

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Turn your bibles with me to the book of Romans 1

We are continuing our verse by verse study through this very deep theological letter that the Apostle wrote to the believers in Rome and us today – about the gospel of grace.

And one of the things that the Holy Spirit inspired Paul – as he wrote the letter is to make sure that in order to understand the gospel of grace – we truly have to understand the seriousness of our sin.

Because if we truly don't recognize that there is a problem – then we will never understand the need for God's solution.

Just like there is today – back in those days, when someone shared the gospel to a nonbeliever – there were always people who would say, “Well, I am already a good person – why do I need to put my faith and trust in Jesus”

And Paul's counter to those individuals is that they truly don't understand God's righteousness and holiness and how much He hates sin – His wrath.

And we began to look at God's wrath last week

And I mentioned that it was going to come as a shock for some of us because this is one of the sections of scripture that is really glanced over or even skipped over by many churches today because it isn't pretty or inclusive or politically correct.

But church

As believers, we are never called to be politically correct

We are called to be biblically correct.

And the scriptures clearly tell us that man apart from God – leads to depravity.

[Jhn 3:19 NKJV] 19 "And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

Why does the world reject Jesus Christ

Not because they are incapable to understand – they reject Jesus Christ because they chose not to accept Him because they would rather love wickedness – they don't want to let go of their sin.

And so what Paul is going to demonstrate to us this morning is the level of depravity that man is capable of – living a life apart from God.

Let's pray...

Read Text (vs 24-32)

Now before we dissect the text – I want to provide an alternate reading -

Therefore, because they honor God, He bestows on them self-control & purity. Since they consider their bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit they cherish the truth of God & worshipped & served Him as the Creator, blessed forever.

For this reason, God rewards them with pure & wholesome lives, lives with carefree ease even in their most intimate relations so that all receive in themselves the reward of their fidelity. Because they acknowledge God in all things,

He rewards them with a clear & sound mind. And because their thoughts are sound, they always do the thing so that life works. Being filled with righteousness, goodness, generosity, kindness, selflessness, life, health, honesty & kindness—they're gentle in speech, always building each other up, lovers of God, respectful, humble, selfless, inventors of good & helpful things, obedient to parents, understanding, trustworthy, loving & merciful.

Since they know & do the will of God, they possess an unsurpassed quality of life that they refuse to hoard to themselves, but in love & concern for the welfare of others they give hearty approval & honor to those who likewise live virtuously.

Question –

Which of the readings more accurately reflects our culture today?

What Paul wrote at the end of Romans or this alternate reading –

What Paul wrote at the end of Romans 1 – is a description of a culture who has rejected the complete revelation of God – those who strip away God of His attributes that don't agree with their lifestyle (there is no wrath of God, righteousness, holiness, justice – there is only love) and we see the depravity that is the result of it as God's wrath is unleashed.

Remember what I said last week – God's wrath is Him simply honoring our decisions to live a life apart from Him. So He let's us pursue our own desires.

That's what these verses describe.

Here's the problem – Life doesn't work without God!

He created us in His image so that we could enjoy an eternal love relationship with Him.

The essence of life is knowing, loving, & serving God.

That's where all our peace, purpose, & power is.

The alternate reading is a description of a culture who has embraced the complete revelation of who God is.

The result is – not depravity or wrath – but reward

So the major point that we are going to see in our text this morning is that when sinners willfully abandon God—God will abandon them.

Let's look back at verse 24 -

[Rom 1:24-32 NKJV] 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.

In our study last Sunday –

I had you make a note of the phrase “gave them”

We see this phrase here in verse 24,26 and 28

God gave them

The word that is used here in the Greek is a word that means to be deliver up one to custody to be judged, condemned, punished, scourged, tormented, put to death.

In the gospel – we find this same word used of Jesus Christ giving Himself up to death.

But the word is also used in the New Testament in the judicial sense of a person being committed to prison or to judgment—which is how Paul uses it here in Romans 1.

In other words, God gave them up to punishment, to imprisonment, and to painful circumstances (the painful consequences of their sinful deeds).

The punishment is that God gave them up!

(God's wrath)

God gave them up over to their own sinful desires and actions which brought consequences into their lives that God wanted to spare them from—

Now, it is very important for us to understand the following –

The text says – that God gave them up – it doesn't mean that God gave up on them.

God will let them indulge their flesh so that the consequences of their actions will hopefully bring them to their senses where they will repent and come to God.

So the first thing that God does is gives people up to depraved sensuality –

The result of rejecting God is a life dominated by the body's demands.

And people try to fill it with drugs, alcohol, sex –

And because these things can't fulfill the bodies demands – they go to further extremes.

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.

So we see a progression –

In verse 24 – depraved sensuality

Here in verse 26 – depraved sexuality

And one way that this is manifested – is through homosexuality

Sexual perversion

Church, don't lose sight of the context

Suppression of the truth leads to distortion of the truth leads to shameful longings.

Now we understand why this portion of scripture is not taught in many churches.

So the question that everyone asks is why does Paul – in describing the depravity of human behavior, focus and describe homosexuality.

And here is the answer – because it is so obviously wrong.

God created men & women as sexual creatures.

There's a proper & holy way for the expression of our sexuality; within the boundaries of marriage.

But when people reject God, all of life spins out of control, including sexuality.

What Paul refers to here are people who've rejected God so long and they have hardened their hearts, He's turned them over to the sexual depravity they long for.

Their view of things has become so distorted there's been a complete reversal in their view of themselves.

You see, if the only true way to know one's self is to know God, as the Bible says, Then rejecting God will ultimately result in the complete loss of one's own self-understanding.

But here is the good news church

Homosexual behavior is a sin

Why is that good news?

Because it can be forgiven

That individual can turn from it – he or she can embrace Christ

You see, there is hope

There is a remedy

The bible makes it absolutely clear that homosexual behavior can be abandoned, forsaken, forgiven and cleansed.

Turn with me to 1 Cor 6

Remember, I told you a few weeks ago that Paul writes this letter while he was in Corinth.

[1Co 6:9-11 NKJV] 9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor

adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

You see – Paul points out this specific sin – because he was surrounded by individuals practicing homosexual behavior.

Corinth was the San Francisco of that time.

Homosexuality was celebrated as normal in Corinth – much in the same way it was accepted and celebrated in Rome.

And by the grace of God, the gospel was shared to them and many actually responded.

I had you make a note that Paul clearly says in his letter to Corinth – “And such were some of you”

There were believers in the early church that partook in homosexual behavior before putting their faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

You see church – we look at our society today and we are shocked at what has occurred within the last 20 years.

But church – there is nothing new under the sun.

What is happening today is the same thing that has happened throughout history.

As society drifts away from God – God gives them up to their desires and we see the collapse of the society.

When you study Roman History – 14 of the last 15 Roman emperors openly embraced and partook of homosexual behavior and consider it normal.

But on the contrary, Paul's point is that to consider it normal is a sign God has given a society over to sexual depravity.

I had you make a note of the last portion of verse 27

receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

The idea here is that seeking fulfillment and expecting a blessed outcome for their practice of homosexuality they received exactly the opposite – they received judgment as God let them reap the penalty for exchanging what was natural for what was perverted.

I want to pause here –

Do you know what the most disturbing thing about this chapter?

That Paul doesn't simply stop at verse 27 – as he speaks of homosexual behavior.

He is going to continue

He is going to talk about my sin –

He is going to talk about your sin

Paul is going to put our sins – the ones that are not clearly visible to the human eyes (the ones that are not clearly obvious – like homosexuality) and place them next to those are visible.

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;

Here we see now God gives them over to a depraved mentality.

I had you make a note of the word knowledge

The word that is used here for knowledge is a word that means complete knowledge or full knowledge

This is the individual who recognizes and realizes that God exists – they recognize in their head that God is who He says He is – and they turn around and say, “Who needs God?”

For the person who says –

I don't recognize the God of the bible

I don't approve the God of the bible

I don't acknowledge the God of the bible

That is not the God I believe in, that's not the God I care about

That is not the God who I think is right and just

And they say this because they want to justify the wickedness of their circumstances.

God gives them over to a depraved mind

Understand that a 'depraved mind' is a mind that can no longer think and reason as God designed it to be able to do—it can't form right judgments because it is so skewed and warped by sin.

It means that the individual is so debilitated, so corrupted that they no longer are capable of making a simple moral decision.

And beginning in verse 29 – Paul outlines the content of a depraved mind.

By the way – when we think of someone with a depraved mind – we think of individuals that we here about in the news who did something unspeakable –

But look at how Paul describes it...

He gives us 23 common vices that existed in the time that Paul wrote this letter and have existed in every generation – even today.

I want to touch briefly on some of these -

29 being filled with all unrighteousness,

This includes every immoral act – it is all encompassing

Including those that are done in the heart.

sexual immorality,

This includes every kind of sexual sin that is done outside of marriage.

wickedness,

This speaks of something that we don't only think about doing – but we act it out.

It is a wickedness that is an invitation to hurt others.

covetousness,

This is a lust for more and more – it is a love of possessing stuff.

But here is the catch – the reason that we covet is because we would rather collect stuff than retain the knowledge of God

It is choosing to collect stuff over having a relationship with God or having to think about God.

maliciousness;

This is ill-will

This is spite

This is the individual that holds a grudge against everyone.

The individual who thinks the worst about everyone

full of envy,

murder,

strife,

This isn't simply arguing or having a difference of opinion – this is fighting in order to have what other people have.

deceit,

evil-mindedness;

This is the individual who is always bitter towards everyone

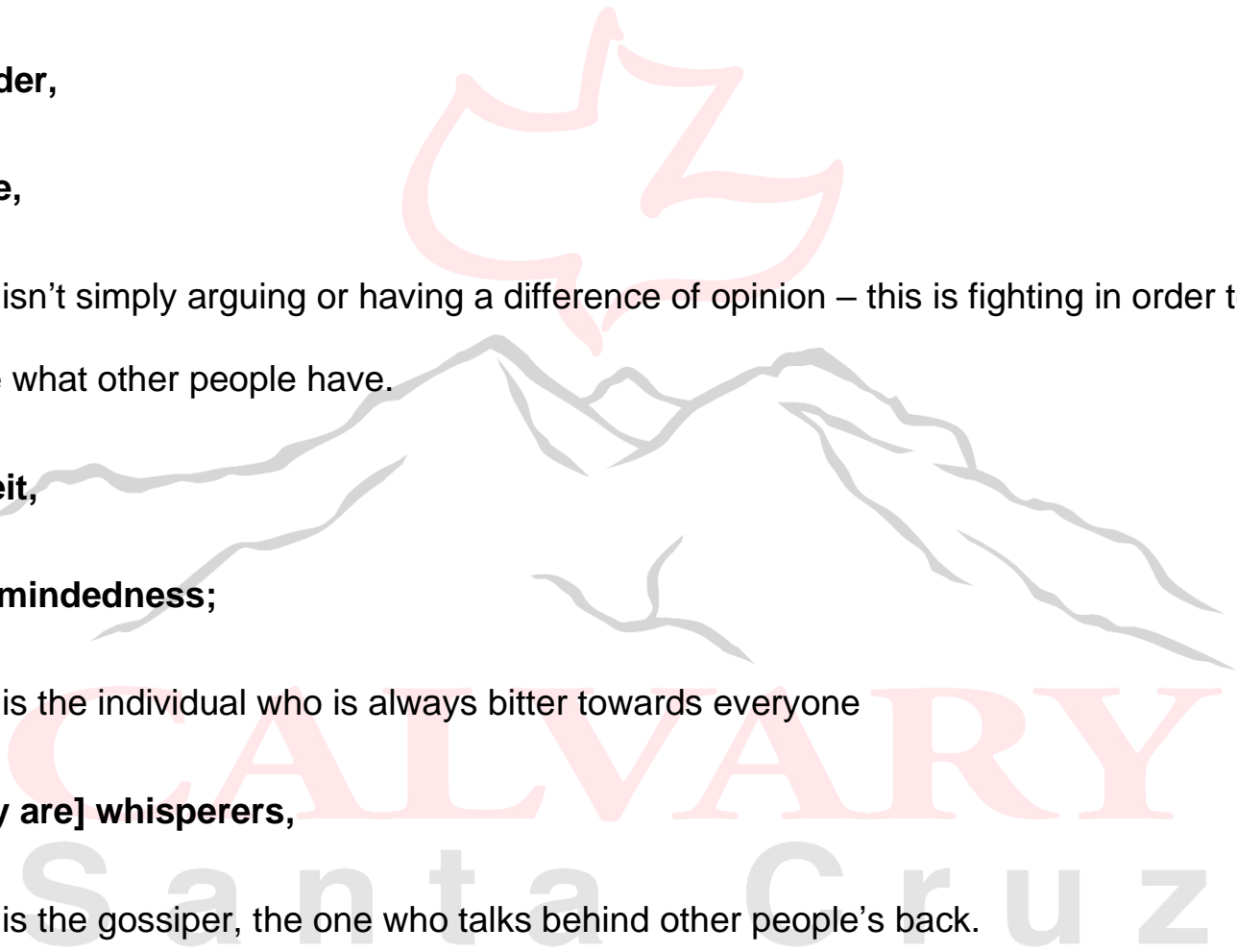
[they are] whisperers,

This is the gossip, the one who talks behind other people's back.

This is the slanderer

Nobody questions whether murder is bad –

But we don't stop to think that slander is murdering someone's reputation.



30 backbiters,

This is different than the gossipier who does it behind your back – this is the person who is willing to talk bad about you right in front of you.

haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful;

This is the sick legacy of a world that has rejected God and His righteous standards—

[Gal 6:7-8 NKJV] 7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

Paul reminds us that people who don't want to recognize God –

Those who want to ignore God

Those who love darkness rather than light – will.

And the truth is that sometimes people will do exactly what they want to do.

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.

Here is Paul's final charge against mankind.

And that is man's total defiance of God.

They know God and they know that they deserve judgment.

Yet they persist in their sin after knowing that they are deserving of judgment.

They are proud of their sin

And here is the thing – they applaud it on others.

They take pleasure in disobeying God.

Paul – later on is going to tell us in Rom 6:23

For the wages of sin is death

And therefore, man's only way out is to not follow in the pathway of perversity.

Turn with me to 2 Cor 6

[2Co 6:16-18 NKJV] 16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols?

For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them

And walk among [them]. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." 17

Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not

touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." 18 "I will be a Father to you, And

you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty."

[2Co 7:1 NKJV] 1 Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

We have a choice –

We can chose to suppress the revelation of God / we can chose to take away some of His attributes because they contradict our lifestyle or we can chose to honor Him and revere Him and recognize that apart from Him – we are capable of doing some very wicked things.

Not only things that will hurt us – but also hurt those around us.

Because that is what sin does.

It destroys lives, it destroys our marriages and families.

Paul finds it necessary to make an argument that everyone needs to be saved.

Jew and Gentile

Homosexual and heterosexual

All people – everywhere.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

The good news –

God has provided the righteousness we need in Jesus Christ

And, this gift of righteousness is not given to those who try really hard, but rather to those who trust in Christ.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'

