

THE TRUTH

Romans 1:24-32

1.20.2019



ROMANS
THE GREATEST LETTER EVER WRITTEN.

WHY DO WE EVEN NEED THE GOSPEL?

- **Q.** Why do Christians make such a big deal about “the gospel”? **Q.** Why does Paul lay out very early in this letter to the Romans that he’s “set apart for the gospel of God” (v. 1) or “I’m eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome” (v. 15) and then “For I am not ashamed of the gospel” (v. 16)? **Q.** Why do we even need the gospel? That’s the question. **And I’ve got an answer**—but it’s not going to come until the very end of this passage. And I’m giving it to you much earlier than Paul does to these Romans!
- **(S. Ferguson)** The passage that’s before us was once printed by an inter-varsity Christian group in the UK & distributed to students, yet it was printed in a way that seemed like it could’ve been written recently. No verses, just the words.

ROMANS 1:24-32 {GOD’S WRATH ON UNRIGHTEOUSNESS} 24 Therefore God **gave them up** in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves,

- **Q.** What does Paul mean by “God gave them up?” (Theologians = “Judicial abandonment”)
- **A.** It means God “handed them over”—that’s what the word means (“**GAVE THEM UP**” = *Paradidomi*: “handed over”)
- **Q.** So what did God hand them over to?
- **A.** “**LUSTS**” = *Epithymia*: “unhealthy desire; desire for that which is forbidden” - “**HEARTS**” = *Kardia*: “the fountain of thoughts, passions, desires, appetites, affections, purposes, endeavors” - “**IMPURITY**” = *Akatharsia*; “opposite of holy; unclean.”

It is a monstrously dangerous thing to insist on your own way.

- **C.S. Lewis, The Great Divorce:** “There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, ‘Thy will be done,’ and those to whom God says, in the end, ‘Thy will be done.’”
- **One of the most terrifying things God can say to a sinner is “Thy will be done!”**
- **THIS IS NOT ONLY TRUE WITH UNBELIEVERS: A tremendous amount of prayers I’ve heard are people basically asking God to give them their idols**—and we don’t even realize it! What if he gives it to you?
- **Q.** Why did “God give them up” and who are the “them”? **A.** The Ungodly, Unrighteous—Sinners (v.18). **Look at verse 25!**

25 because they exchanged the truth (= *Aletheia*: “objective fact/reality”) about God for a **lie** (= *Pseudos*: “falsehood/fake”)

Those who refuse to honor God or give thanks to Him are willfully ignorant.

- **There’s an older movie directed by the Wachowski siblings** that is set in the future and depicts the world ruled by superior and intelligent machines. But most humans don’t know it because their brains are plugged into a computer program. In this story, there’s a group of people that have “unplugged” from this lie, and one wants to get plugged back in.
- **Those who are willfully ignorant of God**—as Paul says all are in Romans 1:25—will no more escape His wrath than a person who willfully goes to sleep in a burning building would escape being burned to death.

and *worshipped* and *served* the creature (*created things*) rather than the Creator, who is blessed (*praised!*) forever! Amen.

Everyone worships and serves something.

- **Imagine yourself standing in front of a great mirror**—and this mirror showed you exactly what you most desired, and what’s more, you were the only one who could see what the mirror showed you. **Q.** What would you see?
- **As Martin Luther pointedly wrote,** “Whatever your heart clings to and confides in, that is really your God.”
- **When the thoughts, passions, desires, appetites, affections, purposes, and endeavors come out of the fountain of you heart, where do they go?** That’s what you worship and serve. Is it a created thing or “the Creator who is blessed (praised) forever! Amen”?

26 For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; 27 and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed (*burned*) with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

Paul says Homosexual behavior is the clearest expression of the depths of our perversity.

- “This is a text that we will not hear often on television in this day and age. There are two things I need to say about it. First, when the apostle Paul describes the radical corruption of the human race, he sees the sin of homosexual behavior as the sin most representative of the radical nature of our fall. It is seen here not simply as a sin, nor even as a serious sin or a gross sin, but as the clearest expression of the depths of our perversity.” - Sproul, R. C.. *Romans* (St. Andrew's Expositional Commentary) (pp. 50-51).
- **If you think**, “Wow, this is offensive” then good. It means you’re reading it properly.
If you think, “Wow, this is offensive to me!” then good. As Johnny Mac has been saying for years, “People have been offending God for years by their sin, it’s about time they were offended.” (**John MacArthur**).
- **Man these people are bad, huh?! Not so fast, Mr. or Mrs. Perfect. The late R.C. Sproul was correct when he said**, “If you can read through this list and not feel a prick in your conscience, you are a Psychopath.”

28 And since they *did not* see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a **debased mind** (*depraved*) to do what ought *not* to be done. 29 They were **filled** with *all* manner of *unrighteousness*, evil, covetousness, malice. They are **full** of envy, murder, strife, deceit, *maliciousness*. They are gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

The unrighteous & ungodly—all of us apart from God’s rescuing grace—are not depicted as sick, or maimed, or slightly defective, or in need of help. We are depicted as FULL of sin.

- **Q. Why do we need the gospel?**
- **A.** Because “the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness & unrighteousness of men...”
Men who... (LOOK AT VERSE 32!)

32 Though they know God's righteous decree (*q. what do they know?*) that those who practice such things deserve to die, they *not only* do them but give approval to those who practice them.

- **Q. Why do we need the gospel?** **A.** Because we have *ALL practiced such things*; we have *ALL* exchanged the truth about God for a lie; on our own, we are *FILLED WITH ALL MANNER OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS*.

We need the gospel because we are guilty, we deserve death, & it’s the only way we can be saved! “The Gospel is the power of God for salvation!”

- **Q. So what IS the gospel?** **A.** The Gospel is the good news concerning what Jesus has done to save sinners like us from the wrath of God against all unrighteousness—from the *DEATH we deserve*—and re-hand us over into the love of God!
- **The Gospel is the good news that**
“God did not spare His own but *GAVE HIM UP for us all*” (**Romans 8:32**).
- **It’s the good news that**
“[Jesus] was *GIVEN UP* for our trespasses and raised for our justification” (**Romans 4:25**).

- **The Gospel is the good news that declares** “*THOUGH WE* in our rebellion deserve to be *HANDED OVER* to our sin and idolatry, *HANDED OVER* the wrath of God, and *HANDED OVER* to death,
- **Jesus came to the earth and perfectly worshiped and served the Creator rather than the creature**; Jesus exchanged the lie about God for the truth; Jesus never dishonored His body, never committed shameless acts, and he had not a *DROP* of unrighteousness. (look at verses 29-30 if you want more...)
- **And with that total PURITY**—only deserving God’s love and acceptance and honor—He went to a cross & allowed His body to be dishonored as we deserve, he took the wrath of God that we have earned, he was *GIVEN UP TO DEATH FOR US—GIVEN UP FOR OUR TRESPASSES* in order to purchase *ETERNAL LIFE* for His people!

And he did it voluntarily.

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes!”

And hear me friend: Jesus says in John 6:37
“whoever comes to me I will never cast out.”