**A picture containing text

Description automatically generatedRomans 1:8-32**

**The Righteousness of God & The Wrath of God! (Lesson #3)**

***8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world. 9 For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you 10 always in my prayers, asking that somehow by God’s will I may now at last succeed in coming to you. 11 For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you —  12 that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith, both yours and mine. 13 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. 14 I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. 15 So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.***

**Vs 8 -** Thankfulness to God should be the first thing for us as well!

*“Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!” (Ps 100:4 ESV)*

*“give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” (1Th 5:18 ESV)*

**For all that God has given us, we should be thankful!**

In a few verses Paul lays out the charges against lost men and women, one of those is thankfulness:

*“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.” (Ro 1:21 ESV)*

This is one of the multiple charges against lost mankind. They know God exists, we will talk about that, they do not honor him, we will talk about that, and they are not thankful for all that he has done!

**Vs 8 -** Paul made a practice of beginning his letters with a word of thanks to God, a specific prayer, and a personal message to the recipients. He rejoiced that news of their faith had spread all over the (known) world, (i.e., the Roman Empire). Keep in mind not only the environment, but the modes of travel. This is a rather amazing statement!

The believers in Rome are known through-out the world and what was talked about was their FAITH!

**An Important Point:** Sometimes when we read the Bible, and we import a modern idea of the words, that the writer did not mean. Here is an example, when Paul said:

I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in “**all the world**.”

Two Greek words here: **ὅλος** (*hol’-os) and* **κόσμος** (*kos’-mos). We would translate this:* ***“whole world”***

So did Paul mean, the whole world **“globally”** the way we might think of those two words today.

\*\* When he wrote this was he thinking of the Chinese or the North American Indians? No, of course not and this helps us understand that context is critical when we read. Paul meant the whole known world or the whole Roman empire.

But Paul’s point is, in a day with no Twitter, email, Facebook, texting, or even smart phones, the faith of the church that existed in Rome was being spoken about throughout the entire known world.

**Vs 9 –10 -** Paul marches God in the dock, and here is what he says: **For God is my witness**… that **without ceasing I mention you always in my prayers…**

I pray for you, church in Rome, without ceasing… God is my witness.

**He is being driven intrinsically.**

That without ceasing I make mention of you in my prayers. We are very familiar with this language, we read something very similar in I Thes 5:17: **“Pray without ceasing…”**

Now he does not mean that he was praying for them 24/7, rather he has not removed them from his pray list. He keeps praying for them. He does not stop praying for them.

Now we do not know everything that Paul is praying for the church in Rome, but we do know one thing, for he tells us: **Vs 10b - asking that somehow by God’s will, I may now at last succeed in coming to you.**

**Vs 11-12 -** Paul makes it clear, they are on his prayer list and he longs to see them. The word Paul chooses here is the word that means to **strongly desire**, to **pursue with love**, to **long after**.

This is a word, that points us to the heart of the apostle. He loved fellow believers and he had a deep desire to meet up with those in Rome and he tells us why…

**That he may impart to them some spiritual gift to strengthen them.**

* 1. To exercise his own spiritual gifts among them, likely through teaching.
  2. To bestow some spiritual blessing upon them.

**That they may be together encouraged by each other’s faith.**

Paul did not envision the blessings as only flowing from him, but he recognized a channel that flowed between them where he was enriching and encouraging them and they, him.

**Vs 13 –** Paul then tells them something they may not know, but he wants them to fully understand. Namely, that he had **“often”** intended to come to them, but thus far have been prevented.

Paul has not only a desire to come, but he had even **“planned”** to come. But he had been **hindered** (**prevented**, **forbidden**, or **refused**).

\*\*\* If you are like me you have some immediate questions for Paul. What and who hindered you? What did that look like?

Now interestingly enough that is all he says about it here. But let me show you what he says in chapter 15, that sheds some light on what, I believe, he meant:

*“****19b*** *…so that from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum I have fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ;* ***20*** *and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else’s foundation,* ***21*** *but as it is written, "Those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand."* ***22*** *¶ This is the reason why I have so often been hindered from coming to you.* ***23*** *But now, since I no longer have any room for work in these regions, and since I have longed for many years to come to you,* ***24*** *I hope to see you in passing as I go to Spain, and to be helped on my journey there by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a while.” (Ro 15:19b-24 ESV)*

So in verse 20 Paul says, my aim, my ambition, my goal is to preach the gospel where the name of Jesus is not known. He then loosely quotes Is 52:15. His point seems to be that he sees his ministry as fulfilling God’s promise. We will talk more about this when we actually get there.

Jesus was known in Rome, he was not known in these western areas of the Roman empire and his desire to come to Rome was blocked by his **greater desire to preach Jesus where he was not known**!

Then he explains why, and we see once again, the heart of a missionary:

**Vs 13b-** That he might see people **place faith in the Lord Jesus Christ**. That he might **preach the gospel** and **see men and women converted**.

It is this thought that catapults his mind, once again, to discuss the gospel.

**Vs 14-15 -** Paul indicates that he is under obligation to both Greeks and barbarians (to both wise and fools).

The Greek word translated obligation means to **owe a debt, to have an obligation, to be bound by duty to do something** for someone else. As you consider this, consider how Paul understood his apostleship to the Gentiles.

Paul, as the apostle to the Gentiles saw himself under a debt, an obligation, because he was called, he had an unfulfilled responsibility to **“preach the gospel.”**

The Greeks saw everyone as either Greek or Barbarian, literally someone who spoke Greek and had an appreciation for the culture of someone who did not.

Barbarians are those who did not speak Greek. The Ostrogoths, Visigoths, the Huns are some of the many examples of surrounding nations that were not influenced by the Greek culture.

Most scholars believe, although we cannot be sure that (wise and fools) is another way in the Greek world to say educated Greeks and foolish.

**Vs 15 -** **So I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome.**

But it was more than an obligation. He was “eager” to preach the gospel to those in Rome! The idea of the word is **ready** and **willing**.

**Paul felt that way at every opportunity, even in the most hostile environment, he was ready, willing, and indeed eager to proclaim the gospel of Christ!**

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***Vs 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. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."***

\*\*\* Here we get to the meat of this chapter and indeed the theme of this letter!

Remember when we defined the theme of Romans:

***“The revelation of God’s judging and saving righteousness in the gospel of Jesus Christ. In the cross of Christ, God judges sin and yet at the same time manifests saving mercy”* (ESV Study Bible).**

These two theologically dense verses are made up of three subordinate clauses, each starting with the word for, and each supporting or illuminating the one before it!

**Now before we start unpacking**, it seems that every time Paul uses the word gospel, he feels a need to explain, expound, and further clarify, the gospel.

We saw last week, Paul said the gospel and all of a sudden, he ran off and says “it”, the gospel:

*“1:2 which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, 3 concerning his Son,*

But here Paul says: **For I am not ashamed of the gospel** and all of a sudden, he explains, expounds, and further qualifies, the gospel.

**Paul was a fanatic for the Gospel, and we should be as well!**

**Vs 16 –**We have looked at the word gospel already, it is the Greek word **εὐαγγέλιον** (yoo-ang-ghel’-ee-on). It means good news, it means glad tidings.

It is interesting, as you consider this verse that Paul chooses the negative **“not ashamed.”**

**Douglas Moo in his commentary states:** *“The negative form of Paul’s assertion, “I am not ashamed of the gospel…” may be a literary convention (litotes), justifying our rendering it as a straight-forward positive statement: “I have great confidence in the gospel.”*

The Message, which is a loose paraphrase, translates this verse:

*“It’s news I’m most proud to proclaim, this extraordinary Message of God’s powerful plan to rescue everyone who trusts him, starting with Jews and then right on to everyone else!” (Ro 1:16 Message)*

In fact, this is exactly what Paul said elsewhere:

*“But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” (Ga 6:14 ESV)*

**Vs 16b –**So the gospel is the good news of God, but notice, it is also the **power of God.**

**The Greek word** here is **δύναμις** (doo’-nam-is) and means **strength**, **power**, **ability**, or **might**. It is where we get the **English word dynamite**.

Notice it is the **“power of God”** unto salvation. The Greek word is **σωτηρία** (so-tay-ree’-ah) and it means **salvation**, **deliverance**, and can include the idea of **protection**.**It is where we get the study of soteriology.**

**The gospel (the good news of God) is the dynamite power of God that delivers men and women from darkness and into a faith based relationship with God!**

**As you consider this, understand that Paul recognized that the gospel is God’s panacea, remedy, answer, or even medicine for mankind’s ill!**

But notice what Paul adds. The gospel, is the dynamite power of God to Jews and Gentiles. Also notice that Paul says: “to the Jew first…”

Obviously, historically the gospel went to Jews first (think of Pentecost, think of Paul’s travels as he would start out in the synagogues). Historically, there was a priority. Jesus went to Israel, Jesus was Himself born (humanly speaking) into a Jewish family, as the promised Jewish King. The Nation of Israel, the Hebrews, the Jews, had a **chronological priority**. The gospel did indeed go to the Jew first.

Then Paul does something, God does something, that He does not always do. He tells us why.

***Why the gospel is the dynamite of God to a saving relationship with our creator.***

**Vs 17 –** For in it! **In the gospel…** **the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."**

So, let’s unpack Paul’s points.

**The righteousness of God is a phrase that is repeated multiple times in Romans.**

The genitive **“of God”** can mean from God or belonging to God…

**Luther was the one who promoted the understanding that this verse is not speaking about God’s own righteousness, that which belongs to God. But rather, what Paul is speaking of is a righteousness that comes to us “from God.”**

Paul uses it this way in Chapter 3:

*“21 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it —  22 the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction:” (Ro 3:21-22 ESV)*

This is a righteousness that God gives to those who believe, it does not come from the law. So where does it come from? The genitive, it is a righteousness “from God.”

But also in chapter 3, Paul seems to use it as a righteousness that belongs to God:

*“24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.” (Ro 3:24-25 ESV)*

The gospel, also shows how God can be righteous and forgive sins. It explains how such an act does not make God unrighteous. The debt was paid by Christ.

**Here in chapter 1 which is it?**

First, as we will see the context demands first that it is a righteousness that flows from God. But I would only add, in this case, Paul (God) could mean both.

For in this case both are true, although I would only say the first seems to be the “most true!”

In the Western world, we do not like double meanings, in Scripture it is actually quite common.

**Vs 17 –** For in it, i**n the gospel…** the righteousness of God is revealed **from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."**

This phrase from faith to faith **(ek pistis eis pistis).**

**From or out of (ek) faith (pistis) into or towards (eis) faith (pistis).**

The ESV translates this “from faith for faith.” Probably the best way to understand “from faith for faith” which to me is a little confusing is **from faith beginning to end.** That seems to be the point. It is secured by faith and it is lived out by faith.

Phillips translation seems to get at this:

*“I see in it God’s plan for making men right in his sight, a process begun and continued by their faith. For, as the scripture says: The righteous shall live by faith.” (Ro 1:17 Philips)*

And that is the point of the quote from Hab 2:4. The just shall live by faith.

*“"Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith.” (Hab 2:4 ESV)*

**I believe what Paul is saying, to paraphrase, is that justification is all about, FAITH!**

**IMPORTANT POINT –** On this matter of faith, or belief. It is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, it is his shed blood unto death, for our sins, that saves a person.

**We procure and secure that work, by faith**. So, our faith does not save us. **Our faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ saves us.**

**We begin by faith and we continue by faith, it is all about faith!**

But notice, here Paul does not say that secures our salvation.Rather Paul says that faith, secures is **“the righteousness of God”** for us!

**That goes back to the first way we understood the genitive and is likely the “most correct” of the two although Paul could mean both.**

**SOTERIOLOGY Break:** This is the study of salvation. When you place faith in Jesus Christ, when you commit your life to Him, he takes your sins which he paid for in full at Calvary and he gives you “the righteousness of God!” This is what I called last week the **“Great exchange!”**

Now is a great time to discuss three Christians words that summarize salvation:

**Justification** – Declaration and reality that we are just before God (acquitted) - **Delivered from the penalty of sin (past tense).**

**Sanctification –** Set apart, this is our growing in grace because we are justified – **Being delivered from the power of sin (present tense).**

**Glorification –** Awaits the resurrection, this is our final state, sin in all its forms is removed and we live holy and righteous lives before the Lord – **Final deliverance from the presence of sin (future tense).**

When this righteousness is imputed to you, you are immediately (justified before God). You are declared righteous.

you are acquitted of all crimes. The righteousness begins to work in your life in the form of sanctification (conforming you more and more into the image of Jesus) and it will culminate in your glorification (eternity in heaven with Christ)!

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Having discussed how man receives this righteousness, Paul is now going to explain the Gentiles desperate need of this righteousness. The antidote can only be fully appreciated and then embraced if one understands how severe and desperate the illness.

***Vs 18 - For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. 19 - For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 - 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. Vs 21 - 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. Vs 22 - Claiming to be wise, they became fools, Vs 23 - and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. 24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, 25 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. 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 with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. 28 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. 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. 32 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.***

**Vs 18** - Now, most scholars and Bible teachers will tell you that here Paul is establishing the **universal guilt of the Gentiles**. He is pointing out how they were provided with a clear presentation of God’s majesty and power in the creation and they failed to respond properly to that revelation.

**The wrath of God is revealed,** this is **(present tense, indicative mood)** it issimply a **statement of fact** and could be translated, the wrath of **God is being revealed** (continual action).

The wrath of God is being revealed, the Greek word is **ἀποκαλύπτω** (ap-ok-al-oop’-to) - (it means to **uncover, make known,** or **lay bare**).

**Now at this point you should have a question. How is God’s wrath being revealed?** Paul will answer this question in the coming verses.

Further, we read, **God’s wrath is being revealed against:**

**All ungodliness –** (godlessness) – man’s vertical relationship to God

**All unrighteousness –** (wickedness) – man’s disregard for the rights of others.

Now at this point, as I told you Paul would often do here in Romans, he is beginning to dismantle an argument that is starting to form in our minds. Here is the argument that is beginning to form in our minds, and we have heard this many times:

**How can God be wrathful towards someone who has never heard of Him, or who has never heard of Jesus Christ.** This is a great question, and Paul begins to answer this question immediately!

**So let’s pick back up and see Paul’s response in vs 18:**

**Vs 18** - For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, ***who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.***

**Charge #1 -** Notice the first charge against mankind, who by their own unrighteousness… **suppress the truth!**

**It is not that they rejected Jesus, it is that they are suppressing the truth…**

Again, you should have a question. **How are men and women apart from God suppressing the truth?**

**Vs 19** - Paul’s explanation as to how they are suppressing the truth is that what can be **known about God** is **plain to them**, for God has **shown it to them**!

**You should have a few questions:** **What has God shown them, when did God show it to them, and how did God show it to them?**

**Vs 20 -** To be specific, Paul says that God is shining forth some of his invisible attributes, specifically his **eternal power** and **divine nature**.

Power and the fact that only God could do something like this, are clearly displayed and they are clearly **perceived**.

**The Greek word translated perceived is the Greek word to know and understand with the mind.** Further, clearly perceived is in the **present tense**, the idea is that man continues to see and continues to understand!

**This is the charge:**

“**1** To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. **2** Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. **3** There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard.” (Ps 19:1-3 ESV)

**Missler:** *The creation is a “cosmic code” which nobody can erase (Ps 19:1-6)!*

**Keller:** *We all know, regardless of wat we tell ourselves, that there is a God of “Eternal power and divine nature.”*

Here is the charge, God displays, at a minimum according to Paul, His **power** and **divine nature** in creation. Men **see it** and **understand it,** they **perceive,** they **get it!**

They perceive it and as we read a verse before, **they suppressed it! All mankind is without excuse for they suppress the truth.**

**The witness of God is so clear and so constant that ignoring it will be indefensible on the day of Judgment. Men and women will be WITHOUT EXCUSE!**

**Notice, condemnation is not based on rejecting Jesus, it is based on sinning against God’s natural revelation!**

**Theology Break:** Theologians talk about the two broad ways that God reveals Himself to men and women:

**General (natural) revelation:**

This is how God makes himself know through natural means, by observing creation, conscience, or even providence. We will look again at Psalm 19 and then let Paul unpack the point:

*“1 To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. 2 Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. 3 There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard.” (Ps 19:1-3 ESV)*

So general (natural) revelation is God showing all mankind that there is a God and some characteristics of this amazing and incredible God.

For example, if you worked at NASA and you were processing pictures from the Hubble Space Telescope and you saw some of these photos, what might you imagine or even deduce about God.

That is general revelation! The problem it only takes us so far. It can tell us things about God, although we might misunderstand what we are being told, but it can never tell us how to know God or how to be in relationship with God.

**Special (Supernatural) Revelation:**

Is the understanding that we can know God through his actions where he breaks down the barrier between the natural and the supernatural and steps into our world. The Bible is filled with examples of these, the coming of Jesus Christ is an example of this, and **God’s word is the ultimate example of Special Revelation:**

*“16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” (2Ti 3:16-17 ESV)*

In Special revelation, particularly the Bible, we hear **directly from God** and can understand when He **says, how we can know Him, and how we can be in a relationship with Him**.

But here, as you will see Paul seems to be talking principally about the knowledge that the creation provides!

**Let’s get back in context…**

When men suppress general revelation, where God is declaring his eternal power and divine nature, they are:

**Vs 20b *“without excuse.”***

**This is the first charge. Paul is going to now add additional charges.** I will give them to you now and we can unpack them as we go:

1. They suppressed God’s truth (Vs 18-20)
2. They do not honor him as God (Vs 21)
3. They are not thankful for all he has done (Vs 21)
4. They worship the creation, rather than the Creator (Vs 22-23)

**Vs 21a -** Although **God had made Himself known**, and they **“knew God.”** They did not **honor Him as God**.

The Greek word is **δοξάζω** (dox-ad’-zo) – It is to **praise**, **extol**, **celebrate**, or **magnify**.

**Charge #2 -** They knew from **general revelation** that a powerful God existed, yet they did not honor or praise that God as they should have.

We were created to honor God, to bring glory to God. Man suppresses the knowledge and even the existence of God and in doing so does not honor God, as he was designed to do.

You will see this in a moment, but it is not that man does not worship, it is that he does not worship the one thing worthy of worship, which results in man worshipping any and every created thing!

We will see this soon enough!

**Charge #3 - Vs 21b - *Nor did they give thanks.***

A **magnificent**, **kind**, and **loving God**, who created everything. Lost men and women suppress the knowledge of Him, they did not honor him, **nor are they thankful for all that he has done**.

**Now let’s pause… This was you and I before we placed faith in Jesus Christ.** We were under the lawful and right wrath of God. We were suppressing knowledge of Him, we did not praise Him, we were not thankful to HIM

But this is all lost mankind, and it is **good that God is letting you in on the secret.**

**APPLICATION:** When we talk to people, we know, for sure, that in their conscience they are **suppressing the knowledge of God**. Keep this in mind as you talk to people. In each of them is a still small voice, (their conscience) that is whispering, **I think there may be an all-powerful God!**

**Quote the scriptures (for they are God breathed) and point them to the gospel (for it is the power of God).**

But know, when they tell you they do not believe in God... Deep down inside, **they have serious doubts about their doubt.**

**But verse 21c: Suppressing** God, **rejecting** God, **not honoring** God, **not being thankful** to God, we read**… *they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.***

This resulted in their hearts being darkened! **This is what sin does in blinds as it binds. It darkens as it enslaves.**

**Vs 22-23 - Charge #4 –** They exchange the glory of the immortal God, for idols. Worship was corrupted and they began to worship everything, except the true and living God!

They exchanged the glory of the mortal for the immortal. The corrupted, for the uncorrupted! **They worship any and everything…** How silly, how foolish. The result of a darkened heart.

**Now, I left a question, unanswered… That is now time to answer. In verse 18a we read: *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven…***

But we never answered: **How is God’s wrath being unveiled?**

**Paul explains in three waves, in three steps, in three measures:**

**Vs 24 - *Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts…***

**Vs 26 - *For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions…***

**Vs 28 - *And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up…***

**Vs 24 -** Here we see that God’s wrath, according to Paul, can be seen as God’s **gives people over** **to do whatever they desperately long and desire to do** and the associated consequences of those choices.

Here is what lost man failed to understand, real freedom is in worshipping the creator, the most horrific bondage imaginable, lies on the path of worshipping other things.

**These things do not free us, instead we find ourselves in bondage to them!**

The word translated “lusts” is the Greek word is **ἐπιθυμία** (ep-ee-thoo-mee’-ah). It literally means **“over desire.”** An all controlling desire or an all controlling longing.

Those deep-seated desires become what is driving us, what is motivating us, where are goals are focused!

**Tim Keller:** *“The main problem of our heart is not so much desires for bad things, but our over desires for good things, our turning of created, good things into gods, objects of our worship and service.”*

This is a giving over of people, in this life, to go their own way. **MacArthur calls it the “wrath of abandonment”, Sproul used a similar term when he called it “judicial abandonment.”** (Examples include: Jud 16:18-21; Jud 10:13-14; Pro 1:24-31; Hos 4:17; Mat 15:14, Acts 14:16)

**We saw this with Israel in our study in I Kings, and if we go back to II Kings we will see it with Judah.**

God removes His restraining hand of grace as men and women push back against his **existence** and **authority**.

**This is God’s right and righteous response to man’s sin.** God simply lifts his hand of restraint and allows them to be led away by the lusts of their own hearts.

They begin to dishonor their bodies (all because they have reversed everything)! The chose not to honor God, God gives them over to dishonor their own selves, just like they had dishonored God!

**Sin is the cause and the effect, and the next cause and the effect, and the next cause and the effect!**

**Vs 25-27 -** Because of their **continued rebellion against God**, they are worshipping the creature rather than the creator. For this reason, God gives them over to the very thing they so desperately wanted, to **dishonorable passions**.

Here Paul explains, further the **women exchanged the natural relationship** for those that are **against nature**. They dive headlong into homosexuality. They begin to commit shameless acts of passion with one another, men with men and women with women.

**These words are not Rich’s words, these are the Lord’s words.**

**\*\*\* Personal note, I know many of us have loved ones in our extended families that are involved in this sin. This is not the unpardonable sin. This is the result of resisting and suppressing God. But they are not too far from the gospel!** That is Paul’s point!

**Vs 28-32 -** **Here we see the third giving over.** Now they are given over to every form of evil!

**They are foolish, they are faithless, they are heartless, they are ruthless. When men suppress the knowledge of God, they are not enlightened, they are enslaved!**

But they are not too far gone.

Men still refuse to acknowledge God, and he gives them over even further, he lifts his hand of restraint even more!

He gives them over to a **“reprobate” mind.** The reprobate or debased mind is one in which the thoughts are filled with impurities, lusts, jealousies, anger, bitterness, etc.

**By the way, we have no reason to believe this list is exhaustive, rather representative.**

**This is God’s charges against man, in particular, Gentile man.**

**Vs 32 –** At this point, Paul would have had his Hebrew readers in full agreement with these awful charges against the Gentiles, he would have had the saying “amen” that I is what the Gentiles have done!

He says this in 1:32-2:1, which by the way sets the stage to focus on the Jews:

***“32 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. 2:1 Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things.”***

Here the finger of God, pointed squarely at the Gentiles, now begins to slowly turn, it now begins to point to those who had been given the law, those who better than the Gentiles understood the laws demands, the law’s charges against those who practice such thing deserve to die!

Therefore, you (Jews, or Gentiles) have no excuse when you judge others and practice the very same things.

Today this applies to the religious man or woman. In Paul’s day this principally applied to those who had the law of God, had the testimony of God, had the word of God, and did the very same things!

Like Nathan of old looked at David, Paul now shifts his gaze from the Gentile to look at his **Jewish brothers and he says… YOU TOO, are the men!**

You knew God’s righteous decrees (the Gentiles, not really), you know that those who practice such things should be put to death (the Gentiles, not really).

You knew all of this and spent time judging and in so doing you are condemning yourself!

**Therefore, you my Jewish brothers, along with my Gentile brothers, are without excuse, when you judge others for doing the very same things you are doing!**

**DROP THE MIKE.**

**Everyone, Jew and Gentile needs Jesus! Because the gospel if the power of God unto salvation!**

Now Paul is about to expound the need for the Jews and then reiterate with the need for all men. Paul want to make sure you and I understand how desperately we need the gospel!

We should not be worried that sin has carried people too far from the gospel!

**The Gospel is the only answer for man’s illness. It is the only treatment, the only medicine, it is the only prescription, the only medication, it is the only remedy, the only pill, the only dose, the only remedy, the single inoculation, the sole jab, the ONLY CURE for man’s sin problem.**

This is Paul’s point as we come to the close of chapter 1.

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