

# Gamma

**Romans 2:1-16**

## **Study 3 The Religious need the gospel 1**

### **Case 1**

**Kirk Low belonged to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Baptist Church and was a deacon. His missions director and some friends were discussing about increasing the number of migrant workers attending their church.**

**Kirk was quite dismissive of the idea because he said many of these migrant workers were quite uncivilized and would spit on the floor indiscriminately, talk loudly, even fight amongst themselves. There have been incidents when even handphones or shoes had gone missing in church ever since they had started coming to church. Many of them would not even eat the food the church provided and had to have their special diet catered for. He added that they were not at all interested in the gospel as they were all pagans and idol worshippers and were just coming for the food that was all. Why bother with them as they have no spiritual openness we should just concentrate on building up the members who were already in the church.**

- 1. Look at Romans 2 and see how Kirk's attitude is similar to the persons Paul is criticizing in the chapter?**

He is judging them in their behavior and this is similar to the religious people or Jews he is criticizing in Romans 2

- 2. Why is Kirk having this attitude? How does the story of the prodigal son give you insight into how Kirk thinks? Can you share too examples in your life when you used to have particular attitudes towards other people or races in your country?**

There are two features of his attitude which are

- a. Particular attitude toward *others*. It is a “writing off,” a happy pronouncement of doom — “you are lost and I’m glad.” He showed no compassion for them and just determined their value based on their behavior.

b. A particular attitude toward *himself*. It is a belief that he was superior, he was worthier. In short, to “pass judgment” *is to believe that others are worthy of judgment but you are not*.

His attitude determined his behavior hence he was not keen to continue out reach to the migrant group because they were judged as lost cases unworthy for their church’s effort.

In the story of the prodigal son the older brother has this attitude because he judged the external behaviour of his brother as sinful and judged him as hopelessly lost. He forgets that despite his impeccable behavior on the outside, internally he was just as lost. He has no love for his father and behaves himself in order to merit the inheritance he obeys the letter of the law but not the spirit of the law.

Jesus in sermon of mount points this out

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ 22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire

(Matthew 5:21-22 ESV)

What Jesus was saying was that the Pharisees who wanted to use the law as a means to salvation were merely obeying the letter of the law of make it easier for them to obey. They ignored the spirit of the law which digs deeper in to the motives of the person. The older brother obeyed externally but internally had no love for the father

The rich young ruler came to Jesus and asked how he was to gain eternal life and Jesus tested him drawing him by asking if he had obeyed the 10 commandments and he replied that he did or so he thought he did because when Jesus told him to sell all he had and follow Jesus he failed to do so. This failure was merely Jesus way of showing he had obeyed the letter of the law but not its spirit or intent as the first commandment is to love God with all your heart and mind ..placing him way before any material wealth. Hence he could not even obey the first command let alone the rest of the 10.

**3. What are the consequences of such as an attitude? Does that mean that Kirk is condemned to hell because of this?**

We will be judged with the same degree of intolerance and standards which we have set out for others.

However we are not judged solely on our works. Works are evidence of our faith and for Kirk his judgmental attitude is worrying because it may be the fruit of his lack of true faith or he could have a genuine faith and yet in his area of his life he struggles with his own sin and reliance on his own merits. As an isolated incident or facet of his life per se no, it may not necessarily mean he has no genuine faith and hence he will not lose his salvation over this but this passage in Romans 2 which is a warning passage to Christians who should not take their salvation for granted and that true faith is accompanied by a transformation

**4. How should the church react to Kirk's attitude and should it continue its outreach to the migrants and why?**

The church committee should be more matured than to be swayed by Kirk's attitude and it should continue to persevere in its ministry. The Lord displays patience in the way he deals with our sin and hence the church should display patience in its dealings with migrant workers who have had a whole pagan culture which is at odds with the Christian faith.

**5. How does God's patience and kindness lead to repentance and how can we emulate this patience in our lives please share.**

First, it probably means that simply the fact that judgment is delayed (and the world goes on) is a mercy. It is kind of him to simply give us more time.

Secondly, it may mean that sometimes the irritations and disappointments and even tragedies of our lives may be actual kindnesses, because they lead us to see the truth about our need and condition and lead us to repentance.

Thirdly, it means that the great and good things we receive in life ought to lead us to repentance. How? If when we get a raise, etc. we see it *as what we deserve*, then it will harden us, but if we see it *as kindness, an undeserved mercy*, then it will soften us and move us toward God and a grateful spirit.

## Case 2

**Ophelia come from a difficult childhood where she was not loved and struggled with low self esteem as she could never seem to please her parents. She came to faith in the Country Harvest church which she really loved. The Pastor John Ramos taught them about grace of how Jesus death on the cross paid for all her sins past present and future and she only depend on God's grace. She is fully justified made righteous by Christ. He taught there is no need for confession of sin because we are fully made right by Jesus. There is no need to follow the 10 commandments because we are under grace and not the law any more**

**Ophelia was glad for the message and began to live her life confidently. She loved the Lord Jesus more because of the cross. The message gave her freedom from guilt. She laughed at her friends who went to BSF and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Baptist church who were always studying the bible , life groups or going to do ministry, praying or fasting. She told them being under grace means never having to work for salvation. Just live naturally. Ophelia continued to live with her boyfriend in a sexual relationship. She worked for the Genting Group and her job was to get more and more customers to gamble in Genting Highlands. Her friends at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Baptist church however pointed out that in Romans 2: 6-8 God judges by works and so Ophelia better be careful to do good works and look for another job. If not she will be judged.**

### **1. Look at Romans 2: 6-8 and discuss who is right Ophelia or her friends at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Baptist Church.**

Neither Ophelia nor her friends are correct.

Ophelia is right that she is justified and made righteous by the blood of Jesus and she can have confident access to the Father through the Son however she has forgotten that salvation is also a process of being made holy or sanctified. In that process, constant repentance is important.

She has made a grave mistake by believing that the Law or 10 commandments moral law is no longer important because it is fully fulfilled by Jesus. The law is the reflection of who God is and what He is like. It is so important that Jesus had to die on the cross to uphold the very Law which Ophelia now despises.

Romans describes the ones who have eternal life as those who do good works and seek for glory and immortality. They will be judged on these. Notice the verse say they "seek for " . They are a transformed people who in their new natures seek to do good works, dream of living a life that brings true glory to God and is based on eternal values. These things are only found in the Law. Only people transformed by the love of Christ will have their hearts of stone turned into flesh and have the Spirit and will truly seek to do these things. They have a godly orientation in life and live for eternal values and things of the kingdom. The cross transforms them and sets them on a new course in life. Yes they will sin and are not perfect but they will constantly confess and repent and rely again on Jesus their advocate in heaven. Good works and seeking for glory are the evidence of their faith.

The friends in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Baptist church are also wrong they seem to think that their good works will earn them a good position and avoid judgement

**2. Look at James 2:17-18 and Matt 25 at the final judgement and discuss how they agree with this passage**

Both passages look at judgment from the point of view of the fruit of a life of faith in Jesus.

You can approach salvation by saying you have faith in Jesus and his death on the cross or you can approach the question by saying you have good works as the result of that faith. You know an apple tree is alive because you see the apples or you can look at its roots and see how water and nutrients are being drawn up if you cut it open and see inside. God can look into our hearts and see real faith or see our good works which are proof of our faith.

**3. Is it true that there is no need to confess sin any more as we are all saved by grace? Ref 1 John 1:9; James 5:16 and 2 Corinthians 7:9-11**

No it is not true that the Christian does not need to confess or repent any more. Sin still remains a daily occurrence notwithstanding what Jesus did for us at the cross. Sin at its heart is a rejection of God's beauty, holiness and majesty for tawdry desires of our own. When we confess, we constantly reorientate ourselves towards God and say, hey Lord I did a horrible thing and did not please you..please forgive me. We turn again away from sin and towards God each time when we repent and confess and God forgives again and again because the debt has already been paid on the cross. We don't repent of our sins in order to get into heaven following a road map to get to heaven, when we repent we re-express our love for His glory and His majesty and reject our own ideas and plans. This pleases God and reflects our inner desire to seek for glory and immortality in Romans 2:6-8.

Sin happens to us every day despite our conversion to Christ.

If we do daily not repent and confess or make any effort to conform to God's law we are then saying that we are okay with pursuing a course of life that is in direct opposition to who and what He is. We are saying that thanks God for forgiveness as we are clear of the penalty of sin but we are also saying that we are not bothered that our current life style is displeasing to God. Our current life style pleases us and we continue to seek the course of life pleasing ourselves. How can that be evidence of true conversion? How can we say we really love God and seek glory and immortality when we continue in our sin and show that we love something that is in direct opposition to His nature.

A repentant life style and confession with godly sorrow is the result of our transformed inner values. How can a true child of God be happy living in a sexually immoral relationship or enticing people to loose their livelihoods? Confession and continual repentance is evidence of a robust relationship with God.

**4. Which verse describes Ophelia better Romans 2: 7 or Romans 2:8? Can you elaborate?**

- a) **“Persistence in doing good”** means that doing good and living good has become a persistent pattern.
- b) **“Seek glory, honor, and immortality”** means that these are qualities that come from life with God. The person who is right with God does not do good deeds for their own sake. He or she wants to become a particular kind of person — one like God.

Verse 8 gives tests that indicate a person is not right w/ God:

- a) **“Self-seeking”** is the tell-tale sign. It means to have a spirit of self-will, or self- glorification. This is something that can be pursued either through being irreligious and licentious, or through being moral and religious and upright.
- b) **“Reject the truth and follow evil”** means that there is an unwillingness to be instructed and to learn from God’s truth. A lack of teachability, a refusal to submit to truth outside of one’s own convictions and heart.

**Romans 2:8 describes Ophelia**

**5. Ophelia’s pastor John Ramos will disagree with you and categorically state that Jesus death on the cross cleanses Ophelia from all her sins past ,present and future. How can she then be condemned?**

Ophelia has made a confession of faith in Jesus and joined the church. The genuiness of her faith confession will need to be verified by her life style and works and right now it would seem that she has no intention of obey the truth (Law) and is still seeking her own good. Hence there is not much evidence that she had made a true conversion to Christ.

We need to be aware of our position in Christ we are saved by grace through faith in Jesus in order that we continue walking in love with Him. Our relationship will be based on us being constantly in awe of Him rejecting and repenting of the sin that still plagues our hearts. As we grow in Him we learn to hate more and more of our sin as we discover more and more how evil we are and learn there fore to repent more and depend less and less on ourselves. As we grow more and more in Him we discover more and more how majestic and loving He is and what great glory He has intended for us, we transfer all our self esteem and worth on to Him and look forward to being glorified with Him. We work hard each day to be more and more like Him because we are enamoured by His beauty not compelled by the fear or eternal damnation. Ophelia exhibits none of these.