

Romans 1:18-32 God's Wrath Against Unrighteousness

Text

¹⁸For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. ²⁰For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. ²¹For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. ²²Professing to be wise, they became fools, ²³and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

²⁴Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. ²⁵For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

²⁶For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, ²⁷and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

²⁸And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, ²⁹being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, ³⁰slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, ³¹without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; ³²and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.

Key Points in the text

- God created mankind in His image and part of that means He created us with reason, and the knowledge that there is a creator, this is called General Revelation.
- The path of being given over to degrading passions starts with denying what we all know is true, that there is a creator who has shown Himself in scripture.
- Once we deny God we become our own God and then we are doomed.

Text Study

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So what is this truth that they are suppressing?

- Verse 19 ...that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.
- General revelation has been given to all mankind. We were made in the image of God and as such we are given reason (part of what sets us apart from other created life). This reason allows each and everyone to know there is a God and He created us and our world.
- So the truth that is being suppressed is the existence of God.

Verse 20 adds that God has shown this in His creation. So we don't just have a mind that says there is a God, we have a creation around us that screams there is a creator.

How is the grace of God shown in these verses?

- These verses show the grace of God towards us in that He provides all of this so that we will know of Him and seek to know Him more through His word (special revelation).

No one is without excuse.

- This is Paul's response to the question of requiring belief in His work to be found righteous.

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²⁴Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. ²⁵For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

We become proud and in that pride we must create our own god, or system of morality.

- We see a better way and in order to take it we must deny what is innate in us. As it says we say this innate thing in me is foolish but I am wise so I will leave behind this primal instinct of there being a God.

It is important to notice here that it says exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for something corruptible and in our image.

- We get the sense here that God's desire is for us to see His glory and worship Him, this would result in a joyful life, but we exchange it for something that is less than, so very less than.

A person who has denied God has no moral compass outside themselves, so what is right and wrong changes based on everything other than God.

- This is a result of God having given them over to their lusts.
- God and His law is our moral compass and so without it we are lost, unless He acts.

²⁶For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, ²⁷and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

Homosexuality is a sin, because it denies creation order.

- Any sin that denies creation order is of highest concern and must not be corrupted or modified.
- To go back to the copyright discussion of it being God's word, we don't have the legal right to be modifying the words of God.

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Just before today's text Paul quoted from Habakkuk 2, which is all about how God saw that the people had denied Him and made their own gods and that their end would be destruction.

- Many of the attributes Paul lists in verses 29-30 can be found in the attributes of the wicked men of that time.
- We even see in verses 13-14 of that chapter words that sound an awful lot like verses 18-20 of our text.
 - ¹³Is it not indeed from the Lord of hosts

That peoples toil for fire,

And nations grow weary for nothing?

¹⁴For the earth will be filled

With the knowledge of the glory of the Lord,

As the waters cover the sea.

Application

- Rejoice and glorify God for His amazing creation and honor Him highly as creator and sustainer of it.
- Never stand for an ideology, behavior, or social construct that is contrary to God's creation order.
- Never allow the world to determine for you what the Word of God says or allow yourself to modify the Word of God to allow you to approve of what the world says is okay.

Next Week's Lesson Prep/Preview

Text: Romans 2:1-11

Focus: God's Impartial Judgment

Devotional: Matthew 7:1-5

Preparation: Read article called Do Not Judge

Do Not Judge - Conrad Mbewe

I am sure you have heard the words "judge not" spoken many times. They are usually mentioned when there is news about something morally questionable, such as a pregnancy outside marriage or a divorce.

The idea behind these words when they are spoken often amounts to something like this: “Do not make any moral judgment on what this person has done. Look the other way. If you pass judgment, you will be doing something that Jesus does not want you to do.”

In [Matthew 7:1–5](#), Jesus said:

Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye.

On first reading, these words of Jesus seem to suggest that if you know that you are not perfect, then you should not pass moral judgment on others. The words almost seem to suggest that if you avoid making any moral judgments about other people, then God will not make any moral judgments about you. You can understand why people seem to like to hear and say these words.

We need to realize that Jesus is using the word judge as a synonym for condemn. He is warning against a censorious spirit. Those who have a hypercritical attitude often overlook their own faults while being very hard on others.

This is what Jesus means when He goes on to say, “For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you” (v. 2). Jesus is warning against being severe on others while being lenient on yourself.

This becomes even more evident when you consider the imagery that Jesus uses to illustrate His teaching. Jesus is obviously using hyperbolic language. Here you are, He is saying, content with a log in your eye, and yet you are making an issue of a speck in your brother’s eye.

Clearly, then, Jesus is not suggesting that you should not pass moral judgments on the actions of others. In fact, He is saying that you should begin by passing a moral judgment on yourself that leads to genuine repentance. Then you will be in a good position to judge others.

“First take the log out of your own eye and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother’s eye” (v. 5). Have you done that yet?