

PUT YOURSELF ON THE PRAYER LIST

JUNE 7, 2020

Wow, what a week! If you spend any time on social media, you have seen so much. Even people who generally only post Merry Christmas and Happy Birthday are now writing long posts. They are sharing their opinions about racism, the protests and marches, their experiences with the police in response to the death of Mr. George Floyd. It can be exhausting reading people's commentaries, looking at the memes and listening to the news. This week, I thought about my experience reading the writings of Paul in Romans 1 and 2 a few years ago in Bible Study. I recall that Romans 1 caused lots of discussion, then as we read on to Romans 2, the room was much less talkative.



~Romans 1:28-32

²⁸Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. ²⁹They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, ³⁰slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; ³¹they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. ³²Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

In Romans 1, Paul is speaking of the godlessness and wickedness of people. He says people have hidden the truth of God's teaching by acting in wicked ways. He says that since Creation, God has made himself known, but there are people who refuse to hold His truth near to their hearts and conduct themselves likewise. He says God has removed His hand from them and has just allowed them to relish in their morally corrupt mind. In this passage, Paul writes in the 3rd person, using the pronoun "they." Often, we use the terms he, she or they when the person(s) who are the subject are not present. We use these terms when talking *about* someone, not *to* them. As I read this passage, different people come to mind. I know people who are wicked, greedy, people who are arrogant, disobedient and have trouble showing love. Personally, I wouldn't go so far as to say they deserve death, but I would say they need some talking to or they need some role models, but Paul says, and it's God's will that they deserve death. I suspect that this passage gave you some imagery, as well. Hopefully these are people on your prayer list. Hopefully you are praying that they come to know God and develop a relationship with Him. Hopefully, you are also doing your part in helping them to grow in the Lord.

As we read on to Romans 2, Paul reveals more about the people to whom he refers in Romans 1.

~Romans 2:1

You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.

Just like that, Paul switches from 3rd person to 2nd person. He was pointing the finger at them, now he is pointing at you (and me, us!). I don't know about you, but I was not expecting that. I thought he was talking about...bad people...them...but he's talking about us.

Think about it. In ways are you wicked? The new term for wicked seems to have become "petty." In what ways are you greedy? How much toilet tissue did you buy back in March? In what ways are you filled with strife - anger, bitterness, or disagreement over fundamental issues? How have you been arrogant? Boastful? In what ways have you shown rigidity - it's been explained to you, but you refuse to understand and refuse to even try to see it from a new perspective? Who have you murdered? Murder is more than the physical destruction of life. Murder can happen through our words, spoken or written. We can degrade a person, or an entire group of people, with our thoughts which eventually become our attitudes and our actions. Paul says the people who do these things deserve death. We need to put ourselves on the prayer list.

~Romans 2:3-4

³So when you, a mere human being, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? ⁴Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?

I am not here to point fingers, just here to share something the Holy Spirit put on my heart this week. We all have thoughts and ideals that are not godly. When we subscribe to those for too long, or limit our associations to those who are like-minded, our view narrows and makes us unwilling to attempt to understand the views of others. Genesis tells us that man was created in the image of God which means we have the ability to think, reason, and plan. The qualities God intended for good can become our demise if we use them improperly.

Put yourself on the prayer list. Ask the Lord to help you be more understanding of the needs of His children. Ask Him to help you listen more and speak less. Ask Him to help you show kindness, forbearance and patience to all of His children. Ask Him to help you align your [agenda](#) to His. Ask Him to help you be a part of the change and less a part of the problem here on earth. Amen.

Congratulations to the [Class of 2020!](#)

Happy Summer!

Kim