

Alignment (Week 2)

Small Group Lesson

Last week in our Alignment Series we began our study of Righteousness from the book of Romans. We discussed living a saved life as opposed to living an unrighteous life. This week we will dig deeper as we continue to unpack Paul's letter to the church at Rome.

Have you ever sat at a red light and seen an individual with a cardboard sign asking for a handout? With just a look you write the story of their life, judging them just by their appearance or the situation. Jesus talked about a Pharisee who went to the temple to pray. As he started to pray, he noticed another tax collector at the altar and began to judge him, He prayed; God I thank you that I'm not like that guy, a stinking tax collector... (Luke 18:11-14) Ok he didn't say it just like that but he might as well have. Comparing ourselves to others is such a dangerous trap. We can all fall into it if we are not careful.

I. "Self-righteousness" (Rom. 2: 1)

"Self-righteousness" is an attitude. It is looking at myself through a lens of unfounded superiority over others. A man tends to feel better about his own life by comparing himself to others he deems to be a worse sinner than he (like the Pharisee). The truth is that we all stand guilty apart from Christ. The only thing that sets us apart is our surrender to Jesus. When asking someone about their relationship with God you may hear "Well, I go to church". Going to church may make you feel better but honestly will not clear one sin from your record. It just makes you religious. In fact you can go to church everyday and miss heaven! There needs to be admission of sin and your need of The Savior. You can't justify yourself by thinking, well, at least I'm not as bad as others. Paul was critical to the Jewish leaders for their self-righteous attitude. They preached the Law but did not obey it (v. 17-23).

Alignment questions: Is your knee jerk reaction to try to explain away your failures or are you quick to say, I messed up. Why is it hard to confess sin to another? What if you knew that you had a friend that you could tell any sin to and know that they would not judge you but love you through it and help you?

II. The Goodness of God Leads us to Repentance (v. 4).

God's "goodness, forbearance (giving time for people), and longsuffering" show how kind, understanding, and patient God is with our unrighteous nature. He sees how we are out of alignment and that not one of us came into this world as a good bible toting believer in the Lord. He longs for every man to be soft and repentant before Him so He can forgive him. If we refuse to repent and continue in sin, then we are "storing up wrath" (v.5) It is like a volcano that will one day "boil over" in God's "indignation". Our great hope is that in Jesus Christ, we can hide in His righteousness.

Alignment Questions: How does knowing that the unexpected can happen in a moment change the way you see eternity? When we understand that God is not eagerly waiting to punish sin but is willing to forgive anyone who will repent, How can we justify rejecting His forgiveness?

III. Righteousness is inward first (v.29)

Our proper alignment begins on the inside and becomes visible on the outside as we change the way we live our lives. It is not enough to just talk a righteous talk but you have to walk a righteous walk. The Apostle Paul writes that being right with God (righteousness) is not about the outward things but the inward commitment to Christ. One day this life will be over and it will be bad news for the religious self-righteous man who tries to justify his sin and unrighteousness. Eternal life waits for those who have a real revelation of righteousness and call upon the Savior.

Alignment Question: Have you realized your need for the Savior or is that in the future for you? So many people are trying to be better but do not understand that being a better person is not salvation.

App. Point: The Gospel is simply the good news. Why not share with the group the name of someone you may know who needs to hear it.

Leader: Take a few minutes and lead your group in prayer. Ask for names of men that your group can commit to prayer for their salvation. Look for opportunities to serve in outreach at your campus.