you to come into my heart and make me clean." I think that's where an adult has to get, too. Unless you become as a little child, admitting you're wrong, knowing you have no resources and are totally dependent on God you're not going to come to Him.

What happens to a person when he or she believes on Jesus but doesn't repent and doesn't ever turn from sin? You know what happens? Nothing happens...nothing. The devils...what?...believe and tremble. We have to believe and then repentance turning from sin toward God, confessing the lordship of Christ, being obedient to Him.

Well, I hope this helps. I think we've covered the questions that you had in your heart on Romans and I got a lot of terrific other questions that I think we'll keep for our next question and answer on a Wednesday night, and maybe we'll even do this on a Sunday night this way again.

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