

Bible e-Study on the book of Romans (2)

Repentance for... All!

“4 Or 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?”

Romans 2:4

NUGGET – Some years ago a publishing company installed a new computer. It was programmed to send out renewal notices to subscribers whose magazine subscriptions had lapsed. Shortly after it was installed, something went wrong with this fancy, new computer. Somehow, before the error was discovered, the computer sent a rancher in Colorado 9,374 notices that his subscription had expired. Having received these 9,374 renewal reminders in a period of one week, the rancher sent in a one-year renewal and a note that said: ‘I give up! Send me the magazine immediately!’ Better than that broken computer is God’s love that doesn’t give up on us. It is His ***“his kindness, forbearance and patience”*** that shows us He does not give up on us, but that He wants everyone to be led to repentance.

In His patience God, we’re told in this nugget verse, withholds His wrath and judgment that is talked about in the next few verses. Who could be that patient? We all know what it’s like to have to repeat instructions over and over again to someone who just doesn’t seem to get it. Often times we’re exasperated and frustrated and at our wits end with someone who seems witless after being told over and over again what needs doing or how something works. It even seems intentional sometimes, rather than innocent.

And of course St. Paul is pointing out in the next verses that those who disregard God’s patience are not innocent but ***“storing up wrath”*** against themselves. And this applies to all people. In verse 10 St. Paul says, ***“For God does not show favoritism.”*** This regards both Law and Grace. In both of these God does not show favoritism.

The Law of God brings forth truth (see vss 2, 8 & 20) and it both instructs and condemns everyone equally. Verse 9 says, ***“There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile”*** Even those who do not have the Law as given by God, according to verses 12-16, have the law written on their hearts. They can do the external things the law requires without knowing the law. And yet everyone, with and without the Law still violates it.

That is why God’s patience is needed. His patience is what allows for people to hear God’s call for repentance and to turn to Him in faith. Always remember that repentance has 2 parts; contrition or sorrow for sin, and trust or faith in the forgiveness of God that is promised through the gospel of Jesus Christ. He is the only one who has perfectly kept the law and so has fulfilled the demands of the law for everyone. For that reason repentance is for everyone and for all who trust in the name of Jesus there is true hope.

APPLICATION -

1. You all know not to ask for patience, why? That’s right, because God may put you in ‘opportunities’ to learn patience, so goes the old saying. But thank God that He is truly patient with us. We all encounter times when our patience is tried. When those times come, be reminded of God’s patience with you. Allow that knowledge to strengthen you to endure and comfort you when you fail.

PRAY – O Lord, Jesus Christ, grant to us the ears to hear Your call to repentance and grant us the Holy Spirit to strengthen us to live by grace through faith in Your name, Amen.