



Sunday, January 12, 2014 Zapping-you Whenever Thoughts Flow

ROMANS

Part 12

Chapter 2:11-16



Romans chapter 2:11-16

For there is no partiality with God, for whoever sinned without the law, without law also shall perish, and whoever sinned in law, through law will be judged. For not the listeners to law are just with God, but the doers of law shall be justified. For whenever they of the nations that have no law, by nature

may be doing that which the law demands, these, having no law, are a law to themselves, who are displaying the action of the law written in their hearts, their conscience testifying together and their reckonings between one another, accusing or defending them, in the day when God will be judging the hidden things of humanity, according to my evangel, through Jesus Christ.

It is ridiculous how impartial God is. He does not care if you are high or low, rich or poor, Jew or Greek, male or female, idiot or genius, black or white, sick or healthy, Pepsi or Coke. I really like this about God, but it may upset many people. Many people believe that advantages in this life should count for something. This opinion belongs to the rich, to the well-educated, to Jews, to Catholics, to people who drink Pepsi (so you have your own generation—big whoop), to talents and celebrities of every stripe. These people must feel at times that their social standing, or wealth, or world-wisdom will barter for them favors at God's tribunal. Such is not the case. We take none of this with us, folks.

What survives death? Experiences; who you are; how your character was developed. This is why I invest in experiences. If I spend money, I buy experiences rather than things. For instance, I will travel to be with other people. I will spend money to make something *happen*. At the resurrection, happenings accompany you. Left behind is money (or lack thereof) health (as well as disease) and physicality. If you have a degree from Harvard, the degree stays here in your gold frame, but the experience of having gone to Harvard follows along like an obedient puppy.

When we appear before God, everything will have been stripped except who we are and what we have done. This is great advantage to those who have been disadvantaged in this life: the poor, the sick, the stupid, the

consumers of Coca-Cola (according to the Pepsi people). This appearance before God will be the day of reckoning when the true self can shine, finally freed of all impediment.

LET IT BE

People envy the rich and famous. In the past, I have envied the Beatles. How rich and famous can you get? As yet, none of the Beatles—as far as I know—are (were) believers. So at the resurrection, John, Paul, George and Ringo will be envying me. God's impartiality will likely shock them. "But I was one of the Beatles," Ringo will say.



God will say, "I really liked your drumming on 'Tomorrow Never Knows,' from the Revolver LP, but I do not care that you were the first rock band to feature electronic feedback on a song—the beginning of 'I Feel Fine'—or played backwards lyrics at the end of 'Rain.'" To God, it won't even matter that the Beatles packed Shea Stadium, or that they were bigger than Elvis.

I like to tell people who are obese, or who are constantly sick, or who have cancer, or who are missing body parts: "Wait until you experience your *new* body." It is generally true that the low become high, and the high become low. It is not strictly true because a very few smart,

wealthy, healthy, and famous people are appointed members of the body of Christ. Just not regularly. In fact, rarely. On average, these temporary and temporal advantages distract people from God, rather than lead to Him. God chooses the unwise, weak, ignoble and stupid (1 Corinthians 1:26-29).

WHOEVER ARE OF LAW, ARE SCREWED

"Whoever sinned without the law, without law also shall perish, and whoever sinned in law, through law will be judged" (Romans 2:12).

The law is the standard by which human behavior is measured and through which law-keepers are judged. If God based His reward system on human behavior, we'd all be dead and would stay dead—no gold stars for anyone. That's the whole point of this section of Romans, that no one earns the rewards which God offers for just behavior, because no one is just, not even one (Romans 3:10).

The word "perish" should jump out at you, because that's our lot, apart from Christ. Apart from Christ, we would all die and stay dead. There would be no resurrection for anyone. Cemeteries would be permanent exhibitions. Truly, the best a person could do in this life would be to eat, drink and be merry. Why wouldn't you? If there was no resurrection, you would be dumb not to eat, drink, and do Mary—I mean, be merry. Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life. Without Him, all is lost—for everyone. With Him, everyone returns to God—eventually. I will continually remind you that the thing from which we are rescued by Christ is not an eternal torment in fiery flames. Christ rescues us from dying and staying dead forever. Eternal torment in fiery flames is theological fiction, anyway; and, strangely, Christian fashion.

The common denominator in the above verse is sin. If you sin without the law of Moses, you will perish and be dead forever because you broke the law of conscience. It's one or the other. Isn't God foresightful? There's always a law somewhere to convict you, condemn you, and make you need a Savior. The law of conscience (conscience makes you instinctively know when something is wrong) agrees with the whole point of the law, which is, "Love your associate as yourself." The conscience can tell when you're not doing that.

"For the entire law is fulfilled in one word, in this: 'You shall love your associate as yourself.'" (Galatians 5:14).

Even without the law of Moses, all you have to do is act against your conscience one time, and you will eventually die and stay dead. No one aces the conscience. It's generally too strict. For instance, let's say you eat one more Dorito than you know is right to eat.



The Dorito tastes good, but you know you've blown it.

This one act against your conscience is sufficient—without Christ—to damn you to eternal death. One mistake (God is perfect, how irritating) is enough to fall short of the glory of God. The result of this disaster is perishing. That's a scary thought, isn't it? Yes. It's supposed to be scary. Forget eternal torment, which isn't even

true. Eternal death is scary enough. This is the true scare, the real one, the effective one. This scare makes you think differently. It makes you change. This is why we need Christ, because of fear of eternal death, and the reality of eternal death without Him.

Apart from Christ, no one escapes eternal death.

LAW LOVERS

Now we come to those who sin *in* law. We are speaking not only of the Jews here, but anyone stupid enough to apply the Mosaic law to themselves, i.e. Christians. If you sin *in* law—which every one of these so-called law keepers do (it is impossible for those in flesh to keep law, Romans 8:3, which is why I said, “so-called”)—you will be judged through law.

Do you really want to do this, you law keepers? At least those without law simply perish. They eat one more Lays potato chip than they know is right, get a brief judgment, and then—apart from Christ—die and stay dead. But *you*—you not only will perish and stay dead (apart from Christ), but you have the added trauma of being hauled before a throne and judged during an embarrassingly long session. You have to stand before God and endure the humiliating experience of

having God hold up your activities against the pure and holy law of Moses. Is this what you really want? (Here is the answer: *You don't.*)

It won't be so bad for Doritos guy. God will simply hold up that extra Dorito and say, “You really didn't need this one, did you?” The guy will smile, and God will smile, and there will probably be titters among the angels. Then off the guy will go (apart from Christ) to eternal death. But now, here comes a resurrected idiot (there will be lots of them) who actually thought he or she could actually perfectly perform all 613 laws of God, or even the first ten. When this person comes to the throne, everyone rolls their eyes. The person will be standing there all proud, fanning out their feathers like a daft peacock. Then God applies the law to them. Here's where it gets rough. It will be so embarrassing that some of the angels will have to look away. The millions of mistakes of this person's life will be projected upon a screen, superimposed against the perfect standard of divine holiness.

To say that this person will be found wanting, is a terrible understatement. There will be dead silence at the throne, because of how embarrassing it will be for this person. You might only hear a single throat clear. The Dorito guy was amusing, but this will be humiliating—and sad. Through the Mosaic law God fixed the highest standard of behavior, and thus the highest standard of judgment. Knowledge of the law only incriminates more deeply those who try to keep it but inevitably break it. As Paul writes in Galatians 3:10—

For whoever are of works of law are under a curse, for it is written that, Accursed is everyone who is not remaining in all things written in the scroll of the law to do them.

The key there is “all things.”

LISTENERS VS. DOERS

“For not the listeners to law are just with God, but the doers of law shall be justified.”

This verse confuses people because it seems to be teaching that doers of law shall be justified. That's exactly what *it is* teaching. If anyone could do the law perfectly, then that person would be justified. This is the righteous standard of performance/reward underlying God's judgments. He is ready to reward perfect

people. That there are no perfect people does not undo the truth that a righteous accounting of right and wrong underlies God's throne. Did you do everything perfectly according to law? God is ready to reward you. Step right up and claim your prize. (The horrifying thing is, many Christians and Jews and even Muslims are going to step right up to claim their prize. They will be sorry, and completely embarrassed. This is where the weeping and gnashing of teeth will come in. I have always thought that a Kleenex salesman or a dentist would do very brisk business at the Great White Throne, as well as on earth, at the inauguration of the thousand-year kingdom. Keep this in mind for future employment possibilities.)

It is not enough to hear the law. It is not enough to hold it up as an ideal to which you should attain. It is not enough to post it on a wall and admire it. In other words, you can't just talk about it, you have to do it.

No one can, so don't try. I'm not challenging you.

LOVE FULFILLS LAW VIA SPIRIT

"For whenever they of the nations that have no law, by nature may be doing that which the law demands, these, having no law, are a law to themselves, who are displaying the action of the law written in their hearts" (Romans 2:14-15).

The Jews don't like this verse. I love it. It lets people like you and me do what the Jews strove their whole lives to accomplish but couldn't: please God. We please God the easy way, however. We do it, not by obeying law, but through God's spirit.

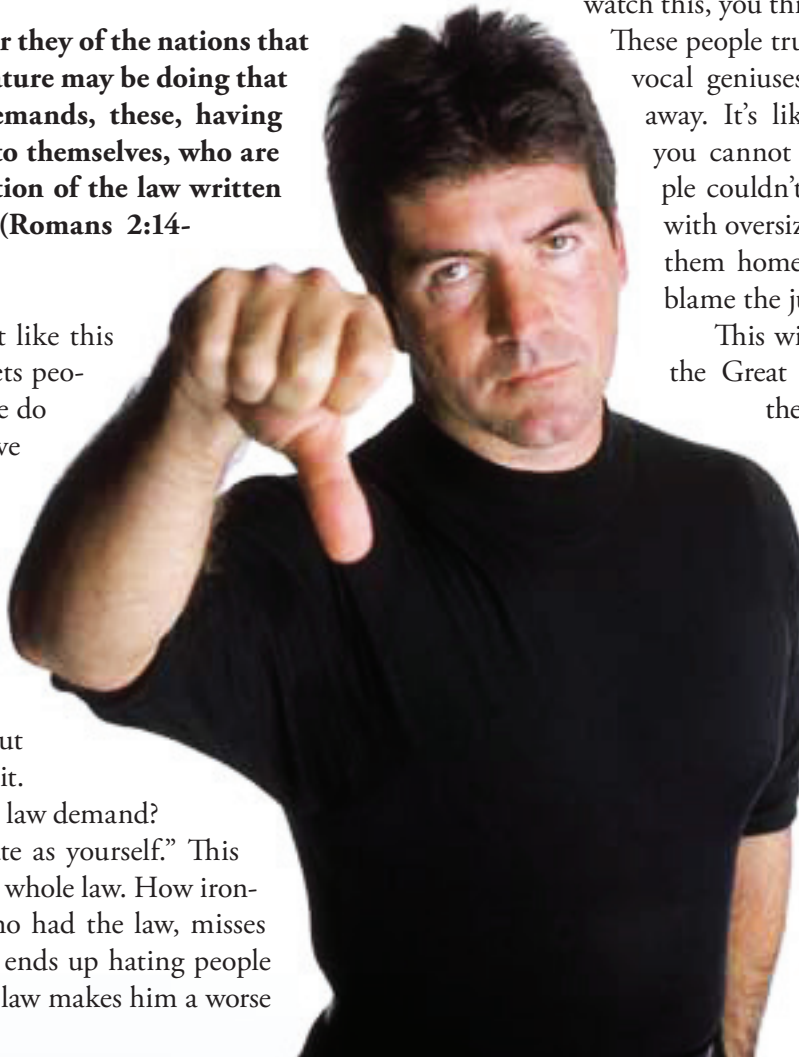
What does the law demand? "Love your associate as yourself." This saying sums up the whole law. How ironic that the Jew, who had the law, misses the spirit of it and ends up hating people (the pressure to do law makes him a worse

sinner than he was before law—Romans 5:20; trying to follow 613 laws makes a person grouchy and irritable), while the man of the nations, who doesn't have a single law, ends up doing what the law said, not *through* law, but simply because he followed his conscience and did the right thing. The man of the nations dodged the pressure of God's holy, righteous standard (being under the law is a curse, not a blessing), and this made him a better person.

This phenomenon of pressure (law) and no pressure (grace) explains the otherwise puzzling statement, "Yet the law came in by the way, that the offense should be increasing" (Romans 5:20). The law of God only increases offenses, again, because trying to do it sets one upon a path of frustration and failure. The people who don't realize they're failing (Christians) are like those people we see in the first round of "American Idol," who can't sing but think they can. They stand before the judges and completely humiliate themselves in front of a large television audience. When you watch this, you think it must be a joke. It's not.

These people truly believe they are superstar vocal geniuses. You almost have to look away. It's like a car accident, however; you cannot avert your eye. These people couldn't carry a note in a handbag with oversized handles. The judges send them home. The people cry, cuss, and blame the judges.

This will be the lot of Christians at the Great White Throne who posted the Ten Commandments at the churches and not only tried to live by them, but encouraged other people to do the same. They will cry and cuss and blame God when they get humiliated at the Great White Throne. God will hold up the Bible and say, "Hello? Did you even *read* this? *All* of it? Ever hear of the book of *Galatians*?" They will nevertheless be sent home. No round 2 for you. No Los Angeles, sorry. You have no talent for obedience.



Romans 2:24 proves that human nature is not sinful. The nations do what the law demands, not because of law, but “by nature.” Left to itself, human nature is fine. It is mortality that has beset and idled it. Mortality makes people do unnatural things. People sin because they are mortal; they are not mortal because they sin (Romans 5:12). As soon as mortality is removed from human nature (“this mortal must put on immortality”—1 Corinthians 15:53), our natures will spring back to be what they were meant to be. Without death operating in us, sin will be impossible. Even *with* death operating in us, human nature finds shining moments. Credit this to the limited but real operation of the spirit of God inside us.

“... who are displaying the action of the law written in their hearts, their conscience testifying together ...” (Romans 2:15).

God’s spirit causes people to do what the law demanded, just not through law. The first fruit of the spirit, for instance, is love (Galatians 5:22). If you love someone, you will not murder them. The law, on the other hand, tried to get you to not murder people by telling you not to murder people. It did not rely on the spirit, but rather on you obeying—by means of your flesh and your will—an outside command. The result of this is resentment against the command and eventual rebellion against it, because “the disposition of the flesh is enmity to God, for it is not subject to the law of God, for neither is it able” (Romans 8:7).

Ironically, spiritual people demonstrate the *action* of the law by ignoring the law and refusing to attempt it. Instead, they rely on spirit. At worse, they rely on their conscience, which is a better guide for right behavior than the outward commands to “do this” or “do that.”

WHAT IS THE CONSCIENCE?

It’s about time we define this term. I’ll do my best. Conscience is a built-in sin sensor, put there by God. It’s the only way I know how to explain it. It is a miracle, this conscience. It cannot be subjected to scientific testing. It doesn’t show up on x-rays. I don’t know where it lives. It’s not a “thing”; it cannot be surgically removed. It doesn’t dwell, literally, either in the heart or the brain. It is not to be found in the kidneys or liver. It’s as mysterious as spirit, but no less real. Like spirit, it is an invisible power.

Ernest Hemingway once said, “Every writer

needs a built-in s*** detector.” Likewise, every human being needs a built-in sin detector and, miraculously, God has provided this. (Not every writer, however, has the detector to which Hemingway refers. One may corroborate this truth at any Christian bookstore.)

Some people seem not to have a conscience. The conscience can be “cauterized” (1 Timothy 4:2, Concordant Version). The Greek word here, *kausteriazō*, means “burned.” Just as a house

burns down, a human conscience can also go up in flames. I don’t think it is ever really destroyed, though. Something always remains. The conscience is burned off at the end; it’s shortened, left wanting. Adolph Hitler had a conscience concerning his dog (he loved and cared for him), but not six millions

Jews. That, my friends, is a cauterized conscience. It’s cut short. A conscience can also be weak (1 Corinthians 8:7). A weak conscience, in the aforementioned context, describes the phenomenon of someone suffering under artificially-induced religious qualms, denying him or herself legitimate freedoms.

HERE COMES THE SUN

“... and their reckonings between one another, accusing or defending them, in the day when God will be judging the hidden things of humanity, according to my evangel, through Jesus Christ” (Romans 2:15-16).

“Spiritual people demonstrate the action of the law by ignoring the law.”



There will come a day—thank God—when everything hidden will be made known. My frustration of the last few years in my personal relationships has been the proliferation of lies, the believing of lies, and the misunderstandings of motives. I have compared this to the Lucy show, where no one knows what anyone is doing until the end of the show. “Lucy” is sometimes frustrating



to watch. Life is many times frustrating to live. The day is coming, however, when the light will shine and every misunderstanding will dissolve. People who thought you were nuts, will realize you weren't. People who thought you were evil, will realize your sterling character. (This will be a two-way street, naturally.) Conversely, those who have put up a religious front and a sheen of self-righteousness will be exposed for what they are: hypocrites. Those who have imposed an impossible, unfair standard on others, must bear that light shining back at them. They will be exposed for who they are—not only to themselves, but to an on-looking celestial and human audience.

A.E. Knoch writes in his *Concordant Commentary on the New Testament*:

Much of the judgment which obtains among men is unjust and oppressive because of their inability to uncover the real truth: But in the divine judgment the *hidden* things will be revealed and a just sentence will be based on all the facts. Doubtless the motives will be laid bare as well as the acts themselves and thus the quality of each action will receive due recognition.

Mr. Knoch speaks of recognition both good and bad.

Many people subconsciously know “something is not right,” but nevertheless live their lives in the habit in which they were raised—the comfort zone of delusion. The light, for them, will be immediately blinding and uncomfortable (witness Saul on the road to Damascus), but an ultimate relief. Many of you live lives in humble obedience to God. You patiently serve Him, as well as the saints. Even so, you are thought to be an evil-doer, even by loved ones. The light, for you, will be welcome vindication.

Do not fear the light. Even in today's darkness, seek it. Let it expose you, now. Otherwise, it will expose you later. —MZ

Dear Martin,

Thanks for getting back to me so soon, you have been the biggest and most important influence in my entire life. I really mean that. I would still be in the dark without you. I was hospitalized for anxiety because I was afraid to go to hell. I was so scared I just wanted to commit suicide and I would have had I not been afraid to go to hell. Then God led me to your site and your teachings. I am still having trouble fully believing all of it but I pray that God will give me the faith to believe. Without your ministry I would still be in the hospital or maybe even worse. Your work is not in vain, you are changing the lives of so many. I would love to meet you one day, I feel that meeting you will help me to fully accept the things you say. I am very much looking forward to the next Scripture conference and I pray that I will be able to attend with my family. Thank you again Martin, you truly are a blessing. C.S.

Thank you to everyone who writes me. You say my work changes your life, but your letters change my life. Without your communication, I would become so discouraged that I would give up. It would be way too hard without you. But with you, I know I can make it another day. —Martin