

Romans

Romans

- The Letter to the Church in Rome was written by Paul on his 3rd missionary journey.
- The Church in Rome was started by a group of Jews that met and worshipped in house churches.
- Sometime around the 40's A.D., the Emperor Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome (Acts 18:2).
- The Roman Church because of the edict by Claudius was entirely composed of Gentiles up until his death when Jews were able to return to Rome.

- It was written from the city of Corinth around 57-58 A.D..
- The Jews were beginning to return to Rome around 54 A.D..
- Jewish and Gentile believers had different cultural ways of expressing their faith in Jesus so Paul seeks to instruct both groups in the message of the Gospel.

The Purpose of Romans

- Paul wrote to the Romans to prepare for his arrival on his way to Spain (15:22-24).
- Paul had hoped to use the Church in Rome as his launching pad for spreading the message of the gospel into the regions of Spain and the rest of the western Roman empire.
- Before going to Rome, Paul was on his way to Jerusalem to take an offering for the poor that lived there from the churches that were in Macedonia and Achaia (15:25-26).
- Paul was aware of the risk that he could lose his life by going to Jerusalem (15:31), so he may have written his fully inspired account of the gospel message just in case he didn't make it.
- Paul eventually makes it to Rome but as a prisoner (Acts 28).

The Impact of Romans

- The impact of the letter to the Romans cannot be overstated and is considered to be the greatest of Paul's writings.
- Paul in sixteen chapters, inspired by the Holy Spirit, lays out the gospel message that Jesus is more than able to save people to the complete uttermost (Hebrews 7:25).
- Paul's message that the "**the just shall live by faith**" (1:17) has become the motto of western Christianity provided to us by the reformers during the Protestant movement.

- Consider what believers throughout history have testified about how their lives have been impacted by Romans:
 - "No man verily can read it too oft or study it too well; for the more it is studied the easier it is, the more it is chewed the pleasanter it is, and the more groundly [sic] it is searched the preciouuser [sic] things are found in it, so great treasures of spiritual things lieth hid therein." -Tyndale, William
 - "I labored diligently and anxiously as how to understand Paul... the expression 'the righteousness of God' blocked the way, because I took it mean that the righteousness of God whereby God is righteous and deals righteously in punishing the unrighteous. Although an impeccable monk, I stood before God as a sinner...therefore I did not love a righteous and angry God, but rather I hated and murmured against him..."

- “Then I grasped the truth that the righteousness of God is that righteousness whereby, through grace and sheer mercy, he justifies us by faith. Therefore I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise...I broke through. And as I had formerly hated the expression ‘the righteousness of God’ I now began to regard it as my dearest and most comforting word.”- Luther, Martin
- “It is the chief part of the New Testament and the perfect gospel... the absolute epitome of the gospel.”-Luther, Martin

- “When anyone understands this Epistle, he has a passage opened to him to the understanding of the whole Scripture.”-Calvin, John
- John Wesley, “...describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for my salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken *my* sins away, even *mine*.”
- The Letter to the Romans changes lives because it lays out a complete picture of the gospel plan of God.

The Book of Romans shows the Difference between Law Righteousness and Faith Righteousness

<u>Law Righteousness</u>	<u>Faith Righteousness</u>
Only for the Jew	For everyone who believes
Based on works	Comes by faith alone
Self-made righteousness	God-made righteousness
Cannot Save	Brings Salvation
Tries to obey the Lord	Calls on the Lord
Leads to Pride	Leads to God's glory
Based on fear of failure	Based on Fatherly love

Romans 1:1

“Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God”

Three Types Of Servants In Scripture

- A servant who gets paid for his service.
- A servant who does not get paid for his service.
- A bond-servant: A servant who has been set free by his master but chooses to serve because of his deep love for his master.
- A servant of a person in a high position had more authority, status, and freedom than the common person. Servants of the emperor were some of the highest ranking people in all of Rome.

Exodus 21:5

"But if the servant plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free..."'

Our Relationship With Jesus Is Seeded In Our Devotion To Him!

- You and I free to leave if we choose
- We can keep our own sovereignty over our lives or we can choose to stay with Christ in love and let Him have sovereignty in our lives
- This changes our spiritual journey from obligation to serve by willfully choosing out of love for Him.
- A spiritual journey grounded in love-relationship with Jesus not enslaved to the religion of obligation (works).

- Paul was “called to be an apostle, set apart...”
- Paul had a special calling upon his life and that was to be set apart for a purpose.
- Paul committed his life to be a servant of Jesus Christ for the sole mission of spreading the gospel.
- For Paul the gospel message is so awesome that he was willing to separate himself from all other earthly pursuits- fame, fortune, family, and friends in order to be faithful to the calling of God.

The Gospel of God

- The word in the original Greek is “euangelos” and literally means “good message” or “good news”.
- The gospel is not something to do, or some advice to be followed it simply news and it is good news of what has been done by God for man.
- When we think of the gospel we usually think of the “unconverted” who “need” salvation.
- But the Gospel is the power of salvation continually throughout the life of the believer.
- We should be in our lives preaching the gospel over and over again to ourselves every day and every moment.

- Paul let's us know that it is not his gospel that he is set apart for but it is gospel of God.
- Paul was simply a messenger of the good news of what God had done.
- The gospel of God is not a new message but an old one that had been planned beforehand: “the gospel by the power of God who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began,”-2 Timothy 1:9
- “..in [the] hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began.”-Titus 1:2

The Good News

- An understanding of our position before God is the foundation for all of growth in the grace and knowledge of God.
- “Justification is the act of God whereby He declares an ungodly man to be perfect while he is still ungodly.”-Boice, James Montgomery
- The Good News declared in the Bible is that our righteousness is based upon what God has done not what we do.
- “And to the one who does not work but believes in him who **justifies the ungodly**, his faith is counted as righteousness, just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one to whom God counts righteousness apart from works:”-**Romans 4:5-6**

Romans 1:2-4

“which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord”

The Gospel Promised

- Paul says that God had promised the gospel through His prophets and proclaimed in the Scriptures which God provided for us in the Old Testament.
- “And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.”-Luke 24:27
- Paul's gospel was not a human invention that can be reshaped by man nor can it be changed in order to fit our own ideas.
- “I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel, not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.”-Galatians 1:6-7a
- There is only ONE gospel promised and proclaimed by God.

The Gospel Message

- The Gospel's message is about “His Son”. (vs.3)
- The good news is not centered on a teaching, a tradition, nor an experience but is laser focused upon the Person and work of Jesus.
- The good news is about Him, not us. It's His work, not ours! When we lose track of this truth our lives become enslaved to performance resulting in bondage to our own fleshly desires.
- “We never grasp the gospel until we understand that it is not fundamentally a message about our lives, dreams, or hopes. The gospel speaks about, and transforms, all those things, but only because it isn't about us. It is a declaration about God's Son, the man Jesus.”-Keller, Timothy

The Son

- The Son is both human, **descended from David according to the flesh**, and divine, **declared to be the Son of God in power**.
- Jesus is the promised “seed of David”, Who was promised to David that one of His descendants would sit as King forever over all the earth (2 Samuel 7:11-16).
- Jesus was **declared** the Son of God in power by being raised from the dead by the Holy Spirit and by ascending to the right hand of the Father, Who stamped it forever in time.
- The **work** that Jesus did in the **past** He did “**according to the flesh**” and the **work** He is doing in the **present** is “**according to the Spirit**”.

- “For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his **own Son** in the **likeness of sinful flesh** and for sin, he **condemned sin** in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not **according to the flesh** but **according to the Spirit**.
Romans 8:3-4
- The Father sent His own Son, Who was without sin, in order to be identified with man in the likeness of sinful flesh to condemn sin **for us**, so that believers can now identify with Him according to the Spirit Who is the very life of Christ **in us**.
- “God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, **made us alive together with Christ**— by grace you have been saved— and **raised us up with him** and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus”
Ephesians 2:4-5

- “For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.”-Galatians 2:19-21
- “Faith connects you so intimately with Christ, that He and you become as it were one person. As such you may boldly say: ‘I am now one with Christ. Therefore Christ’s righteousness, victory, and life are mine.’ On the other hand, Christ may say: ‘I am that big sinner. His sins and death are mine, because he is joined to me, and I to him.’”-Luther, Martin

The Father and The Son

- It is made clear throughout the Scriptures that God is revealed to us a Father.
- Jesus prays, “Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.”-John 17:24
- The Father has been loving the Son, and the Son has been loving the Father throughout all of eternity.
- True love must have an object outside of itself to love; love existed between the Persons of the Godhead before anything was created. The Triune nature of God is not only Scripturally correct but also, a clear understanding is necessary to have a relationship with Him.

- The Father demonstrated His love for us by sending His only begotten Son.
- “Anyone who does not love does not know God, because **God is love**. In this the **love of God** was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.” **-1 John 4:8-9**
- “I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the **love I with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.**” **-John 17:26**
- Jesus prayed that believers would be invited to participate in this Dance of Love between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

- Our union with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit doesn't mean we become divinity ourselves it means we are called “into the divine family”.
- “There is...an eternal society or family in the Godhead, in the Trinity of persons. It seems to be God's design to admit the church into the divine family...” **-Edwards, Jonathan**
- The grace of the **Lord Jesus Christ**, and the **love of God**, and the **communion of the Holy Spirit** be with you all. Amen. **-2 Corinthians 13:14**
- Union with Christ is not an abstract idea to be understood. Truth is a Person to Whom we are united and in Whom our lives are rooted and grounded in love. This is what it means to be saved, to be united with Him Who is grace and truth...” **-Wilbourne, Rankin**
- John Owen, explained that God maintains His love and justice in perfect harmony. The sins of God's people do not go unpunished. Our sins are punished in Christ, to Whom believers are so completely united to Christ the head.

United With Christ

- In order to understand any of Paul's writings one must know that Paul truly believes that we were there "in Christ" at the crucifixion and resurrection 2,000 years ago.
- "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death...we have been united with him in death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him... if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him". -Romans 6:4,5,6
- "I have been crucified with Christ." -Galatians 2:20
- If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world..." -Colossians 2:20

- " "For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God"-Colossians 3:3
- "But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,"- Ephesians 2:4-6
- " having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith..." -Colossians 2:12
- "If then you have been raised with Christ..." -Colossians 3:1
- Where were you when they crucified my Lord? If you are a believer you were not only there but you were "in Christ" when He died and you were "in Christ" when the Holy Spirit raised Him from the dead and you are "in Christ" Who is seated at the right hand of God making intercession for you.
- "My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me." -Psalm 63:8

Union and Communion

- “Union with Christ is the central truth of the whole doctrine of salvation not only in its application but also in its once-for-all accomplishment in the finished work of Christ”-Murray, John
- John Owen makes a clear distinction between union with Christ and communion with Christ which is helpful and practical for today.
- Our union with Christ is **fixed** and does not rise and fall on what we have done or failed to do. Jesus said, “...no one will snatch them out of my hand (John 10:28).
- Communion with Christ **changes and varies** depending upon what we choose to do or not do in working out our own salvation in faith.

- We by our own natural tendencies base our security in union with Christ (*Does Jesus love me?*) upon our communion with Christ (*am I doing enough?*). The end result will always be frustration and condemnation and our spiritual life thwarted by exhaustion in trying to do more wondering if we are getting anything out of this Christian life, or if it is even real based upon our experience to what we read in Scripture.
- One Puritan writer stated, “Your heart is not the compass Christ sails by”. – Rutherford, Samuel
- Jesus is always faithful even when we are not, “if we are faithless, he remains faithful” (**2 Timothy 2:13**). We change all the time but he never does, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever”(**Hebrews 13:8**).
- Union is the secret to communion. Only when we have the “assurance” and “conviction” (Hebrews 11:1) that the Father has adopted us into holy union as His sons and daughters out of His great love and rich grace can we be safe and secure to press deeper into the relationship given to us in Christ Jesus.

Believers Are In Love With Jesus

- We don't do the things of the Christian life and call ourselves Christian!
- Believers are in love with Jesus and believers **belong to Jesus**(vs.6) and are **loved by God** (vs. 7) and our actions represent His love.
- "Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and **manifest myself to him.**"-**John 14:21**
- However it seems at times we get this backwards, and we believe as long as we are doing things for Jesus therefore we are loving him. **It steals our joy because the doing becomes a burden.**

Romans 1:5

"Through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations,"

Grace

- There are many and varied definitions of Grace.
- We know that, “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.” -**Ephesians 2:8**
- A definition for grace that is used a lot is the acronym: God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense

- God’s grace is a free gift of salvation given to us through the work of Jesus upon the cross which is accepted by faith.
- It is true that there is nothing more we can do to earn God’s love and favor which leads people to think that there is nothing left to do.
- “Grace is not opposed to effort, it is opposed to earning”-Willard, Dallas

- The Bible speaks of being called to “rest” (Matt. 11:28), yet at the same time encourages us to “strive to enter that rest” (Heb. 4:11).
- “Cheap grace is the deadly enemy of our Church. Cheap grace means...the preaching of forgiveness of sins without requiring repentance...grace without discipleship, grace without the cross...Those who try to use grace as a dispensation from following Christ are simply deceiving themselves.”-Bonhoeffer, Dietrich
- Where is the harmony between our resting in His love and grace and our striving and pressing forward which can be exhausting and discouraging at times?

- John Calvin said, “Let us therefore labor more to feel Christ living in us”.
- John Owen stated, “Labor, therefore, to fill your hearts with the cross of Christ.”
- And finally Jonathan Edwards, “We should labour to be continually growing in the divine love”.
- The believer is called to rest in the grace of God, and yet, at the same time, we labor to be “**brought near**” by Him and as we “**draw near**” to Him He shows us more of himself to us.

- It's not labor for salvation but for revelation of a deeper knowledge of God and His heart.
- As the believer engages in Bible reading, prayer, worship, and fellowship the Lord is actively engaged, through grace, in drawing each person closer by "manifesting Himself" to the believer.
- "for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."-**Philippians 2:13**
- "Now may the God of peace... equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight...."-**Hebrews 13:20-21**

Obedience of Faith

- The obedience of faith is simply believing in the gospel message.
- "Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent."-**John 6:29**
- The subject of our faith is Jesus.
- Obedience of faith is to "believe God" and not man and his traditions.
- Obedience of faith is not "What you believe?" But, "Whom do you believe?"

- “Only those who believe can obey...only those who obey believe...If the first half of the proposition stands alone, the believer is exposed to the danger of cheap grace, which is another word for damnation. If the second half stands alone, the believer is exposed to the danger of salvation through works, which is also another word for damnation.... It is all- important that the pastor should be ready with both sides of the proposition: Only those who obey can believe, and only those and only those who believe can obey.”-Bonhoeffer, Dietrich

Center In Christ

- There is inherent problem with the statements “just have more faith in Jesus” or “just obey God more”.
- The problem is that both of these statements put the focus upon ourselves at the center of change instead of Jesus.
- Our transformation is a direct result of the work of Jesus on the cross “for us” and of His on going work of transformation through His Spirit “within us”.
- “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”-2 Corinthians 3:17-18

- “O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? ”-**Galatians 3:1-3**

- To believe is to obey, to obey is to believe.
- Obedience is an act of trust in what God has revealed about Himself and to submit our sovereignty over to Him as Lord of our life to do as He wills.
- Disobedience then is the act of not believing in what God has revealed about Himself choosing to live as a “son of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2) refusing to accept the work of Christ on the Cross and be delivered.
- “Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. ”-**Ephesians 2:1-2 (NLT)**
- “For they are a rebellious people, lying children, children unwilling to hear the instruction of the LORD;”-**Isaiah 30:9**

Different kinds of Obedience

- Some people obey out of **fear** of not being good enough. (**fear driven obedience**)
- Some people obey out of a sense of **duty** to the church. (**duty driven obedience**)
- Some people obey out of **pressure** from the culture they live. (**pressure driven obedience**)
- Some people obey out of the **need to please** those in their church or family. (**performance driven obedience**)
- None of these mentioned above are **faith driven obedience**.

Faithful Obedience In Loving Action

- Living faith produces **good works** that are a direct result of the new nature born into the believer through faith in Jesus, Who is working in us.
- **Good works** are prepared beforehand by God for the believer to walk in through faith.
- “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for **good works**, which God **prepared beforehand**, that we should walk in them.”- **Ephesians 2:10**

- The only works that God prepared for the believer to walk in are called **Good Works** all other works are **dead** or **wicked/evil** and are forced as a result from the old nature not the Spirit of God.
- “And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, **doing evil deeds**, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death”-**Colossians 1:21-22**
- “Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from **dead works** and of faith toward God”-**Hebrews 6:1**
- **Dead works** may appear to be good works and some people may even see and call them as good but God views them as and calls them **dead** because they did not come from a living faith in relationship with God working in us resulting in His divine plan and purposes lived through us.
- Spiritual character and good works will be observed by others as a result of the inward working of the Word of God upon our heart through faith and our obedience to it.

Romans 1:6-7

“including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Describing the Believer

- Paul describes the believer here in Romans in four ways:
 1. Believers are **called to belong to Jesus Christ**.
 2. Believers are **loved by God**.
 3. Believers are **called to be saints**.
 4. Believers enjoy **grace and peace** from God.

Called

- Paul reveals that believers are called.
- Paul was **called** to be an apostle (vs.1).
- Believers are **called** to belong to Jesus (vs.6).
- Believers are **called** saints (vs. 7).
- “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be **called** children of God;”-**1 John 3:1**

- “It is very likely that the word “called” means more than merely “named” and refers to the effectual action of God the Father ... specifically Who calls effectually by His grace.”-Murray, John
- “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.”-**Romans 8:28-30**
- All of the redemptive work that God does upon the heart of the believer it all begins by His divine call which ushers us into fellowship with His Son Jesus and union with Him.
- “You did not choose me, but I chose you...”-**John 15:16**

Saints

- Paul stated that believers are called to be “saints”.
- The words “to be” are not in the literal translation and doesn’t need to be included. “To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called saints”.-Young’s Literal Translation
- “They were not called because they were saints; but they became saints through that calling.”-Spurgeon, Charles
- Saints literally means “holy ones”, or “separated ones”.

- The believer is **called** “holy” by God which means to be separated for His purposes.
- Paul wants his readers to know that they are “**called saints**” not out of any merit of their own but because of God’s love and call.
- Saints are also sanctified in the Lord.
- “To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those **sanctified** in Christ Jesus, **called** to be **saints** together with all those who in every place **call upon the name** of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours”-**1 Corinthians 1:2**

“GRACE AND PEACE TO YOU.....”

- A familiar greeting of Paul
- **Grace** is how God reaches out to man, but is also how man reaches out to God.
- Without **grace** man would still be apart from God with only a fearful expectation of judgment.
- **Grace** has brought man and God back together and it is by **grace** that we are saved.
- **Grace** necessarily brings **peace** of mind to the believer.

Romans 1:8-15

“First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God’s will I may now at last succeed in coming to you.

For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith, both yours and mine. I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that I have often intended to come to you but thus far have been prevented,

in order that I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles. I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.”

The Roman Church

- Paul wanted to “**first**” thank God for the reputation of the Roman Church that had been “**proclaimed**” throughout the world.
- Paul indicated that the Roman Church had an excellent reputation concerning their deep **faith** in the **Gospel** of the **Son**.
- A church’s reputation hinges on the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the willingness of her people to proclaim the truth of the Gospel message.

Paul Prays For the Church

- A key element in Scripture is the prayers of Paul and the possibility of its fulfillment in our own lives today.
- “I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my **prayers**, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the **Spirit of wisdom** and of **revelation in the knowledge of him**, having the **eyes of your hearts enlightened**, that you may **know what is the hope to which he has called you**, what are the **riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints**, and **what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe**, according to the working of his great might that he **worked in Christ** when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places...”-**Ephesians 1:16-20**
- “The LORD is **near** to all who call on him, to all who call on him in **truth**.”-**Psalm 145:18**

Mutual Encouragement

- Paul desired to come to the believers in Rome to “**be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith**”.
- There are good number of people who go to church when they **feel like it** or a **crisis** puts them in a position of need causing anxiety so they turn to the church for comfort.
- There are a good number of people who go to church to be **entertained** by the music, by the preacher, or by a current program.
- “Many go to church if they feel they "need it" at the time. But our motivation for fellowship must be to obey God and **to give to others**. We can go to church looking to encourage someone who needs to hang in there against a tide of discouragement.”-Constable, Thomas

- Believer's come together to mutually encourage each other to keep pressing on into the Gospel and continue on the path that the Gospel teaches.
- “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”-**Hebrews 10:23-25**
- Paul sought out to be encouraged in the faith from other believers how much more should we today do the same?

Greeks and Barbarians

- The Greeks considered everyone who did not speak the Greek language as barbarians.
- The Greeks also considered themselves to be wise and others foolish.
- There was an educated group of the Jewish class that considered themselves as Greeks but the Greeks considered them as barbarians.
- Paul was concerned that all people hear the gospel message whether it be Greeks, Jews, Romans, or Barbarians and he was, “eager to preach the gospel to all of them.
- Paul was eager to preach the gospel to the **Jews** who demand signs and to the **Greeks** who seek wisdom, since **Christ crucified** was a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentile.
- Not everyone will receive the gospel message but as believers we are under obligation to all people to share the message.

Romans 1:16-17

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, ‘The righteous shall live by faith.’”

The Power of God

- The main reason Paul was not ashamed of the gospel was because he knew it contained an inherent power to change believers.
- As the believer walks with the Lord there is an internal power working upon his soul and spirit through the person of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God.
- The gospel has the power to transform lives, to change minds, and to shape behaviors.
- “For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”-**1 Corinthians 1:18**
- The hearing and believing of the gospel message of the Cross will bring the power of God into the life of the believer.

Salvation

- Paul says the gospel is the power of God for salvation.
- **Salvation** is an all encompassing word which has its basic outcome in **wholeness** for the believer.
- Salvation includes everything for our deliverance in righteousness, redemption, reconciliation, sanctification and glorification.
- “And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption”-**I Corinthians 1:30**

Righteousness of God

- A person might think that because God is righteous He would condemn rather than forgive and make a sinner righteous.
- God because He is righteous is faithful to His promises.
- God has provided a righteousness, His very own, for men who have none of their own.
- There **is** no other God besides Me, a **just** God and a **Savior**; There **is** none besides Me. Look to Me, and be **saved**, All you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there **is** no other.-**Isaiah 45:21-22**

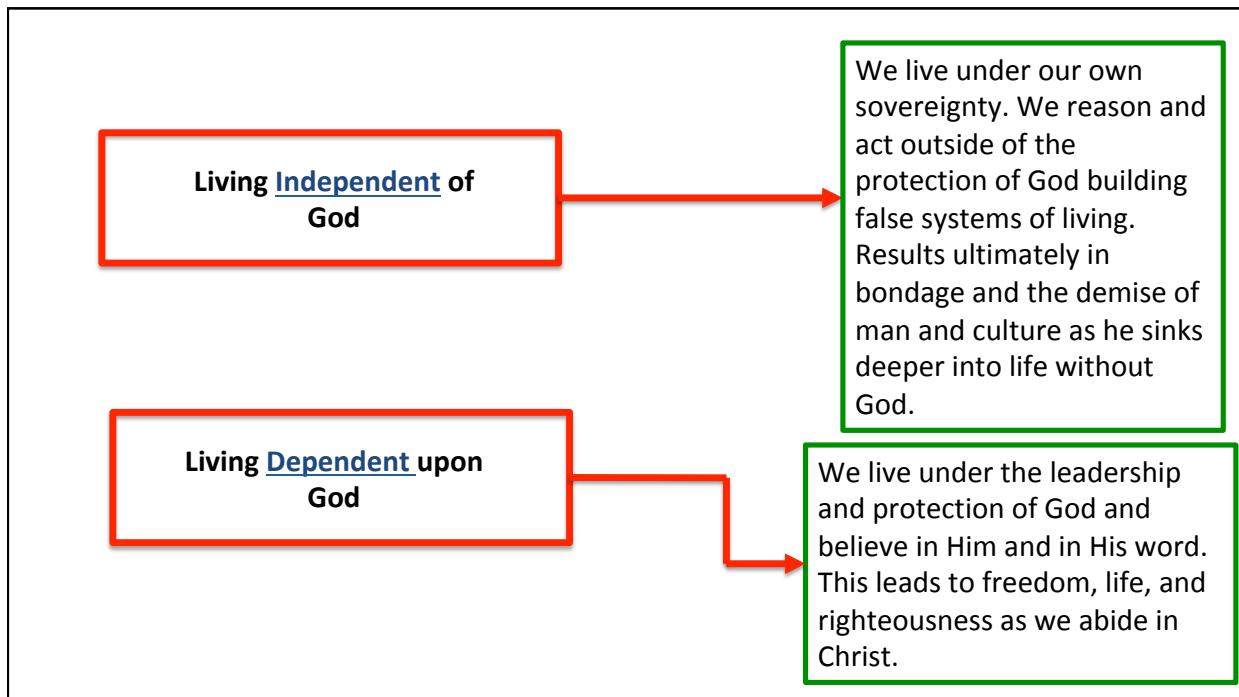
- If God justifies a sinner, it does not mean that he finds reasons to prove that he was right – far from it. It does not even mean, at this point, that he makes the sinner a good man. It means that **God treats the sinner as if he had not been a sinner at all.**”-Barclay, William
- “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the **righteousness of God.**”-**1 Corinthians 5:21**
- Through the work of Christ upon the Cross, God has made people righteous, i.e., an act by a saving Father Who brings people back into a right relationship with Himself.

The Righteous Shall Live By Faith

<u>The Phrase</u>	<u>Placed Used</u>	<u>Emphasis</u>
The Righteous Shall Live by Faith	Habakkuk 2:4	The Righteous <u>Live</u> by Faith
The Righteous Shall Live By Faith	Romans 1:17	The Righteous Live by <u>Faith</u>
The Righteous Shall Live By Faith	Galatians 3:11	Justified by Faith as opposed to the Law. The <u>Righteous</u> Live by Faith.
The Righteous Shall Live By Faith	Hebrews 10:38	Living by faith in God’s promises. The Righteous <u>Live</u> by Faith.

Two World Views

- “Behold the **proud**, his soul is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith.” Habakkuk 2:4
- In opposition to a life of faith is a puffed-up world view that is filled with pride and self assurance.
- The other world view is a life of faith-dependence upon God. A sense of certainty in spite of appearances and circumstances we can trust in God to do what He has promised.



What We Know About Faith

- Faith is not a work. It is a gift and is the means by which man is saved (1 Corinthians 12:4,9).
- “For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.”-**Romans 12:3**
- “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”-**Romans 10:17**
- “No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. That is why his faith was “counted to him as righteousness.”-**Romans 4:20-22**

- Faith is being fully convinced that God will do what He has promised to do.
- We are convinced that we are made righteous before God by faith.
- We are convinced that we are justified before God through faith as opposed to the Law.
- We live by faith in the promises of God.
- Faith is the opposite of sight. (**2 Cor. 5:7**)
- It is by faith that we perceive the things happening around us are not be chance but created and maintained by God.
- “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”-**Hebrews 11:1**

Faith Is The Assurance

- The word for “**assurance**” in the original text is the word “*hypostasis*” which literally means “ground” or “**foundation**.” Some Bibles have substance or confidence.
- Faith is the foundation of the things hoped for that is not in our possession.
- We all hope for many things but the question is, what is the foundation for our hope?
- Hope depends on the fact that God has spoken and revealed Himself to us through His Son Jesus in the Word.

- If we don’t have faith in the assurance that God has spoken then there is nothing for us to place our faith upon other than our own created idol made in our own image.
- “All who fashion idols are nothing, and the things they delight in do not profit...the craftsmen are only human...He shapes it into the figure of a man...he makes a god and worships it; he makes it an idol and falls down before it.”-**Isaiah 44:9,11,13,15**
- “Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands. They have mouths, but do not speak; eyes, but do not see. They have ears, but do not hear; noses, but do not smell. They have hands, but do not feel; feet, but do not walk; and they do not make a sound in their throat. **Those who make them become like them; so do all who trust in them.**”-**Psalm 115:4-8**

Kingdom of a Frozen Faith

- Elsa from the Disney movie Frozen sings:
 - “The snow glows white on the mountain tonight
Not a footprint to be seen;
 - A **kingdom** of isolation
And it looks like I'm the queen.
 - Don't let them in, don't let them see
Be the good girl you always have to be
Conceal, don't feel, don't let them know
Well, now they know!
 - It's time to see what I can do
To test the limits and break through
No right, no wrong, no rules for me I'm free!”

- Elsa captures the mood of our modern culture focused upon individuality, freedom, and the need to discover and express our true self all the while locking herself away in an ice castle prison of her own making.
- It is too easy to fashion a belief system after our own making and feel safe but be lost to God!.
- “You aren't saved by being good, they say, so you might as well be bad. Do what you like; be free. But these very teachers who offer this freedom from law are themselves slaves to sin and destruction. For a man is a slave to whatever controls him.” **-2 Peter 2:19 (TLB)**

- “You cannot have identity without individuality. False teaching says we lose our personality; we never do. Jesus Christ emancipates personality **absolutely free from my right to myself**, free from identity with any other personality...”.-Chambers, Oswald
- James teaches, “But the one who **looks intently** into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer who works—this person will be blessed in what he does.”-**James 1:25**
- As a person looks carefully into Who God is in His revealed Word the character of God is embraced through His grace, His compassion, His mercy, and His love bringing about a freedom and a transformation of the heart (our true self) as that person looks to Jesus (2 Cor. 3:17-18).

Faith Is The Conviction

- The word in for “**conviction**” in the original text is “*eleghos*” which means a “**a proof by which something is proved or tested**”. Some versions have “evidence” here.
- Faith is the proof or conviction of things that are not seen.
- Do we believe what God has spoken? He has given to us exceeding great a precious promises (1 Pet. 1:4). If we do, then faith is the **foundation** of all we hope for and the **proof** [conviction] of what we heard but do not see.
- Every believer doubts at times but in order for faith to be effective an individual believer needs to draw a line in the sand and say, “I will not be moved, I believe in the promises of God!”

Righteousness Revealed

- Here in verse 17, Paul says that **righteousness of God is revealed**; in verse 18, Paul contrasts God's righteousness with the **wrath of God** which is revealed as well.
- Paul has stated so far, that the **gospel** is the **power of God**; here Paul seems to say that the gospel also **reveals the righteousness of God**.
- The **gospel** reveals not only God's **righteousness** but also the way in which a believer becomes righteous through Faith.
- Our righteousness begins with God and ends with God and in order for man to receive that righteous it begins and ends with faith.

- Paul does not say from faith for works, or from works to faith, but faith for faith; it is by faith alone plus nothing.
- “The righteousness which is unto justification is one characterized by the perfection belonging to all that God is and does. It is a ‘God-righteousness’.”-Murray, John
- It is God’s plan of redemption for man through the work of Jesus upon the cross for salvation and righteousness.
- In rejecting the gospel both moral and immoral people try to become their own savior rebelling against the plan of God incurring His wrath.

Study Notes:

<https://apologian.org>

A Sacred Journey:

Growing in Grace and

Knowledge

Romans 1:18

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.”

The Wrath of God

- Wrath is the holy revulsion of God's being against that which is the **contradiction** of his holiness."-Murray, John
- "Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the **wrath of God** comes upon the **sons of disobedience**."- **Ephesians 5:6**
- "Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the **wrath of God** is coming. In these you too once **walked**, when you were **living** in them."-**Colossians 3:5-7**
- Here in these two passages above the sons of disobedience are living a life of sin which is in direct contradiction of God's being resulting in His wrath upon them.

- "Anyone who **believes** in him is **not** condemned, but anyone who **does not believe** is **already** condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the one and only Son of God."-**John 3:18**
- The one who **believes** in the Son has eternal life, but the one who **rejects** the Son will not see life; instead, the **wrath of God** remains on him.-**John 3:36**
- The wrath of God can not be for the believer who has a genuine faith in the work of Jesus upon the cross since the believer has been justified in Him.

- “Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him **from** the wrath of God.”-**Romans 5:9**
- “For God has **not destined** us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ”- **1 Thessalonians 5:9**
- “Jesus Christ came right straight down into the very depths of wrath. He clothed Himself with the humanity of the race that had fallen and could not lift itself, and in His own Person He annihilated the wrath until there is ‘no condemnation,’ no touch of the wrath of God, on those who are ‘in Christ Jesus’.-Chambers, Oswald

Punished in Jesus

- When Jesus went to the Cross He bore all of the punishment of God’s wrath upon Himself that should have been reserved for each one of us.
- The wrath of God and God’s love were harmonized through the Cross: God acts in love to save man and in wrath He punished Himself in the work of His Son at the Cross.
- “For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died”-2 Corinthians 5:14
- John Owen stated, “Christ is the head, those represented by Him the members; and when the head is punished, the members are also punished”.
- Owen demonstrates how God’s love and wrath are both in perfect harmony. The sin’s of believers are not left unpunished. Our sins are punished in Christ, who as Owen explains, are so united to the Head that we have been punished as well.

Revealed

- Notice that Paul doesn't say the wrath God **will be** revealed but rather the wrath **is being** revealed.
- The wrath of God is happening all around us everyday in at least three ways:
 1. **Death**: Death is a direct result of sin and there are numerous cemeteries with head-stones reminding us about that everyday.

- “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?” The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the **victory** through our Lord Jesus Christ.”-**1 Corinthians 15:55-56**
- Death is not the wrath of God for believers but victorious entrance into the presence of God.
- Death is the great equalizer for man. All men die but not all men have the hope of eternal life.

2. Trials, suffering, and futility in adversity: People are always seeking answers within themselves for the reason man has adversity.

- For the Believer, trials produce character, discipline produces sanctification, and futility causes a deeper search for God all of which give meaning and purpose for adversity. Seeking answers within ourselves or through faulty reasoning like Job's friends brings God's wrath.
- "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for **good**, for those who are called according to his purpose." -**Romans 8:28**

3. Futility in thinking: After the fall man started to think and reason outside of God's design creating false ideas about reality resulting in the suppression of the truth which brings the wrath of God.

- For the believer we have the mind of Christ and we are being changed by the renewal of our minds as we read His Word.
- "Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away...Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but **the Spirit** who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God...For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him? But we have the **mind of Christ.**" -**1 Corinthians 2:6,12,16**

Strange Work

- “God has no pleasure in the destruction or calamity of persons or people...He had rather they turn...He is **well-pleased** if they forsake their evil ways, that he may not have occasion to execute his wrath upon them. He is a God that **delights** in mercy, and judgment is a **strange** work”-Edwards, Jonathan
- “but, though he cause grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love; for **he does not afflict from his heart**....”-Lamentations 3:32-33a
- “My heart **recoils** within me; my **compassion** grows warm and tender.”-Hosea 11:8

- “For the LORD will rise up as he did at Mount Perazim. He will rise in **wrath**, as at the Valley of Gibeon, to do his work, his **unexpected** work, and to perform his task, his **unfamiliar** task.”-Isaiah 28:21
- “Left to our own natural intuitions about God, we will conclude that mercy is his strange work and judgment his natural work. Rewriting our vision of God as we study the Scripture, we see, helped by the great teachers of the past, that judgment is his strange work and mercy his natural.”-Ortlund, Dane
- for **he does not afflict from his heart**.

Direction of Wrath

- The wrath of God is directed against the **ungodliness** and the **unrighteousness** of men.
- **Ungodliness** refers to man's mutiny against God. It is a destruction of a relationship with God as we substitute our own ideas and religion for God. It also refers to a denial of His character and essence as revealed to man through His Word.
- **Unrighteousness** refers to the breaking down of the basic rule of God and His ways. Instead of loving our neighbor we are hating him and treating him with disrespect.
- Ungodliness and Unrighteousness are breaking what Jesus said was the Greatest Commandment,
- "And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."-**Mark 12:30-31**

Suppression of Truth

- It is not that people do not know the truth but they know the truth and **suppress** it down.
- " And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people **loved** the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil."-**John 3:19**
- There is a critical dilemma at the root of people's rejection of Jesus. People love to sin and don't want to admit that they sin and submit to God.
- Whenever the truth makes a person uneasy, they hold it down, they argue against it, or they deny its reality all together.
- "They chose to walk in the darkness, that they might do the works of darkness, they broke the Divine law, refused the mercy offered to them, are arrested by Divine justice, convicted, condemned, and punished. Whence, then, does their damnation proceed? **From themselves.**"-**Clarke, Adam**

Romans 1:19-23

“For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.”

God is Known

- God can be discovered and **known because** God has revealed the **truth** to mankind.
- Mankind knows the truth about God because God Himself **has shown** it to them.
- The word that Paul uses in verse 19, is ***ginoskos*** which means **to get to know through learning or experience**.
- We are able to learn about God through **the things that have been made**.

Creation is Revelation

- God has revealed the truth about Himself, therefore, man can know about God and His character by looking and learning about creation.
- In verse 20, we are told how long the revelation has been in existence, **ever since the creation of the world**.
- God created man and since the very beginning the Creator has made Himself known through the things that have been made. Man is therefore **without excuse**.
- “Being then God’s offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the **art** and **imagination** of man.”-**Acts 17:29**

Thankless Man

- Mankind knowingly rebelled against God and His revelation which at a downward trend resulted in them not giving God the **honor** nor giving Him the **thanks** owed to Him for Creation.
- Man removed God from His rightful place as Creator and in practice became ungrateful to Him for the things that He has done.
- This passage tells us that God takes gratefulness and ungratefulness seriously.
- Ungratefulness toward God is a direct result of an individual or society rejecting God.

- Whenever we give our devotion to any created thing a problem occurs through this misplaced devotion; the problem is that we have exchanged the giving of **thanks** and glory to the immortal Creator God for the giving of **thanks** to creation itself.
- “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.”-**James 1:17**
- “The first expression emphasizes the goodness of receiving something from God, while the second, the perfect quality of whatever God gives. God's giving is continuously good, and His gifts are always perfect.”-The Nelson Study
- “What shall I render to the LORD for all his benefits to me?...the sacrifice of thanksgiving...”-**Psalm 116:12,17a**

- One of the reasons that the Bible takes such a strong stance against man's ingratitude is that it may be that God knows that a possible outcome of such arrogance is a **darkened** and **foolish** mind.
- “But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit was hardened so that he dealt proudly, he was brought down from his kingly throne, and his glory was taken from him. He was driven from among the children of mankind, and his **mind** was made like that of a beast...”-**Daniel 5:20-21a**
- “For the **mind** that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot.”-**Romans 8:7**

Intellectual Futility

- Man **suppresses the truth** and then falls into intellectual futility.
- What has been known about God since creation can be known and is **plain to them** and is **clearly perceived**.
- “I can see how it might be possible for a man to look down upon the earth and be an atheist, but I cannot conceive how he could look up into heaven and say there is no God”-Abraham Lincoln
- God’s Word is an expression of His **divine nature**. Creation is the expression of His **eternal power** and came into being by the Word of God and it will be by the Word of God that this present creation will be judged in the end.

- The heavens were made by the word of the LORD, and all the stars, by the breath of his mouth...For he spoke, and it came into being; he commanded, and it came into existence."-**Psalm 33:6,9**
- "It is neither necessary nor wise to explain away any portion of God's Word. Neither is it safe: for there are many things in heaven and earth which have never entered into man's imagination; and it is childish and absurd to measure and judge of everything by our own limited experience. Things are not unreal, unlikely, or impossible merely because we have never seen them. It is both wiser and safer to believe God."- Bullinger, E.W.

Earth Is A Rare Commodity

- When you take into account all that is necessary to sustain life on this planet. Water supply, oxygen level, warmth of climate, surface gravity, magnetic field, etc. There is approximately 33, needed items for life as we know it. The probability of all 33, occurrences happening on any one planet is 10 to the 42 power. The total number of possible planets in the universe is 10 to the 22 power.
- Laws of probability by Peter Stoner

- 10^{50} Is considered an absurdity, beyond comprehension.
- Total composite probability of 10^{17} .
- This number would cover the entire state of Texas with silver dollars two feet deep. You blindfold a man and tell him he can go any one direction but he must find the correct silver dollar that has been painted red.
- Total composite probability of 10^{45} .
- Make a ball of silver dollars, the radius would be 30 times greater than the distance of earth from the sun and that equals 91,856,060 miles.
- The odds of probability of what is necessary to sustain life on earth again is 10 to the 42 power.

- **48 Fulfilled Prophecies about Jesus Total Probability = 10^{157}**
- Perspective: The silver dollar is to big, we need something smaller. The electron is the smallest object we know, and can see. It takes 2.5 times 10^{15} of them laid side by side to make a line, single file, one inch long. If we are going to count the electrons in this one inch line and counted 250 a minute, and if we counted day and night, it would take us 19,000,000 years to count just a one inch line of electrons. If we made a cubic inch of electrons and attempted to count them it would take 19,000,000 times 19,000,000 times 19,000,000 years or 6.9×10^{21} years, and we would still be way short of 10^{157} .
- This is only 48 prophecies and there are well over 300 prophecies fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Deep Sea Flowers



“O LORD, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all. **The earth is full of Your possessions...** May the glory of the LORD endure forever; **May the LORD rejoice in His works.**” -Psalm 104:24,31

Foolish Hearts

- Intellectual futility has its ultimate regression into **darkness** of being.
- Having a correct understanding and interpretation of the Bible influences how we view history.
- If a believer does not have a correct understanding of Biblical history then when he watches television or sees a movie about ancient history from a secular viewpoint he may begin to believe that the secular account is true.

- The believer may begin to see Biblical history in the context of that secular viewpoint and over time this could begin to have a devastating effect.
- A struggle may begin to take place in his mind as he tries to reconcile what the Bible claims verses what secular history claims.
- The abandonment of a Biblical Worldview and the God of the Bible will result in something or someone to replace Him. As G. K. Chesterton observed, “**When men choose not to believe in God, they do not thereafter believe in nothing, they then become capable of believing in anything.**”
- It is not possible to remain neutral with this issue we either **worship** the Creator or we **worship** something in creation.

False Security

- It gives a person a false sense of security to “**claim to be wise**” as so many scholars do throughout the world.
- However, they became fools and **worshipped what they a created** exchanging the glory of God for **images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.**
- “Will you kindly notice, that, according to my text, **knowledge is of no use if it does not lead to holy practice**? ‘They knew God.’ It was no good to them to know God, for ‘they glorified him not as God.’ So my theological friend over there, who knows so much that he can split hairs over doctrines, it does not matter what you think, or what you know, unless it leads you to **glorify God**, and to **be thankful.**” –Spurgeon, Charles

Romans 1:24-25

“Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.”

Man's Tragic Demise

- Man makes a tragic error when he reasons that it is God's love, mercy, and kindness that **permits** him to continue in sin.
- It is actually God's righteous wrath that allows man to go on destroying himself with sin. **God's wrath gives man what they want not what they need.**
- "God's wrath mentioned in Romans 1 is not an active outpouring of divine displeasure but the **removal of restraint** that allows sinners to reap the just fruits of their rebellion." -Mounce, William
- The reason that God **gives them up** is because they **exchanged the truth about God for a lie.** The lie is idolatry whatever it may be.
- The tragedy of every human is that we strive for and fail to reach fulfillment in the things of this world when all we need to do is turn and worship the Creator which will bring ultimate fulfillment to our lives

- “The worst thing that God can do to human beings in the present is to let them reach their idolatrous goals.”-Keller, Timothy
- Our culture puts a pointed emphasis on achievement and goals. God and His word become for us an instrument for our success.
- People who become successful in business, school, or sports, begin to get their identity with being successful. They get awards and promotions which serve to validate what they believe to be a blessing from God.
- God becomes a “sort of a name that’s been assigned to that particular kind of function for me, to make the most of my life.”- Bellah, Robert
- God’s wrath is to **give them up in the lust of their hearts**. God’s kindness is intended for repentance (Rom.2:4).

Romans 1:26-27

“For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.”

Lusts of the Heart

- Paul categorizes the rest of this section of sinful man under the heading: **lusts of their hearts**.
- Paul wrote to a culture where homosexuality was accepted as a part of life for both men and women. Most Roman men were considered culturally insignificant if they did not have multiple partners of both sexes.
- Homosexuality is a perversion because it uses sex for a purpose contrary to those for which God created and intended it (Gen. 1:28; 2:24).
- In order for homosexuality to be culturally accepted people will have to suppress the truth of God and exchange it for a lie then in the end pervert the truth i.e., “it’s all about love and I was born this way.”

- "Contemporary homosexuals insist that these verses mean that it is perverse for a heterosexual male or female to engage in homosexual relations but it is not perverse for a homosexual male or female to do so since homosexuality is such a person's natural preference. This is strained exegesis unsupported by the Bible. The only natural sexual relationship the Bible recognizes is a heterosexual one (Gen. 2:21-24; Matt. 19:4-6) within marriage."-Witmer
- Paul is absolutely clear that homosexuality is **shameless acts** of perversion towards God's designed order for sex but this is only the beginning of his list of sins, others will strike us closer to home.
- We can never focus on the one Big Sin meanwhile accepting others like gossiping, envy, and pride.

- Paul speaks of these people as receiving the **due penalty for their error**.
- This speaks about the self-destructive nature of sin in **particular** and in **general**.
- “A man cannot be delivered up to a greater slavery than to be given up to his own lusts.”-Henry, Mathew
- “But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his **own** desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.”-**James 1:14-15**

- All sin has its own **penalty** and all sin has its **power** destroyed through the Gospel.
- “Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”-John 8:34-36
- Trusting in the living Word brings freedom meanwhile contradiction of the living Word brings God’s wrath ending in bondage.
- What all sinful people need do everyday is to **turn** to Jesus and **live** in obedience to the truth of the **Gospel** that is the only way to freedom.
- We are called to walk in a manner worthy of the gospel which is to **love** people as I **love** myself and **accept** people as Jesus **accepted** me meanwhile **disapproving** of any destructive sinful practice in our own life and the life of others.

- “I remember Christian teachers telling me long ago that I must hate a bad man's actions but not hate the bad man: or, as they would say, hate the sin but not the sinner.I used to think this a silly, straw-splitting distinction: how could you hate what a man did and not hate the man? But years later it occurred to me that there was one man to whom I had been doing this all my life -- namely myself. However much I might dislike my own cowardice or conceit or greed, I went on loving myself. There had never been the slightest difficulty about it. In fact **the very reason why I hated the things was that I loved the man.** Just because I loved myself, I was sorry to find that I was the sort of man who did those things.”-Lewis, C.S.

Romans 1:28-32

“And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness.

They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them."

A Depraved Mind

- A debased mind is the direct result of **suppressing** the truth and **believing** a lie invented to replace God.
- "A mind which is reprobate, worthless, useless, is unable to fulfill its natural functions as designed by God; it confuses right and wrong, failing to distinguish what is pleasing to Him from what is displeasing." -Vine, W.E.
- "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight! Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine, and valiant men in mixing strong drink, who acquit the guilty for a bribe, and deprive the innocent of his right!"-**Isaiah 5:20-23**

- “Their works are works of iniquity, and deeds of violence are in their hands. Their feet run to evil, and they are swift to shed innocent blood; their **thoughts** are **thoughts** of iniquity; desolation and destruction are in their highways... “transgressing, and denying the LORD, and turning back from following our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart lying words. Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands far away; for **truth** has stumbled in the public squares, and uprightness cannot enter. **Truth** is lacking, and **he who departs from evil makes himself a prey.**”-Isaiah 59: 6b-7,13b-15
- Our culture which worships individual self actualization and achievement also has accepted two lies. The first is that if you disagree with another individual or their lifestyle you have literally attacked their individuality and must fear or hate them.
- The second lie is that in order to love someone you are obligated to agree with them in everything they believe or do otherwise you must fear or hate their claim to individuality.

List of Unrighteous Behaviors

- Notice in this list of unrighteous actions that there are socially **acceptable sins** right along with socially **unacceptable sins**.
- **Evil:** “The evil man is the man who robs both man and God of their rights. He has so erected an altar to himself in the center of things that he worships himself to the exclusion of God and man.”-Barclay, William
- **Covetousness:** A deep desire for more without satisfaction or law. At the heart of every sin is covetousness.

- **Malice:** A deliberate will to do harm physically, spiritually, or emotionally.
- **Envy:** “It looks at a fine person, and is not so much moved to aspire to that fineness, as to resent it. It is the most warped and twisted of human emotions.”- Barclay, William
- **Murder:** Jesus said murder can be done in the heart through anger and contempt towards another.
- **Strife:** The desire for prestige, success, and a place of prominence.

- **Deceit:** A person with a twisted mind who uses craftiness and cunning to get what he wants. A Con-man.
- **Gossips and Slanderers:** A whisperer is a person who goes around telling stories about another whether it be true or not. False stories are slander against another.
- **Haters of God:** A person who shakes their fist in the face of God. They argue against Him with others.
- **Insolent:** “It describes the spirit of the man who is so proud that he defies God. It is the insolent pride that goes before a fall. It is the forgetting that man is a creature. It is the spirit of the man who is so confident in his wealth, his power and his strength that he thinks that he can live life alone.”-Barclay, William

- **Haughty:** Contempt for everyone except oneself. Pride that God resists (James 4:6;1 Peter 5:5; Proverbs 3:34).
- **Boastful:** It describes a person who makes himself out to be bigger than he is in order to impress others.
- **Inventors of Evil:** It describes a person who has become bored with sin and invents ways to bring the thrill back into the original sin.
- **Disobedient to parents:** A breakdown in the family unit ultimately will be a breakdown of society as a whole.

- **Foolish:** A person who cannot learn the lesson from experience.
- **Faithless:** The word literally means “a breaker of agreements”.
- **Heartless:** The natural bonds of human affection and love have become callous to human life and dignity. “We kill a mad dog; we slaughter a fierce ox; we plunge the knife into sickly cattle lest they taint the herd; children who are born weakly and deformed we drown.”-Seneca, Roman Philosopher
- **Ruthless:** A person who has not pity or mercy towards others.

The Practice of Approval

- The lowest point in a depraved culture is when people openly and proudly sin and **approve** and encourage others to join them.
- The people that practice these things **deserve to die** and so do we if we have not accepted Jesus and His work upon the Cross.
- The wrath of God remains only on those who do not believe in His Son.
- If we have a tendency to feel self righteous after reading this list of sins then hold on because Chapter 2 remind us that we **practice the very same things**.