**The Difference between the Saved and the Lost**

Can I share with you an alternate view of **Romans 2:6-11**? Read by itself, it seems to be Paul’s description of the difference between the saved and the lost. Those who are self-seeking, disobedient, doers of evil will be lost. Those who do good by seeking glory, honor, and immortality will be saved. So, quit doing evil and start doing good. Of course, you need to turn from evil (cf. Ezekiel 18:23) and you need to pursue good (cf. II Timothy 2:22), but is that really Paul’s point in this paragraph?

Right off the bat, we should be cautious because **Romans 2:6** says, “He will render to each one according to his works…” and then **Romans 2:13** adds “…but the doers of the law will be justified.” However, other passages that reference judgment, works, and the Law say the exact opposite. Look at **Romans 3:20, 28; Galatians 2:16**. Perhaps Paul is making a rhetorical point.

If **Romans 2:6-11** really is the difference between the saved and the lost, how will any of us measure up? Not so good I’m afraid. While the first two chapters as a whole shed a pretty condemning light on all of us. Note Paul’s summation in **Romans 3:9-18**. Paul’s summary actually refers back to **Romans 2:6-11** almost point by point and turns it on its head.

None is righteous. None does good. No one seeks for God or His glory. No one seeks for life, but rather all pursue death. No one has known the way of peace. No one knows truth, but rather all deceive. No one has patiently endured, but all have turned aside. No one has feared or honored God. Then we see **Romans 3:23**. All have sinned and fall short of God’s glory.

I’ll ask again, how do we measure up to **Romans 2:6-11**?Sounds to me like we are in trouble. If **Romans 2:6-11** is the difference between the lost and the saved, no one stands a chance. We are all on the lost side of this ledger.

This paragraph is part of Paul’s overall point that the difference between the lost and the saved is Jesus. If we are going to be justified by Law, just having and hearing the Law is not enough, we have to do it (**Romans 2:13**). Not only that, we have to do it perfectly, otherwise we haven’t done it. If we ever sin, we have violated the Law. Those who sin without the Law perish without the Law and those who sin under the Law are judged by the Law (**Romans 2:12**, see also **James 2:10**).

This is why we need grace and the gospel. If all we are taking with us into the judgment is the Law, the only thing it can do is condemn us. We need to take something else. We need to take someone else. We need to take Jesus. Jesus is the propitiation for us, that is, He is the sacrifice that appeases the wrath of God, as John also says (**Romans 3:24-26; I John 2:1-2**).

Don’t misunderstand. Jesus did not die so we would be free to pursue evil. Understanding Paul’s point here does not give us permission to keep on sinning, thinking Jesus will simply take us to God in eternity (see **Romans 6:1-4**). Rather, understanding this gives us the power to overcome sin, the power to pursue holiness. And most importantly, it gives us the permission to turn to Jesus when we have sinned, finding salvation and strength in Him. The difference between the saved and the lost is Jesus. Are you in Him?