

“THE VERY BAD NEWS: ALL HAVE SINNED”

Romans 1:18-3:20

Series: A Study of Romans: “This is Good News”

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INTRODUCTION:

In Romans 1:18 Paul’s tone changes. He suddenly gets very serious and begins talking about the wrath of God. Why? To be willing to receive the Good News we must understand how bad the bad news is.

(Note: The culture has lied to you and told you that you’re not spiritually sick.)

I. THE GENTILES ARE UNDER GOD’S WRATH (Rom. 1:18-32)

A. GOD’S WRATH IS BEING REVEALED AGAINST THE UNGODLY

[Rom 1:18-32 NIV] 18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, 19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.

Note: God is a God of love and justice.

SIDE ROAD: EXPLAINING PAUL'S "DIATRIBE"

In this section of Romans (chapters 1-3), Paul uses a teaching method called Diatribe. A diatribe was a particular style of speaking, in which the speaker sets up a mock opponent with whom to argue his point. Paul in Romans 1-3 is having an imaginary conversation with a Jewish man. Romans 1, in which he describes the wrath of God being poured out on the Gentiles who don't know God, is a setup for what he needs to say to the Jewish man in Romans 2.

B. THE DOWNWARD CYCLE OF THE UNGODLY

(1) THEY EXCHANGED THE GLORY OF GOD FOR FALSE GODS

(a) THE EXCHANGE:

20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. 21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God

for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.

Here's the foundational cause of man's spiritual disease, and the first reason God's wrath is being released on the world: They've ignored God and turned to false gods.

They should have known just from creation about God.

- His eternal power...
- His divine nature...

(b) THE RESULTS: RAMPANT SEXUAL IMMORALITY

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.

NOTE: SEXUAL REVOLUTION DESTROYS FAMILY, HARMS CHILDREN

2) THEY EXCHANGED THE TRUTH ABOUT GOD FOR A LIE

a) THE EXCHANGE

25 They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator--who is forever praised. Amen.

Note: Moral relativism.

b) THE RESULTS

26 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts.

3) EXCHANGED NATURAL SEXUAL RELATIONS FOR UNNATURAL

a) THE EXCHANGE

Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. 27 In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.

The Bible says homosexual lust and behavior is not normal. It is a result of living in this diseased world.

SIDE ROAD: What should you do if you feel these things or have experienced these sins?

(1) Acknowledge that this is sin. “Lord, I will acknowledge these desires are not of you.”

(2) Surrender your soul to Jesus; you’ll need his power to overcome.

(3) Determine to abstain from sinful desires.

[1Pe 2:11 NIV] 11 Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul.

God loves you! You are his child. Trust that he can do great things in and through you.

b) THE RESULTS

The results of this last exchange are devastating. After a culture openly accepts all kinds of sexuality, the wheels come off.

28 Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. 29 They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, 30 slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; 31 they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. 32 Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

II. YOU, JEWISH MAN, WILL ALSO FACE JUDGMENT (Rom. 2:1-3:8)

A. YOU HAVE NO EXCUSE!

[Rom 2:1-16 NIV] 1 You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things.

2 Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. 3 So when you, a mere human being, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? 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?

5 But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed.

6 God "will repay each person according to what they have done."

B. DOES THIS APPLY TO YOU?

1) If you come from Jewish background, this was written for you: Understand being Jewish is a great privilege and advantage, but does not guarantee heaven.

2) Those of us who grew up in church, who think that's good enough.

3) Anybody who thinks they're good enough to get into heaven.

C. DESCRIBING THE DAY OF JUDGMENT

7 To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life.

8 But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.

9 There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; 10 but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

11 For God does not show favoritism.

16 This will take place on the day when God judges people's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.

III. THE CONCLUSION: ALL HAVE SINNED (Rom. 3:9-20)

[Rom 3:9-20 NIV] 9 What shall we conclude then? Do we have any advantage? Not at all! For we have

already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin. 10 As it is written:

"There is no one righteous, not even one; (Eccl 7:20)

11 there is no one who understands; (Ps 14:2)

there is no one who seeks God. (Ps 53:2)

12 All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one." (Ps 14:3)

13 "Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit." (Ps 5:9)

"The poison of vipers is on their lips." (Ps 140:3)

14 "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness." (Ps 10:7)

15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood; 16 ruin and misery mark their ways, 17 and the way of peace they do not know." (Is 59:7)

18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes." (Ps 36:1)

19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. 20 Therefore no one will be

declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.

CONCLUSION:

We desperately need some Good News! Next week we will dig deeply into the cure. Here's a welcome taste of the next passage:

[Rom 3:21-24 NIV] 21 But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. 22 This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

You can get to heaven in one of two ways:

- 1) You can live a perfect sinless life, never breaking even one law.
- 2) Or you can let Jesus rescue you from the law of sin and death.