

Romans 1:18–32

Why we all Need the Gospel

Tonight we are looking at a passage here in the book of Romans that has been ignored by some

A)Frequently misunderstood and repeatedly misused by others.

B)But A proper understanding of this passage is essential in dealing with one of the most sensitive issues in our culture today – **Homosexuality**

C)It is essential that we understand God’s heart on this issue if we are going to properly reflect and represent the **heart of God in our culture today.**

Want to say – This is not going to be a comprehensive look at the subject

A)Sean McDowell – teachings and debates – these 3 books

B)Also I want you to note that the subject doesn’t appear until v.26

1)So be patient – context is important and essential to understanding this discussion

C)Goals

- To properly expound the text
- To see the subject in the context
- To Catch God’s heart

D)Application

1) Rap up – How should the church respond to the homosexual community outside the church

E)How do we respond to those dealing with same sex attraction in the church – PRAY

In our weekend series in the book of Ephesians – Chapter 1-3 Paul is articulating the incredible blessings of being in Christ.

A)We have noted that as followers of Jesus we have a new identity in Jesus

B)We have noted The reason why this is so important to understand is that Man’s original identity was lost in the garden

1)Part of the fall -

C)Genesis 1:26 Describes our original identity this way: 1:26 **God said let us make man in our image and likeness**

1)Man’s original identity was to be found in his relationship to God – and bearing the image and glory of God

D)But our original parents rebelled against God’s plan and chose to find their identity outside of their relationship with God

1)They chose to pursue their own glory instead of God’s glory

E)That decision sent humanity into a tailspin that continues to this day!

It is that decision that Paul the apostle uses as the catalyst of his discussion here in Romans chapter 1

A)Now we saw in Paul’s introduction last week – that - Romans is about Redemption – Salvation – **The power of the Gospel to transform a life**

V.16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

B)**This is at the heart of the book – this is the context – for the discussion that follows – V.18- Ch.3**

1)The gospel is the power of God to save – transform

C)This is one of the first things that often gets ignored when Christians are talking about the verses in Romans 1:18-32

1)They ignore the heart of what precedes these verses – which is the **really central message of the book –**

D)Paul is going to build this wonderful and beautiful case about how the gospel is the power to save and transform all sinners

1)And we are all sinners

E)The gospel is the power to transform any life – and any lifestyle – and we are all in need of transformation

Salvation and transformation come to those who put their faith in Jesus!

V.16 Paul says that the gospel is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

For in it {**The gospel**} the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, *“The just shall live by faith.”*

Note V.18 18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men,

The Contrast

- **V.17 – The righteousness of God is revealed via the gospel**
- **V.18 The Wrath of God is revealed against sin**

The Big idea

- **God’s wrath would be poured out on His own sin – so that sinful man could be made righteous**

Now Before Paul tells us about this great Salvation and how we access it he is going to tell us about how messed up we are because of sin!

A)He is going to tell us why we ALL needed to be saved!

- B) Man needs to know that he is lost – Chapters 1-3**
- Chapter 1:18-32 the sins of the gentile world
 - Chapter 2:1-29 the sins of the moralist Jewish world
 - Chapter 3:1-20 Jews and Gentiles alike are all infected by sin

C)But there is hope – God sent His son to rescue us!

1)Here is why we needed rescued

D)How did things get so out of wack?

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, 21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were

darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. 24 Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, 25 who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

26 For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. 27 Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; 29 being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, 30 backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; 32 who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men,

A)Now this phrase the wrath of God has thrown people for a loop – they don’t picture God that way! – They want to picture him as Loving

B)It is true 1 John 4:8 and 4:16 Define God in this way – **God is Love!**

C)So for some people the idea of God being angry or vengeful just seems completely out of Character.

D)But it is out of his love that his wrath flows – the two go together!

E)Think of it this way: **I love my kids – and if someone did something to my kids my wrath would be ignited!**

1) Now I am a flawed human being – God is perfect and absolutely holy – righteous

See we are also told in 1 John 1:5 that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all!

A) He is perfect in every way – that is His nature – nothing evil – perfect love –

“Wrath is the holy revulsion of God’s being against that which is in contradiction of his holiness.”
(Andrew Murray)

B) Wrath is the holy revulsion or reaction to anything that is contrary to his holiness

C) We understand that – Why you react in great anger and sadness when you hear about a child being molested – repulsive to us – not right

1) That goes against our sense of morality

D) React the same way – when you see a video of a baby being ripped apart in an abortion – (Repulsive – not right – Anger wrath sadness is the reaction)

The idea that the wrath of God is the holy revulsion against that which is contrary to his holiness – goes beyond a sense.

A) It goes against his very nature!

B) I was trying to think of things that would be repulsed by each other or just naturally don’t go together.

1) Spinach and Vanilla pudding – {well there might be someone who would like that –

C) Asked Pete and Aaron – Funny they immediately went to food

- Pete - Salmon and ketchup?
- Dipping your Oreos into orange juice!
- Beef flavored Jell-O
- Garlic flavored toothpaste

D) But I am sure that we could find someone who might like each one of those things.

E) Here is two things that doesn’t go together – Adverse reaction – Acid on Human skin – the two don’t belong together

That is God’s Holiness in conjunction to sin -

A) Adverse reaction – His Wrath is stirred – the two don’t go together

So Paul begins by saying

A) The wrath of God will be revealed. It is seen now, today.

B) This prompts two questions: Why is it being revealed? and How is it being revealed? The rest of the chapter gives his answers.

C) What draws God’s anger is “**ungodliness and unrighteousness.**”

D) Ungodliness first speaks to a disregard of God’s rights, a destruction of our vertical relationship with him.

Unrighteousness refers to a disregard of human rights to love, truth, justice etc,

A) Destruction of horizontal relationships with those around us.

Aa) It is a breaking of what Jesus said were the greatest two commandments: to love God, and to love our neighbor (Mark 12:29–31).

B) Now some would argue – How can God hold people accountable for not knowing or following a God they have never heard of.

C) Paul seems to have anticipated that question - For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,

Men are without excuse because Creation speaks of a Creator –

A) Your Car / Your iPhone –

B) Created – design = designer

Because there is a creator – and that we are the created – that means we are all accountable to Him – we are all without excuse

A) That right there is the rub – with many people – they want to deny the existence of God and ignore the evidence of His existence

B) Because if there is no God then there is no one to answer too – I can just do what I want, when I want and with who I want.

C) So it starts with this suppression of the truth the **suppression of the existence of God**

21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

God uniquely made man out of all of creation in His image and likeness – to be a reflection of his glory

A) Man chose not to worship God and glorify God – man became futile in his thoughts

B) The result - they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. 22 Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools. **NLT**

“What happens when people refuse to acknowledge and depend on God as God? We do not stop worshiping. We simply change the object of our worship.” Timothy Keller

C) Paul says that instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles

We are wired to worship something.

A) We were created to worship the Creator, so if we reject him, we will worship something else.

B) There has to be something which captures our imagination and our allegiance,

1) which is the resting place of our deepest hopes and which we look to calm our deepest fears.

C) Whatever that thing is, we worship it, and so we serve it.

1) It becomes our bottom line, the thing we cannot live without, defining and validating everything we do.

Understand this:

A) Because God created the world “very good” (Genesis 1:31), all created things have good in them.

B) We are right to find them admirable and to enjoy them.

1) The problem comes from giving any created thing inordinate affection—the ultimate affection, which only God deserves and has the right to demand.

C) Paul is saying that the human heart loves to make a good thing into its god thing. – Keller

And this exchange in our worship and service undoes the created order. This is at the heart of Paul’s argument

A) We do not worship what is immortal; we worship what is made.

B) Put another way, we do not worship the Creator; we worship the created (v 25). Which is Really the worship of ourselves

So because mankind beginning with Adam and Eve – Chose to find their identity against God –

A) Rejected the created order – His holiness – His perfect plan

His reaction was one of Wrath – His wrath is being revealed

B) V.24 Paul begins to show us how God’s wrath is being revealed – very interesting –

C) Greek God’s – Might expect it to say – he destroyed everyone

1) But that would not be love that would only be wrath – In God there is always the blending of the two

V.24 24 Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, 25 who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

How is God’s wrath revealed: He gave them over..... repeat 3x – here He gave them over to the sinful desires of their hearts!

A) You want to live free of me – you want to do your own thing – go for it – have at it

B) Man chose to do it his way: God said ok – I am not going to force you to follow me or serve me –

1) **Not robots – Relationship**

C) God says – that is what you want – then go for it – I am going to let you discover the full ramifications of your sinful decisions

D) His hope is that we see the futility of it – that nothing on this earth is going to satisfy us

E) See God knows that The things we serve will not free us; rather, they control us. We *have* to have them.

God wants us to see the futility of our pursuits – He wants us to see what over indulgence leads to – Prodigal son – Pig pen

A) Hoping we come to our senses

B) Like the parent who catches his son – smoking – has them smoke a whole pack on the spot – makes them sick – never want to touch a cigarette again

C) Note v.24 again – NIV

V.24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.

D) The reference to “sexual impurity” is in reference to all sex that is outside of marriage.

The first thing that man given over to his pursue his own passions resulted in was sexual immorality.

A) God created sex to be enjoyed in the context of marriage – Song of Solomon

B) When we violate that and engage in Sex outside of marriage – we are degrading our own bodies

C) He who engages.... Sins against his own body

D) The Problem is we are ignoring God’s design for sex!

The Roman culture that Paul was living in was a Sexually rampant society- everything goes mentality

A) Rome was full of every kind of debauchery imaginable - Paul’s point was illustrated all around him

B) But then he continues

26 For this reason God gave them up to vile passions {Vile = dishonoring}. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. **Lesbianism** 27 Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

The Key words in this paragraph are natural and nature

A) There is a design – God who loves people – designed us to function in a certain way.

B) In Paul’s case, same-sex sexual intimacy is an another clear illustration of the human impulse to turn away from God’s order and design.

C) Homosexual practice is sinful because it violates the divine design in creation.

According to Paul’s logic, men and women who engage in same-sex sexual behavior

A) Even if they are being true to their own feelings and desires—

B) They have suppressed God’s truth in unrighteousness.

C) They have exchanged the **fittedness of male-female** relations for those that are contrary to nature.”

D) Homosexual practice is an another example on a horizontal plane of man’s vertical rebellion against God.

1) There is no way to get around that- some try

Recently, some have attempted to suggest that the traditional understanding of these verses is mistaken;

A) They say that this refers to people who act against their *own* nature;

B) So that it refers only to promiscuous homosexual sex,

C) Two people living in a monogamous same sex relationship are ok – doesn’t refer to them

Well if that were true Paul would not have needed

to single this sexual sin out from the overall sexual immorality that he mentions in V.24

A)(v 26, 27) is literally “against nature”—*para phusin*.

B)This means that homosexuality is a violation of the created nature God gave us.

D)And there is nothing here to suggest that Paul only has some kinds of homosexual acts in mind.

E)As a cultured and traveled Roman citizen, Paul would have been very familiar with long-term, stable, loving relationships between same-sex couples.

1)That does not stop him from identifying them as being outside of God’s design =

So Paul is being very clear here that Homosexuality as well as Heterosexual sex outside of marriage is Sin

A)Because they both are outside of God’s original design for man

B)The original way that God made man to reflect him and his glory

C)Christ and the Church – Picture

Now here is where some Christians have gone wrong on this subject

A)They see the word Wrath in V.18 and then they jump to V.26-27 and use that as a basis to say that God hates Homosexuals

B)That mentality ignores the basis of God’s Character – He is love and verses like John 3:16 – For God so loved the world

C)**God loves Sinners – period**

Another problem with some Christians is they want to take this passage and somehow use it to say – this is the worst of all sins

A)God gave people over and this is the result – look what happened

B)They say Homosexuality is the worst of sins

C)Such logic ignores the fact that Paul first said – V.24 God gave them over and the result was sexual immorality – period

D)And it also ignores what Paul says in V. 28-32 His 3rd and God gave them over statement

This time I want to read it in the NLT notice the highlighted words

²⁸ Since they thought it foolish to acknowledge God, he abandoned them to their foolish thinking and let them do things that should never be done. ²⁹ Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip. ³⁰ They are backstabbers, haters of God, insolent (Being rude), proud, and boastful. They invent new ways of sinning, and they disobey their parents. ³¹ They refuse to understand, break their promises, are heartless, and have no mercy. ³² They know God’s justice requires that those who do these things deserve to die, yet they do them anyway. Worse yet, they encourage others to do them, too. NLT

God gave us over to our own passions and this is the result -

A)All kinds of selfish destructive behavior

B)But here is the Hypocrisy that permeates the Church – Christians will scream and protest and be grossed out by homosexuality

C)And yet they will look the other way – **Young unmarried couple have sex outside of marriage – Struggling**

1)They will be compassionate toward the guy/gal involved in Porn

They chalk up rudeness to someone having a bad day

A)Pride as someone being an over achiever - God’s top seven –list

B)Gossip gets excused with we really need to pray for so and so!

C)Backstabbing goes on all the time and no one says a word!

My point is according to Paul – God in his Holiness is repulsed by all of this!

A)It is equally the same in his eyes

B)Which means – we all need to take sin a lot more seriously – We are all guilty – we all needed a savior –

C)And that is Paul's point – it is not single out one form of sin it is to show that all have sinned – and all sin is repulsive to God

So in closing two questions

A)#1 What should be the churches response to Homosexual people who are outside the church?

B)Realize – Jesus loves them – We need to love them

C)When someone in that lifestyle comes here – we want them to experience the same thing as every other person lost in sin

1)They would find their identity not in some sexual orientation but in who God desires that they would be in Christ

D)His workmanship – Turn from their sin – turn to the savior they can experience a whole new life

#2 What should be our reaction to people who are struggling with Same sex attraction in the church

A)Compassion and Care!

B)This is where the church has really messed up – Young person 7,8,9 have these feelings – Feelings are not sin – only if you act on them

C)The feelings are a part of the fall – feelings are part of the way Satan tempts – plants thoughts

But here is the problem – Young people have seen and heard their parents and the church negative reactions towards homosexuals

A)I can't share this with any one – I will be ostracized – Condemned

B)Read stories of Parents who beat their kids – locked them in rooms because they expressed a same sex attraction

C)We need to be willing to talk and to share – and to walk **people through the reality that** – this temptation is dealt with the same as any

D)Walk with them through the word – Turn from a fleshly desire and pursue God

Old man and his power has been rendered inactive

A)We all have sinful desires – some are strong

B)Desire to sleep with women

1)Aaron's interview – Desire to kill people

C)Everyone of us has a natural bent that is outside of the design of God and we all have to learn to respond to that biblically

D)We as the church and parents need to not be afraid to have that conversation.