

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Romans 2: 4-6

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the bible again. Today, we will continue reading Romans chapter 2, verses 4 to 6.

A person who loves to judge others is both ungodly toward God and self-righteous. They use what they know to judge what others do; perhaps their actions are slightly better than those they judged, and they think this gives them the basis to judge others. But Paul says that in whatever matter they judge others, they condemn themselves in that same matter. God's standard of judgment is not based on what they do or what they know, but on something higher—truth itself. This means it is based on how Jesus Christ lived on earth, which is God's absolute standard for judging people.

God's Son, Jesus Christ, came to earth as a man, born into a poor and ordinary family. He grew, lived, and worked like others, not beginning His ministry until age 30. He experienced all the joys and sorrows of human life and was tempted in every way, yet Jesus never sinned. He lived a perfect human life, and His life became the standard by which God judges people.

Every person who loves to judge others must compare themselves to Jesus. Their behavior may be slightly better than those they judge, but their behavior is not God's standard of judgment. In the matter they judge, God's standard is what Jesus did. If their actions fall short of Jesus' standard, God will condemn them in that matter. God's standard for condemning people, in terms of moral measure, is based on the absolute standard Jesus lived out; if a person's actions do not meet this standard, God will condemn them.

An ungodly person cannot escape God's judgment, and even a godly person cannot meet such a standard. But thanks be to the Lord, a godly person can, through confession, apply the blood of Jesus Christ to have their sins forgiven.

After addressing the moral measure, Paul introduces another dimension: the dimension of time. Paul first challenges the self-righteous with a question: You judge others while doing the same things they do—do you think you can escape God’s judgment? The answer, of course, is no. But for most self-righteous people, God’s judgment does not seem to come immediately, which introduces the dimension of time. Paul continues to challenge them with questions regarding this temporal dimension.

Verse 4: “Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?”

God’s judgment does not come immediately because of His rich goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering. Let us first examine these three important terms: goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering. Goodness is often translated as “kindness” or “goodness” in English; the Greek word originally means meeting real needs in God’s way at God’s timing.

A sinner’s true needs have two aspects. The first is objectively resolving the problem of sin. God has sent His only beloved Son to bear humanity’s sins, completing redemption, which addresses this aspect. The second is that people must subjectively accept salvation. In this regard, God has taken the first step by sending the Holy Spirit after Christ’s resurrection and ascension; this Spirit brings faith to people. If a person is willing to open their heart, repent, and believe, they can escape God’s judgment—this is God’s goodness. God, in His rich goodness, sends messengers of the gospel to repeatedly proclaim this great news to those in need.

Dear brothers and sisters, if you reflect on your journey to salvation, you cannot help but thank God for His rich goodness. God repeatedly allowed you to hear the gospel message. At first, you were reluctant, then half-believing, until finally you overcame mental barriers, accepted the gospel, believed in Jesus, and were baptized to become a member of the church. Even after your salvation, you still struggle with sins you cannot overcome, so you continue to need God’s rich

goodness. As long as you receive God's provision in faith, you can overcome. We must recognize that the sin of judging others is in our blood; otherwise, there would be no quarrels between spouses or strife in the church. Today, we still need God's rich goodness.

Next, let us consider forbearance. Forbearance means God, in His mercy, delays the arrival of judgment, a provision in His dispensation. In God's righteousness, He cannot treat the guilty as innocent; He must condemn sin. However, He repeatedly delays the execution of judgment, giving those condemned a chance to repent—this is God's forbearance.

The arrival of judgment is when God's righteousness and forbearance reach a balance point. For saints, this balance point is at Jesus' return, as described in 1 Corinthians 15:52: "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." At the last trumpet, as mentioned in Revelation with the seventh trumpet, the saints will be raised.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 provides more details: "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus, we shall always be with the Lord." This passage states that we will all meet the Lord in the air, and the first thing the Lord will do is judge His household, for God's judgment begins with His household.

2 Corinthians 5:10 says: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." This is God's judgment of His children. It is not about determining eternal damnation, as God's children have His eternal life and will not perish eternally. This judgment determines whether a person receives rewards and can reign with Christ for a thousand years in the millennial kingdom. This is the judgment for reward at the judgment seat of Christ, occurring at Christ's return, before the millennial kingdom.

For unbelievers, God's judgment occurs after the millennial kingdom, as recorded in Revelation 20:11-13: "Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works." The judgment at the great white throne determines whether a person has a part in the eternal new heaven and new earth. This occurs after the millennial kingdom, when all the dead are raised and judged; those whose names are not in the Book of Life are cast into the lake of fire, which is eternal damnation.

Dear brothers and sisters, please note that whether at the judgment seat of Christ or the great white throne, judgment is based on what people have done—their actions. Thus, the testimony a person lives out is far more important than the truth they know. Forbearance is God delaying the time of judgment, a dispensational provision where His righteousness and forbearance reach a balance point. If God delays further, it would violate His righteousness, marking the limit of His forbearance. This balance point's arrival is not adjusted based on individual circumstances; it is God's dispensational work.

Now, let us consider longsuffering. This word comprises two Greek terms: "makros" meaning long, and "thymos", meaning passion, together forming "longsuffering" in English. This means God Himself suffers long, giving people time to repent, referring to His longsuffering toward each individual. When we stiffen our necks and follow our own ways, God is willing to suffer Himself, giving us time to repent. In other words, God continues to endure our sinful behaviors, sparing our lives so we may have the opportunity to confess and repent. Once a person dies, they lose the chance to repent.

Thus, dear brothers and sisters, when we face great trials and survive, we must recognize this as God's longsuffering. In such moments, we must carefully examine ourselves to see if there are sins we have not repented of—this is God's special

grace, preventing us from leaving this world with unconfessed sins. Hebrews 9:27 says: “And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.” God’s rich goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering are meant to lead people to repentance. For unbelievers, it gives them the opportunity to accept judicial redemption; for believers, it gives us the chance to experience organic salvation, overcoming our sinful nature.

Verse 5: “But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.”

This is Paul’s stern warning to the self-righteous. You, in accordance with your hardness and impenitent heart, are treasuring up wrath for yourself. Here, “wrath” refers to God’s righteous anger, a firm, sustained, and gradually accumulating anger triggered when people violate God’s righteousness. Righteousness is God’s principle of action; when people act contrary to it, this is their sin, provoking God’s righteous anger. If a person continues to harden their heart and refuse to repent, God’s wrath accumulates in them until the day of judgment arrives, a day of God’s wrath.

In other words, God’s wrath continues to accumulate until it reaches the balance point of His forbearance, when God must reveal His righteous judgment. This is the appointed day of judgment. Do not think that hardening one’s heart and refusing to repent brings no consequences. We must understand that in the spiritual realm, unseen to us, God’s wrath is continually accumulating, hastening the day of judgment, as with Sodom when its wickedness reached its full measure, forcing God to manifest His righteousness.

Verse 6: “who ‘will render to each one according to his deeds.’”

Paul emphasizes again that God will render to each one according to their deeds. Everyone is ultimately responsible for their own actions. In today's world, we see many injustices, people escaping punishment through power, and opportunists exploiting legal loopholes for immoral gain, seemingly evading the world's legal consequences. But we must recognize another judicial system—stricter, fairer, more comprehensive, and meticulous—in which God is the judge.

God's standard of judgment is Jesus Christ's life on earth; anything falling short of Christ's life becomes a person's sin. God precisely records every account until the great day of judgment arrives, when He will settle all accounts. In God's goodness, we can use Christ's blood to clear our sin debt; in His longsuffering, He repeatedly gives us opportunities to respond to His goodness; in His forbearance, He delays the day of judgment. But when the time comes, God will render to each one according to their deeds.

Let us pray together: Lord, have mercy on us. We know You have rich goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, repeatedly giving us opportunities to repent. Lord, help us truly recognize Your rich goodness and examine ourselves in our daily lives to see if we frequently judge others, especially our spouses, family, or brothers and sisters in the church. Help us see that in whatever we judge, we condemn ourselves. Having experienced Your goodness, may we also treat those around us with goodness. Thank You for Your forbearance and longsuffering, giving us opportunities to repent, and help us learn to be forbearing and forgive those who offend us. Having experienced Your goodness, may we also be full of goodness toward others. Bless my daily life. I pray in the holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ.