

SERMON NOTES

By Pastor John Paul Miller

In The Grip of God's Grace

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans

Romans 1:24-32 - "The Heathen without Excuse (Pt. 2)"

Romans 1:24-32, *"Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."*

We now come to the first doctrinal section called CONDEMNATION (1:18-3:20)

In it we find Paul answering the question, is the world lost?

The answer, yes, all the world is guilty before God.

Paul makes it clear that the whole world of mankind is without excuse and is deserving of God's wrath.

Notice, verse 18 – The heathen:

They knew God, but suppressed the truth
They glorified Him not as God – they perverted the truth

The steps down:

1. Indifference (vs. 21)
2. Ingratitude (vs. 21) *"...neither were thankful;..."*
3. Ignorance (vs. 22)
4. Idolatry

Now, in verse 24, we find the results, *"Wherefore..."*

Man, who was made in God's image now makes God into an image.

Verse 23 tells us that the first image man makes to exchange for God is that of *"... corruptible man, ..."*

They begin to sing, "Glory to man in the highest!"

What does God do?

vs. 24 - *God also gave them up*

vs. 26 - *God gave them up*

vs. 28 - *God gave them over*

We see the wrath of God revealed.

I. God gave them up to depraved Hearts and Bodies (vs. 24-27)

Romans 1:24-27, "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet."

In verse 24 we see God's judgment on man's idolatry was to give them over to *"... uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts,..."*

The New Living Testament – *"God abandoned them to do whatever shameful thing their hearts desired. As a result they did vile and degrading things with each others bodies."*

John R.W. Stott – "The history of the world confirms that idolatry tends to immorality. A false image of God leads to a false understanding of sex."

It's Sexual Sin!

Paul doesn't tell us what kind of sexual sin it was. But it's most likely heterosexual: fornication; adultery; lewdness; prostitution

It's any sex outside of marriage.

It's God's will for the Christian (1 Thess. 4)

But Paul does say (vs. 24) that this behavior degrades their bodies.

Illicit sex degrades a person's humanness.

But sex in marriage, as God intended it, ennobles it.

Notice verse 25, "*Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.*"

In verses 26-27, "*For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women (lesbianism) did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men (homosexuality) working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.*"

Paul now specifies their sexual depravity as homosexuality.

Let me say first that: (1) they are humans but their behavior is sinful:

Genesis 18:20-19:38 - Sodom and Gomorrah

Leviticus 18:22, "*Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.*"

Leviticus 20:13, "*If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.*"

1 Corinthians 6:9-10, "*Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.*"

1 Timothy 1:9-10, "*Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;*"

It's not a sickness, its sin!

It's not hate speech, it's truth (love speech)

But praise God, there's a cure for sin – some sickness' have no cure!

Paul also makes clear that this sin is "against nature (vs. 26)

"...men, leaving the natural use..."

Don't exchange the *truth* for the *lie*!

Don't buy the lie, be guided by God's word, His word is true. The truth will set you free!

The natural use does not mean "my nature", or, "what seems natural to me". It means God's created order.

So to act against nature means to violate the order which God has established.

What is God's order?

In Matthew 19:4-6, Jesus said, "*And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*"

Tim Allan Gardner (*Sacred Sex*) - "Sex was created, inaugurated, and blessed by the source of holiness, God Himself. Before sin entered the world, God gave sex as a divinely unique and extraordinary gift to the original couple to share and enjoy with each other, to celebrate their oneness. Sex is holy as well because it is in sex, in the full unity of both male and female, that the image of God is represented." This explains why Paul taught that marriage should give a concrete display of the relationship between Christ and the church. Sometimes we get the impression that when Paul wanted an illustration of the relationship between husband and wife, it dawned on him that Christ and the Church would be a great parallel. But deeper reflection leads to the conclusion that the *very purpose of marriage was to reflect the relationship between Christ and the church.*"

Nancy Leigh DeMoss - "The attack on marriage we are witnessing on every front in our society strikes at the heart of the character, the authority, and the redemptive plan of God. With courage, conviction, and compassion, Dr. Erwin Lutzer explains why this is such a critical battle and calls the church to fulfill its responsibility in this defining moment in history."

John R. W. Stott - "God created humankind male and female; God instituted marriage as a heterosexual union; and what God has thus united, we have no liberty to separate. This threefold action of God established that the only context which he intends for the 'one flesh' experience is heterosexual monogamy, and that a homosexual partnership (however loving and committed it may claim to be) is 'against nature' and can never be regarded as a legitimate alternative to marriage."

Notice at the end of verse 27 (KJV), "*...receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet* (right)."

The New Living Translation: "they suffered within themselves the penalty they deserved."

Is Paul speaking of AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome)?

No, Paul had never hear of AIDS, but perhaps some other sexually transmitted disease.

The point is that sin does and will have consequences!

II. God gave them up to a depraved mind

Romans 1:28-32, *"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."*

Notice the play on words in verse 28

What is a reprobate mind? It means tested and found to be no good.

It's a mind that doesn't work – what is good, it calls bad; and what is bad, and it calls good.

In verses 29-31 Paul lists 21 sins (anti-social behavior)

"... all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:

Notice in verse 29, *"Being filled with..."* – Controlled by

vs. 31 - *"...Without understanding (senseless), covenantbreakers (faithless), without natural affection (heartless), implacable, unmerciful (ruthless):"*

2 Timothy 3:1-5, *"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."*

They are without brains, honor, love or pity.

vs. 32 – *"...but have pleasure in them that do them."*

The give hearty approval

Psalms 8:5 *"For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, ..."*

Angels have spirits but no bodies

Animals have bodies but no spirits

Man has both body and a spirit!

Man can move upward toward spirit or downward toward the body.

We cannot sin “a little bit!”

All sin moves us downhill, individually, nationally, and culturally.

How far?

No one can set the limit.

It is hopeless – But not for God!

Ephesians 2:4, “But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,”

Illustration: The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32)