

Romans 1:18-32

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Date: 30 September 2018

[0 : 00] Or take your Bibles from me to the book of Romans, Romans chapter 1. Romans chapter 1, this morning we're going to be verses 18 through 32, so we will finish the first chapter.

Romans chapter 1, starting at verse 18, reading to the end of the chapter, which gets us to verse 32. Last couple of weeks I've had the privilege, along with my wife, of kind of facilitating, I don't want to say leading, the new Sunday school class, the new young adult Sunday school class, which we started for those who are out of high school, their college and career, however you want to title it, those who just didn't have a place to fit in prior.

And I want to say it's been a privilege. It has been a privilege. If you fall into that age group and you'd love to join us, we want to encourage you. It's always great to partner with my wife to do things like that again, but it's also just amazing to see the way of discussion.

I mean, this morning we got into discussion of tough questions you're asked about the faith. You know, why? I was just there answering questions and we were talking about it. If God exists, why is pain still existent in the world? Why are those things happening?

It's great to figure those things out with one another. Iron sharpening iron. So I want to thank that class for the encouragement they've been to me, but I also invite you to that. You have your Bibles, you'll turn with me to the book of Romans, Romans chapter 1, starting at verse 18.

[1 : 26] I want to invite you, if you're physically able and desire to do so, to stand together with me as we read the word of God. We see what Paul has to say to the church at Rome as he really begins to get into the meat of the scripture.

Romans 1, starting in verse 18, says this. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.

Because that which is known about God is evident within them, for God made it evident to them.

For 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. For 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. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and 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.

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

[2 : 52] For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions, for their women exchanged the natural function of that which is unnatural, or for that which is unnatural. And in the same way, also the men abandoned their 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.

And 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. Being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil, full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice, they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful, and 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.

Let's pray. Lord God, we thank you so much for this day. God, we thank you for the opportunity we have had to come together and worship. Lord, we thank you for the songs which we have sung, Lord, the songs which we have heard.

But God, we are also most thankful that we have an opportunity to freely open up your word and to hear what it has to say to us. I pray, oh God, that it would speak clearly to our hearts, to our minds. Lord, that every distraction, every hindrance will be pushed aside, that it would be you and you alone who has the freedom to speak in this room to each one of us, and we give you the praise in advance for it.

We ask it all in the sweet name of Jesus. Amen. You may be seated. Quite a weighty and difficult passage, if I must say so. Romans is the foundation of our doctrine of faith.

[4 : 36] In the book of Romans, we find, as we have spoke about the last couple of weeks, the foundation of every doctrine which we claim to believe as believers in Jesus Christ.

It is this book, and primarily this book throughout history, that the church has used to lay out their doctrinal beliefs, what they claim to believe about God, what they claim to accept about the teachings of God.

And it is a great book of great truth, but also a book of great weight. It comes to you and hits you very hard before it offers you the sweetness of salvation through Jesus Christ.

In the book of Romans, Romans chapter 1, verses 1 through 17 serve as an introduction. It is in these 17 verses that Paul introduces himself to the church at Rome, which he had never personally met.

People who did not know him by faith had only heard of him through hearsay, a church which he had no part in beginning, and a church in which Peter, or no one else for that matter, which we are, that we know of, had any part in starting that Paul longed to go to.

[5 : 41] So he introduced himself as a fellow believer, a fellow heir of the grace of God through Jesus Christ. And then in verses 16 and 17, he speaks about the power of the gospel.

For in the gospel, the power of God is revealed, the righteousness of God is offered to all men, whoever accept it by faith. In Romans 1, verse 18, we begin to make a transition.

You have to kind of understand how Paul lays out this book. We do this to kind of lay it out for our understanding. It would be real easy to read Romans 1, 18 through 32, and to use this section of verses to beat one another up with, if we take it out of context and we don't take it as it sits.

Paul writes the book of Romans for the very purpose of encouraging people to believe in Jesus Christ. He is writing for the purpose that men and women would put their faith in Jesus Christ, and in so putting their faith, see the righteousness of God given to them as a free gift.

In the first eight chapters of the book of Romans, chapters 1 through 8 really lay out for us the problem of man and how man can be saved and why man needs to be saved.

[6 : 55] Just as we spoke about this morning in the young adult class, until man sees pain and until man sees his desperate need for salvation, he will not reach out to a Savior.

Man will not seek a Savior until he knows that he is lost. Because the one who thinks that he is on the right path is content to stay on that path and not look for any help outside of himself.

Well, we cannot read Romans 1 through 8 and look at that truthfully and think, well, we're doing okay. We don't need a Savior. Paul shows us in eight chapters we are not okay and we desperately need a Savior and that Savior is Jesus Christ.

Then chapters 9, 10, and 11 deal with the nation of Israel, that God has not forgotten the nation of Israel. And chapters 12 through 16 deal with how we live out this salvation on a daily basis.

So we are opening the door here in this very difficult passage in the 18th verse. Paul has said, hey, how are you guys doing? My name is Paul. I'm a fellow believer in Jesus Christ just like you are.

[7 : 58] Man, I love the gospel. Don't you love the gospel? Because by faith we can accept the gospel. And by faith and faith alone, the righteousness of God is given to us. And he says, oh, how you doings and everything like that.

And then he opens the door and says, now I want to tell you why we need the gospel. And we start in Romans 1, 18. And we begin to see the great need of man.

And Paul begins to show us we are not okay. He is not picking on anyone. He's not picking on a group of individuals. He is really speaking of all of humanity.

He starts in the second chapter and says, well, verses 18 through 32 tell us that the natural man is not good. And then in chapter 2, starting in verse 1, he speaks of even the religious man is not good.

He lays out in just a couple of short chapters that no man is good. No, not one. Every one of us are desperately wicked. And in case we realize that we're falling short, even our greatest deeds are like

filthy rags in the presence of God.

[9 : 02] But thanks be to God through Jesus Christ we can be saved. He does in a few short chapters what the Bible does in Genesis 1 through 11. Genesis 1 through 11 really show us every problem of man.

And then in Genesis 12, you have God calling Abram out of the land of the Ur of the Chaldeans to fix the problems of man. In chapters 1 through 11 of the Bible, which you hold in your hand, the very first 11 chapters, we are told that man was put in a perfect situation and messed it up.

And he messed it up beyond all recognition and he messed it up to the point that he could never fix it again. He messed it up so bad that he couldn't make it right. And in Genesis chapter 12, God says, since you can't make it right, I'll make it right for you.

And then the Bible tells us in Genesis 12 all the way to the end of the Bible in the book of Revelations how God is making right what man messed up. And Paul does the same thing in the book of Romans.

So when we read these verses and we see these chapters, please understand it is not my ambition to offend us. It is just my ambition and my aim to rightly define us.

[10 : 11] To show us who we really are. In these chapters, I will be honest with you. I came to Christ through reading the book of Romans. I came to Christ just like many others through personal Bible study reading the book of Romans.

But I will tell you how I began reading the book of Romans. I opened up my Bible because a preacher encouraged me to read the book of Romans and see what it says about salvation. And when I went to that Bible, I went with this mindset.

I'm a pretty good boy. I've been a pretty good guy my whole life. I've never done anything really bad. I've never, well, at least I was never caught for anything really bad. I've done okay.

Everybody thinks I'm good. I'm not in any kind of trouble. I'm doing alright. I've checked all the right boxes. Surely God likes me. And after about three chapters, I went, well, I can throw my list of things away because I don't think I've done anything right.

And I say this so that you don't get offended. At least not at me. Because maybe you are like me.

[11 : 18] See, when I did that, no one was telling me these things. I was reading them and I had nobody to get mad at. I couldn't get mad at my wife because I was doing it in personal Bible study.

I couldn't get mad at the preacher because all he said was read the book of Romans. I couldn't get mad at anyone. The only person I could get mad at was God. And I could say, God, I don't agree with it, but it doesn't matter because whether I agree or disagree, it doesn't change the truth of what God says about me.

And when we open this door, be careful. Because God's going to show us what we really are. We see in verses 18 through 32, the great tragedy of the natural man.

The great tragedy of the natural man. Paul, I love Paul. And the reason I love Paul, Paul says, when I was with you, I was with you in humility and in gentleness.

I loved you as a pastor. I was there to walk with you. But when I write to you, I write to you as one with authority and with power. Remember, the church said, his words are weighty, but his actions are weak.

[12 : 27] And Paul says, what I do in deeds match the words I write to you in letters. Paul was a truth teller. He didn't cover it up. If someone's going to come to me and tell me there's something wrong with me, I would rather them be truth tellers.

I remember when Hunter, our oldest son, tore his ACL for the first time. It was one of the strangest things. He was making a tackle. Well, both of them fell down.

I would say Hunter made the tackle. The other kid hit him hard enough that it kind of snapped his ACL. He got up and he kept playing. He played the rest of the game. We thought he was okay. As a matter of fact, his knee swelled up a little bit.

He's like, Dad, something happens. I was like, oh, son, you'll be all right. The day we found out his ACL was torn, I actually made him push more of our yard. That's just kind of the way it was. I was like, you'll be all right. Quit being lazy. Get up. Let's go get the stiffness out of it, right?

So he's like, but Dad, my knee really hurts. I was like, son, you're okay. Let's go. It'll be fine. You know, I'm a real loving kind of guy that way. But I remember it was fine.

[13 : 26] If you didn't know anything about torn ACLs, once you get over the swelling, it doesn't hurt. Just your knee will dislocate if you're not careful. There's no pain there. And we really thought

he was okay. We went to a doctor, which we have since become really good friends with because he's seen all three of our oldest kids now multiple times.

We went in there and the doctor's name is Dr. Looney. Great name for a doctor, right? Dr. Looney walks into the office. It's the very first time I ever met him. We'd had an MRI. He walks into the doctor's office.

He says, okay, your ACL is shredded. It's gone now that we got out of the way. Let's talk. Well, that's the very first words we ever heard out of his mouth. So here, Carrie, Hunter, and I are all sitting there with our mouth. I'm like, there's no way.

He's just mowing the yard. He's like, no, it's gone. It's not even there anymore. He's like, it's completely gone. He said, now let's talk about how we can fix it. I've learned to respect that about Dr. Looney. Because he doesn't come in and butter it up.

He just tells you what it is so that he can tell you how we're going to fix it. And I love that about Paul because when Paul opens the door, he tells you what it is. He tells you what the problem is so that he can tell you how God's going to fix it.

[14:28] And what we have in these verses is the great tragedy of man, not only at a time and space, but throughout all of history. This is the great tragedy of ourselves, of our own lives.

The thing that we are guilty of as much as anyone else. So when we read these verses, we must be careful that we don't say, well, yeah, I know a lot of people like that. Rather, we must look in the mirror and say, yes, that is me.

Number one, we see that man suppresses the divinely revealed truth. Man suppresses the divinely revealed truth.

He says in verse 18, For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness. Now just stop right there. Verse 16 and 17 talk to us about the power of God being revealed in his righteousness.

And now we have moved from the revelation of God's power in the gospel to the revealed wrath of God from heaven. It is an amazing thing when you begin to speak about this wrath of God.

[15:35] Now I want you to keep this in mind as we go through the message, because a lot of people think, yes, God is a big mean God. He's a God of wrath. I don't want anything to do with this wrath of God. There's this theme throughout scripture called the day of the Lord.

It is a day of judgment. It is a day of righteousness. It is a day of holiness. And we can't really define that for the sake of time. But here's the question I'm going to give you beginning with, and then we'll seek to end it or answer it at the end.

What is the wrath of God that has been revealed? And what is the worst thing that God can do to man with this wrath of God? And we'll seek to answer that, okay?

But look, for now we're talking about how man suppresses the divinely revealed truth. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.

Look at this. Who suppress the truth in unrighteousness. Now to suppress means to push down, to push away, to make sure that it doesn't come up. It has this picture of truth trying to push forward.

[16:35] Truth trying to come out. And man struggling to push it down. And man struggling to keep it away. And man struggling not to acknowledge it. And he's not just speaking about some men.

He's speaking about all men. And ladies, it's not like I'm excluding you. Some of you go, I know a whole lot of men like that. No, it's not that. When I say men, I mean mankind, okay? I'm including all of us in this.

It is the truth that is trying to come out. And man is desperately trying to cover it up. We see here what it says. Because, now this is going to answer the question for us.

Is God just in the punishment of those who have never heard the gospel? This is the question.

What about that tribe in the middle of the Amazon jungle and somebody dies and they never heard the name Jesus Christ.

They never heard the gospel. Isn't God mean because he judges that individual for not having faith in him? Well, thankfully the Bible is not absent in that answer. Look at what it says. Because that which is known about God is evident, look at this, within them.

[17:36] For God made it evident to them. Friend, the way that it has been said throughout history is that God has put a God-shaped hole inside of every human being. The way the book of Ecclesiastes tells us in Ecclesiastes chapter 3, it says that God has set eternity in the heart of all men.

Man, literally that means that all men of all places, of all time, of all nations, of all people groups, of all ages, know within them. They inherently know there's something more to life than just living a number of years and dying.

God has set eternity in the heart of all men. And men throughout the ages have sought to try to fill that gap of eternity with something worthwhile. And that which is known about God is clearly revealed within them because God has made it evident to them.

Look at this. For since the creation of the world. Now, I don't know about you, but that includes all of us. I've been alive since the creation of the world and so have you, right? That doesn't exclude any man.

Adam and Eve walked into this. For since the creation of the world, his invisible attributes, his eternal power and divine nature, look at this, have been clearly seen.

[18 : 46] Having been understood through what has been made so that they are without excuse. I want to go ahead and lay it out here, my friend. Listen to me. God is not without witness even when we are silent.

But it does not give us a right to be silent. God has clearly revealed himself to all men of all times, of all ages, because that which can be known. You see the things which can be made known?

His invisible attributes, his eternal power and his divine nature, they have all been clearly seen.

Through that which has been made. The Bible tells us that all of creation testifies to the creator.

It will only take the smallest flower located in the hedgerow that would testify to the creator. And man is without excuse. Because God has written his name across every bit of his handiwork.

Not only has God set eternity in the heart of all men, God has put the eternal power before the eyes of all men. God has testified to his creation. And when you see creation and you will begin to study the order of things, it is amazing to me that the roots of science are found in theists.

[19 : 54] People who believed in the existence of a God. Because as the early scientists, we had this great scientific age when the early mathematicians and the early scientists really began to understand the order of things.

And how everything works in perfect harmony. When they began to see this, they had to say, surely somebody created this. Surely somebody called this into being.

And they began to look at the order not only of our own world, but even the order of the planets around us. And they began to see the heavens. And they understood beyond a shadow of a doubt, there is a creator.

And we have went from that day to this day where we look at the same thing through clearer eyes. With more scientific information. With more mathematic information. And now today, we want to say it happened by chance.

What has happened? Man is pushing down the truth. Because that which can be known about God has been clearly revealed to man. But man doesn't want to know God.

[20 : 55] Man wants to be God. One of the greatest tragedies of man is that man suppresses the truth. God is not without witness. You find someone who claims not to believe in God.

You find someone who claims not to acknowledge God. Even in your own life, you may acknowledge the existence of a God. But you do not want to put your faith completely in that God. You are looking at the things He has created.

You are looking at the testimony that He is shouting before you. And you push it down. All of these answers to the way things came to be. All of these answers to creation.

All these answers to the supernatural. Are nothing other than man trying to explain it in his own ability. Because he does not want to accept the truth. We all know that tendency.

Because we've all heard things that were true that we didn't want to hear. So we tried to come up with a better explanation. Rather than just acknowledging the truth. Man's tragedy is that they are without excuse.

[21 : 53] But they don't want to accept the truth. You want me to tell you what we did? We didn't want to accept Dr. Looney's opinion. So we called our family doctor and said, Can we get a second opinion?

We think Hunter's knee is okay. Our family doctor looked at and said, You don't understand. Dr. Looney is the team physician for the University of Auburn. He's been the team physician for the University of Alabama. There is nobody in the state that has been better at sports medicine than Dr. Looney.

So I would probably accept his opinion. And we said, Okay, Dr. Looney, when do you want to do the surgery? We tried to suppress it. We tried to push it down. From that point on, every time we went back, the second time we went back, and he said, Hey, Hunter, ACL's gone again.

We're like, Okay. He says, Hey, this is what's happening. We say, Okay. And we don't question him anymore because now we've seen his authority. What happens with man is we hear the authoritative testimony of God that there is a God, that He is true, and that we are accountable to Him.

But we don't want to acknowledge that, so we try to find another way around it. And we try to define the things that He is clearly telling us in natural ways because we don't want to hear it.

[22 : 57] And all throughout it, even science is saying, It's true. It's true. It's true. Man's tragedy is that he suppresses the truth.

Number two, let's make it through these quick. Not only does man suppress the truth, man substitutes the object of his worship. So he goes on to say here, Why does man suppress that truth?

It says, For even though, in verse 21, For 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. Professing to be wise, they became fools.

Some of you were here on a Sunday night where I showed a video of God versus evolution, and we were listening to all these atheist and agnostic professors of great schools of higher education, these great colleges, these supreme top nature schools, and they were talking about all these physics and biology professors, and they were talking about how things came into creation, and not creation, how things came into being, and then this professor summed it all up and said, I really believe that Christians don't have a good enough imagination to believe in evolution.

And we laughed at that, and said, This great instructor of higher education, with so many degrees behind her name, who claims to have filled every need of man in natural order, claims that to believe what she believes, you have to have a great imagination.

[24 : 21] Professing to be wise, they became fools. I would rather believe something that does not take my imagination, but just accepts it as truth. And we see this reality.

Why? We move on. It says, Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for the image in the form of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed animals, and crawling creatures.

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

Amen. What does Paul say? Now, these things build upon one another. When man suppresses the truth, then man will substitute the object of his worship. Do you understand? You were created to worship.

Well, the very first purpose is stated in the Bible. God says that he put Adam into the Garden of Eden and wanted him to obey him and to worship him. The way man was created, man was created to obey God and to worship God.

[25 : 21] That is your purpose. Your purpose is to worship. Your purpose is to fulfill that God-given responsibility. And there has never been a people. There has never been a tribe.

There has never been a people group. There has never been an unreached nation that was not found, that they were not worshipping something. Man was created to worship, and all men, listen to me, all men worship something.

They will either worship themselves, that not all men are bowing down before an image carved out of wood, or an image carved out of stone. Some are worshipping themselves. Some are worshipping their hobbies.

But all men, of all places, of all times, will and is worshipping. This is your created purpose, and you will not deviate from your created purpose.

The tragedy of man is that though God shows us what is true, we push it down. And in pushing it down, we have to fill that void of worship with something, so we find something to worship.

[26 : 21] Maybe we busy ourselves in our own occupation. Do you understand that even the job you have can be your object of worship? If there is something that you can miss, and it can totally destroy your day, more than missing time with God, then my friend, something is before God.

If there is something that you would be willing to miss your time with God to do this, and I'm not saying that it has to be this legalistic thing, I'm just saying that I need to be in the presence of God because I have to worship.

We must ask ourselves, are we falling into this tragedy of substituting the worship of the divine, holy, impeccable, completely accurate one for something that is man-made, man-created, or in the image of man?

Paul says the great tragedy is that man could worship that which is perfect, but they would rather worship the imperfect, something corruptible in the image of themselves.

Why would man long to worship something they can create? Because though we are created to worship, we do not want to worship something that controls us naturally. We would rather worship something which we have control of, and if I can make the idol, or I can create this, or I can create that, then now I am in control of that object that I worship.

[27 : 42] I am in control of that object that I give my time and attention to. That thing no longer controls me. It is a tragedy of man that though we are created to worship, we substitute something in place of God in our worship.

And Paul says this is happening to all of us. Again, this isn't that he is just picking on some people. He is showing us this is the great problem of man. You know, naturally, when you were born, there was something within you that called out to the way God made you.

And you began to see these tendencies, and then you began to fall in life, and you just could not help but understand the truth that God was revealing, but then we get carried away in our own sin nature.

And we began to be drawn, began to be drawn to putting something else in that place. The tragedy of man is that they substitute an object of worship.

Number three, and finally, I moved through the second one pretty quick so that I could get to this third one. Not only does man suppress the divinely revealed truth, not only does man substitute it the object of his worship, number three, man suffers the consequences of his own desires.

[28 : 51] What is the wrath of God that has been revealed? What is the worst thing that God could do to man? You say, well, I think Sodom and Gomorrah, the great destruction of the cities, I mean, hell stones raining down, that's terrible.

Or I think the flood, man, that's terrible. God wiped out the world, except for eight people in these raging waters. Or I think about the battle of Armageddon, how the Lord's going to come on his white horse.

Man, that's terrible. Really, is it that terrible? Because before Sodom and Gomorrah, the Bible says righteous Lot lived there, and there was a testimony to Sodom and Gomorrah. And God had mercy on Sodom and Gomorrah and said that if there were ten righteous individuals that could be found, then he would spare the city, and they would not.

And let's not forget, before the floodwaters came, that there was an ark there, for sure, but when Noah was building an ark for 120 years, he testified to the judgment coming. And the battle of Armageddon, preachers have been testifying to that year after year after year after year.

Before all of these great judgments, God has been merciful. Before all of these great judgments, God has waited. So what is man to tell God that he is bad for doing what he said he was going to do when he gave his chance to repent?

[29 : 59] But what is the wrath of God? Three times here to close this section of verses, Paul writes, God gave them over. God gave them over. God gave them over.

The most tragic thing which God can do, I shared this with the young adults this morning, I shared this as I was talking to them, the most tragic event that God can do and the greatest wrath that we can see of the Lord is that God lets man have his own way.

Man suppresses the truth. Man says, I see everything telling me there is a God, but I don't want anything to do with that God. And then man says, but I feel like I've got to give my life to something so it substitutes something in the place of God and worships that something.

And then God says, okay, if that's what you want, then have it your way. I'm not going to fight with you. I'm not going to wrestle with you. I'm not going to make you. I'm going to love you.

I'm going to offer it to you, but I'll let you have it your way. Have you ever thought about why in the garden, God didn't just intervene when this snake is talking to Eve? I mean, why didn't he just go down there and kill that snake?

[31 : 03] I mean, why did he even create the snake, right? Why did God create evil? God didn't create evil. God's not the author of evil. The Bible tells us that. He's not the author of sin. We see that, but all good things come from God. Why didn't God just stop it?

Because then we would all be robots. The wrath of God is revealed in this, is that he lets man do what man wants to do. And then we have all of these things being laid out for us here.

It says, God gave them over. It says in verse 26, for this reason, God gave them over to degrading passions. The first time he gives them over, it says, the lust of their hearts and purity, and they go into idolatry.

Idolatry leads to verse 26, where God gave them over to degrading passions, for their women exchanged the natural function of that, which is unnatural. In the same way, also the men abandoned the natural function of the women, 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. Man, I know this Bible verse will get me in trouble, but let's just go ahead and say it. God said, he gave them over to that which was unnatural, and literally laid it out into homosexuality.

[32 : 04] God created them, Adam and Eve. He put the two together, male and female, and it's a natural process. We see that all throughout creation. But man says, I don't want to know the truth. I'd rather do it. So God says, that's the way you want to do it.

Go ahead and do it. I'll give you over. When Paul is writing this letter, the 14 of the first 15 Roman emperors were all practitioners of homosexuality. And when he was writing to the church at Rome, they knew all about homosexuality practices.

Now before we look at this, and we go, yes, this is God's judgment against homosexuality. This isn't the worst. He gives them over a third time. And look at that list. Is homosexuality sin and wrong? Yes, it is.

Just as is every other un-God-given natural sexual function. Okay? To do it in any other way than God ordained is sinful. But we move on. Because look at the rest of sin.

Let's not separate those two. And this says, in verse 28, and just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, they finally got to the point where they said, we're getting to do what we want to do.

[33 : 02] Let's just forget about God. They didn't want to acknowledge God any longer. God gave them over to a depraved mind to do those things which are not proper. What is a depraved mind? Look at this list and see if it does not convict you.

Because there are some things on this list, we'll just be quite honest, that we see as okay. And God said they are a result of us suppressing the truth and putting something else in the place of our worship. Look at the list.

We were given over to things which are not proper and all unrighteousness. Wickedness. Greed. You know, I'm going to get what is mine. That's greed. Greed. Evil. Full of envy. Murder. Strife. Deceit. Malice.

They are gossips. What? I mean, just gossip. Slanders. Talking bad about people. You mean that's bad? Haters of God. Insolent. Arrogance. I mean, arrogance is bad.

I mean, I thought we could be confident. Paul says, I'm nothing. Arrogance. Boastful. Inventors of evil. Disobedient to parent. Wait a minute, children. We're in trouble here. We went so far.

[33 : 56] Even disobedience to parents. And then he goes on. Without understanding. Untrustworthy. I mean, we failed people. And God sees this as being wrong.

Unloving. Unmerciful. What? God lays out all these lists and says, if this is the way you want it, here you go. Friend, this answers the question. The greatest thing that God could do in wrath is to let man have his own way.

And when man has his own way, it always leads to these things. This is not the way God created the world. And we find these things. I'll be honest with you.

I read this list and I find these things in me. And you probably find them in you. As much as you may not want to admit it and you may not want to see it, you find them in you. And that's a good thing. Because we see here that God is right. He let me go the way I wanted to go. And the way I wanted to go was away from him. And I've done things that are not pleasing to him. And until we know how bad we are, we will not see how good he is.

[34 : 56] And we will not see how great Jesus is. Do you want to know why we need a Savior? Paul goes on to say, not only do they do that, not only are they okay with that, they encourage

others to do that. Have you ever noticed that?

Those who do wrong encourage others to do wrong. They don't want to be alone. And the great tragedy of man is that we have went so far. We are finally suffering the consequences of our own decisions.

God said, okay, if that's how you want it, then go. Throughout the ages, man said, we don't want anything to do with God. We want to do it our way. And guess what we got? We got a world that is operating the way man wants it to operate.

That's exactly what the truth is. The way we see the world is exactly what our consequences got us to. And we're saying, okay, why don't you join in with us? Why don't you do that? Why don't you do that?

And that is not judgmental. We are all messed up. But until we know that this is the natural outcome of our decisions, we will not stop and say, how will I get out of this? He's always showing us we're in a tragic situation.

[35 : 56] But God loves us so much, He sent His sons to the faith in Him, and we can be saved from this tragedy. Friend, listen to me. This is not a message to pick on us. This is not a message to belittle us. This is not a message for us to walk out of here with our heads held down and go, man, woe is me.

This is a message to say, that is me. But praise be to God through Jesus Christ, I'm not that way anymore. Praise be to God through Jesus Christ. It's not because I'm good enough, because Paul says I'm not, it's because I find everything in that list.

I find myself in that tragedy of mankind. It's not because I deserve it. It's not because I've earned it. It's not because I worked my way up to it. It is in the midst of that tragedy.

Jesus stepped in and said, do you want out? And all I had to say was yes. And in the midst of the tragedy of man, I couldn't get out of that.

But praise be to God, He came to flesh. He took on flesh. He came to me and took me out of that. Do I find myself going back to that every now and then? Yes, because that's the tragedy of man.

[36 : 55] But the glory of God is that in spite of that, He loves me. And in spite of that, He redeems me. And in spite of that, He cares for me.

And in spite of that, He'll save me. As long as I put my faith in Him. And it's good to know the truth. It's good to know about where we really are. He's not done.

He'll tell us more in the next few verses. But He starts out by telling us, we're in a bad spot, guys. We really are. We can't do this on our own.

We'll never make it. It's terrible. We're not going to make it out alone. But God has sent His Son to get us out of that bad spot we're in so that we may live with Him forever.

Let's pray. Oh God, I thank You. Lord, I don't know what You're doing this morning. Lord, but I know the truth of myself. Lord, I see these things played out in my own life.

[37 : 57] And Lord, it causes me to shout hallelujah. To say thank You, Lord. Thank You, Lord, that in spite of me, You have saved me. You have redeemed me.

You have called me to Yourself. God, I ask that You would move. I ask that You would show us more of who we are so that we may understand more of who You are. And we ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Thank you.