

Kindness and Repentance

Scripture Reading — Romans 2:1-11

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

Paul says that when I judge someone else's actions, I am also judging myself. Judging claims to know something about truth, and if I know enough truth to judge someone else, I obviously know that truth for myself too.

That makes sense to me. It would be silly to think that I could point out the greed in someone else and then claim innocence about the greed in my own life. When I was a child, my parents taught me and my sisters to pray with our eyes closed. It took experience to understand that if I told my mom that one of my sisters had her eyes open during prayer, it was obvious that I'd had my eyes open too.

The odd thing is that, like children, we still point out others' faults and think we can get away with it. So God closes the loophole on our tendency to ignore our own guilt while we place blame on others. God makes us look at ourselves. What God wants here is not a detailed theology of sin and guilt but an understanding that his "kindness is intended to lead [us] to repentance."

God's goal is not about catching us pointing fingers at others. It's about honesty that leads to full life in Jesus. God's motivation is to save us from destroying ourselves through our sin. God is asking, "Do you see that?"

Prayer

Father God, thank you for your kindness, forbearance, and patience. Thank you for taking me seriously in all that I am and for pointing me to Jesus. In his name, Amen.

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