

The Book of Romans
1:21-32
9/12/2018 Wednesday PM

Romans 1:21-32

²¹For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.²²Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools²³and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.²⁴Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.

²⁵They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator - who is forever praised. Amen.²⁶Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones.²⁷In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

²⁸Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.²⁹They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips,³⁰slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents;³¹they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless.³²Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

- **V. 21** – “For although they knew God.” – This is not describing a knowledge that could save them, but a knowledge that simply recognized that God’s existence. They were “aware” of God.
- The issue was that the people “suppressed the truth” as v. 18 told us.
- This suppression of the truth leads people down a deadly spiral that leads to idolatry:
 - “they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him,” – They didn’t glorify nor thank God.
 - “but their thinking became futile and” – Truth and absolutes are quickly abandoned.
 - “their foolish hearts were darkened.” – Futile thinking is followed by futile living.
- **V. 22** – Paul says in this verse that they will still claim to be wise even though “their thinking became futile.”
 - People that deny God exists and put something else in His place think that they are wise however, they are actually fools according to the Bible.
- **V. 23** – These same people “exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images...”
 - Human beings are religious beings and it is our nature to worship and serve something beyond ourselves.
 - It may be another idea of God, a person, a thing, or even some false notion that no God exists.
 - Anyone who rejects the Creator will end up worshipping the creation. How foolish is that?
 - **How can intelligent people turn to idolatry?** Idolatry begins when people reject what they know about God. Instead of looking to him as the Creator and sustainer of life, they see themselves as the center of the universe. From there, they create gods that project their own selfish plans and decrees.
- **Idolatry Check** – Here are some questions to help you see if your attitudes are like idolatry.

1. Who created you?	5. What and who do you think you can’t live without?
2. Whom do you ultimately trust?	6. What priority in your life is greater than God?
3. To whom do you look for ultimate truth, security, and happiness?	7. What dream would you sacrifice everything to realize?
4. Who is in charge of your future?	8. Is God first place in your life?
- **V. 24** – What does it mean, “God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts...?” (vv.26, 28)
 - God left those who spurned him to their own desires. He took His guidance away.
 - Without His guidance, they degenerated into ruinous moral practices.
 - He goes on to say in v. 24, “to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.”
 - Without God’s restraint, the people dove into “sexual impurity” which often is a product of idolatry.
- **V.25** – This next section reiterates the connection between idolatry and sexual sin spoken of in v. 24.
 - “They exchanged the truth of God for a lie,” – They traded what can be known about God for a deliberate distortion.
 - “and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator” - This is idolatry at its core.
 - “who is forever praised. Amen.” – God will be praised forever, despite human sinful behavior.

- **Vv.26-27** – “Because of this...” Paul has just finished describing in general terms what happens to people who do not acknowledge God’s law as the standard for moral behavior.
 - Because of those people’s actions, “God gave them over to shameful lusts.”
 - V. 24 was speaking about God releasing people to their “sinful desires” in general.
 - Now he is turning to immoral relations specifically:
 - “...Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones.
 - ²⁷In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another.
 - Men committed indecent acts with other men,...
 - When God’s restraint is taken away and people turn to their “sinful desires” sexual immorality is often to first thing that we turn to.
 - Just because everyone is doing something does not make it right.
 - The last part of v. 27 says, “...and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.”
 - God did not make these people do anything, he simply turned them over to do what they wanted to do.
 - Their choices have consequences and there are penalties for our perversions.
- **V. 28** – “Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God,...”
 - Humans sat in judgment of God to decide whether he fit the qualifications of a God that would be to their liking; they decided he did not meet those qualifications and so dismissed him from their lives.
 - They had the knowledge, but they did not want to use it.
 - The verse goes on to say, “...he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done”
 - This is the third time Paul uses this type of phrase.
 - Each instance is an outline point as to why “the wrath of God is being revealed.” V.18
 - God does not always stop us from making choices against his will.
 - When we choose to reject God, he lets us, and our minds become depraved and we do things we shouldn’t.
- **Vv.29-31** – In these verses, Paul lists over 20 different ways in which our depraved mind can causes us to act.
 - ²⁹They have become filled with **every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity**. They are full of **envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice**. They are **gossips**, ³⁰**slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful**; they **invent ways of doing evil**; they **disobey their parents**; ³¹they are **senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless**. Similar lists can be found in 1 Cor 6:9-10; Gal 5:19-21; and Col 3:5.
- **V.32** – “Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death,...”
 - We are all created in God’s image and have a basic moral nature and conscience.
 - Even phycologists agree that it is rare for a person to have no conscience at all.
 - Most people know instinctively when they do wrong – but they may not care.
 - Just as we can know generally about God through nature, we can also know that consequences come from wrong actions.
 - The verse goes on to say, “...they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.”
 - This is the worst part of this verse really.
 - Not only do the people continue to sin themselves, but they approve of others to do the same.
 - These verses are a perfect picture of what is happening in our society in 2018.
 - Even with all the knowledge of God that we have today, it doesn’t seem that we have changed much in the past couple of millennia.
- This is something that Paul understood and is why he was so passionate about preaching the gospel.
- Only the message of the gospel, applied to the lives of humanity, will change the course of our current state.

Next Week Study

Romans 2:1-11