

Romans 1:24-32

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[0:00] Romans chapter one, and we're going to begin our reading in verse 24. Therefore, God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worship and serve the creature rather than the creator who is blessed forever.

Amen. For this reason, God gave them up to dishonorable passions for their women, exchange natural relations for those that are contrary to nature. 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.

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. They are filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice.

They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanders, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

Though they know God's decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them, but give approval to those who practice them. Happy Easter, right? Let's pray together.

[1:17] Father God, I pray that you will bless us in our frailty this morning. Help us, Father, as we study your word to praise a risen king.

We pray this in Christ's precious name. Amen. Please have a seat. For those of you who are guests with us this morning, I did not pick this text for this morning.

It was kind of a sign to me as we have been preaching through Romans and started, oh, five weeks or so ago. And we arrived here at verse 24.

Last week, we saw the characteristics of the fallen man starting in verse 18 through 23. Those who are not found in Christ rejected God's revelation, fail to give glory to God, is not thankful toward God, thinks foolishly, worships wrongly.

And therefore, we saw in verse 20 are without excuse. The judgment, the condemnation that will be due them is right and it's just.

[2:30] So we come to verse 24. I'm going to focus primarily this morning on verse 24, 25 and 32. Therefore, God gave them up in the lust of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, 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. So Paul says that that God gave them up. I want to read you a quick paragraph from MacArthur's commentary on this. The Greek term, therefore, gave up or gave over is *paradidimo*. Excuse me if I'm mispronouncing that. And he writes is an intense verb. In the New Testament, it is used of giving one's body to be burned and three times of Christ giving himself up to death.

It is used in a judicial sense of men's being committed to prison or to judgment and of rebellious angels being delivered to pits of darkness. It is also used of Christ committing himself to his father's care and of the father's delivering his own son to propitiatory death.

So a strong verb is being used here. This idea of giving over man because of man's sinfulness. God has said, I'm going to retract my restraining grace from him.

[3:52] I'm going to let him do what he wants to do because of his sin. And it's because of the lusts of their hearts. Jesus says in Matthew 15, 19, For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness and slander.

So because of the condition of fallen man's heart, God removes his restraining grace and gives him over to it to serve the creature rather than the creator.

And Paul is referring back to verse 23 from last week. And isn't that really, though, the essence of idolatry? When we turn and serve anything created versus the one who created them, who is the creator.

It's the very essence of idolatry we see there. And I think Paul comes up for air for a moment as he's now half of chapter one talking about man's depravity.

I think he comes up forever to speak of the creator, to give himself a little lift in his spirit. And he says, who was blessed forever. Amen. But I also think in that we can find a great truth because he said who is blessed forever.

[5 : 09] Not conditional based on man himself, on how we worship God. But God is, in fact, blessed forever in spite of what we do.

Amen. Paul interjects that there for us in verse 25. He then goes on to show us the extent to which man's heart is depraved.

I want to define that term for you, that the idea of depravity, depravity is a metallurgical term. When the metal worker would refine metal, he would refine it.

He'd burn off the impurities, would rise to the top, and he'd skim them away. And he'd heat that metal again, and those impurities would rise to the top, and he'd skim them away. And he would pull the good metal out, but eventually he would get to the point where what was left was just the crud. Just the leftovers. And that metal could no longer be refined any longer. That metal was said to be depraved. Good for nothing. Worthless. Of no value.

[6 : 13] And that's what sin, that's what Adam's sin did to all of mankind. Left us dead. Of no value whatsoever. Whatever. Created in God's image, but totally corrupted because of sin.

And that's where we find these people. Right? We see in the following verses, which we're not going to get into, I could list and talk about each one and tell you about all these things and what they mean and how horrid they are.

I'm not going to do that. But what we see in those things is a person who lives in direct opposition to God's law. Breaks it at every point in this list.

He builds. He really exposes the depravity of man to us as he works through these next few verses. And I think that's a value to us as Christians. We have been set free from the law of God, but yet we still break it on so many levels.

So I think it's good for us to look at a list like this and hold ourselves up to it. Charles Spurgeon wrote this in a commentary on this text. He said, The law is also very useful because it shows us our defections and stains.

[7 : 31] It is like the looking glass, which my lady holds up to her face, that she may see if there be any spot on it. But she cannot wash her face with the looking glass.

When the mirror has done its utmost, then there are the same stains. It cannot take away a single spot. It can only show where one is. And the law, though it reveals our sin, our shortcomings, our transgressions, it cannot remove the sin or the transgression.

It is weak for that purpose because it was never intended to accomplish such an end. So the law exposes our sinfulness. And as Christians, that's the value here for us.

And for the lost person, they need the bad news of the law, of the just condemnation of God, for good news to be good news at all. Praise God we get to talk about some good news this morning. I'm going to skip on down to verse 32. Paul writes, Though they know God's decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them, but give approval to those who practice them.

[8 : 43] He says that they know God's decree. Romans 2.15, a little bit later, he writes, They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even accuse them.

Paul says to us that mankind is aware of God's law, that it's written on their hearts, that they know what is good and what is bad. And he takes it a step further to say that they actually know that they deserve to die because they transgressed it.

They know that much. They don't have the gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation, but they at least know that they deserve death because they have transgressed God's law.

And even though they know that, they not only do them, but they give approval to those who practice them. The evidence that the world knows that they have transgressed God's law and they deserve death is the guilt and the shame that everyone in this world carries around with them.

No one in this world is happy. And you want to know why? Because they know they're living miserable lives. And what is misery love?

[9 : 54] Company. Right? So they not only know this, but they give approval to those who practice such things. And that's where we find ourselves without Christ.

Living in sin. Completely aware that we deserve death as a result of it. Until the gospel intercedes. Ignatius, who was a super cool first century martyr, said, The life of a man is a continual death, unless it be that Christ lives in him.

Isn't that good? The life of a man is a continual death, unless it be that Christ lives in him. So let's talk about the gospel. The good news of Jesus Christ.

Martin Luther called it the great exchange. That we were unrighteous. And that Christ took his righteousness and gave it to us, imputed it, is the fancy word for that.

Imputed his righteousness to us, and took our sin on himself. God couldn't let sin go unpunished. Otherwise, he wouldn't be completely just.

[11 : 05] He's completely just. That means he must punish all sin. He couldn't just say, Yeah, you guys are forgiven. You're not forgiven. Okay. Now the score is settled. He had to punish it all.

So he punished the sins of those who place their faith in Christ, in Christ. He poured out his wrath on Christ for our sins. Romans 5.8, Paul writes, But God shows his love for us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

It's kind of a personal rendering of Isaiah 53.4. But he was wounded for your transgressions. He was crushed for your iniquities.

Upon him was the chastisement that brought you peace. And with his stripes, you are healed. One of my favorite gospel presentations in all of Scripture is found in Ephesians chapter 2.

I'd ask that you turn there with me real quick. I want to show you a few things from it. Ephesians chapter 2. I'll start reading in chapter 1.

[12 : 19] And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved.

And raised us up with him, and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace and kindness toward us. In Christ Jesus.

So let me show you his logic in reverse. Okay? Verse 7. So that he might show the immeasurable riches of his gracious.

So he might make himself great. So he might show the world his great grace to his church. What did he do? He raised us up with Christ, so that we may be made alive together with him.

[13 : 33] That truth hinges on the resurrection, doesn't it? And then verse 4, this phrase, but God, because we were dead. Isn't that what verse 1 says?

We were dead in our trespasses and sins. But then this precious phrase in verse 4, But God, even though we deserve his just wrath, condemnation was ours, but God, being rich in mercy, made us alive together with Christ, and raised us up with him.

Said he might make himself great. It's one of my favorite gospel presentations. John Stott once wrote, Christianity is a resurrection religion.

The concept of resurrection lies at its heart. Remove it, and Christianity is destroyed. Turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 15. I hope that this text is being used all over the world this morning.

1 Corinthians chapter 15. There have been some debates in the Corinthian church about whether or not it was possible for someone to be raised from the dead. And Paul begins to address that, but in his very poignant logic, takes it to Christ, and gets right at the heart of their religion.

[14 : 52] Remove the resurrection, and Christianity ceases to exist. 1 Corinthians chapter 15. We'll start reading in verse 12. Now, if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. So how can you say there is no resurrection? Because we know Christ was raised, right? That's what he's saying there. Verse 14. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain, and your faith is in

vain.

We're all wasting our time this morning. Go home. If the resurrection didn't happen. That's what he's saying. Forget about it. Eat, drink, be merry.

This is such a waste of time. If the resurrection didn't happen. Verse 15. We are even found to be misrepresenting God. Therefore, I'm a blasphemer this morning.

Because we testified about God that He raised Christ, whom He did not raise, if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised.

[15:55] Verse 16. Oh, verse 17. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile, and you are still in your sins. That work, that great exchange, it never happened.

That exchange was made null and void, because Christ was defeated by death. Verse 18. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. We are fools. Verse 20. But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

For as by a man came death, being Adam, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead, being Christ. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

Isn't that good? So Christ, not only bore the wrath of God for our sins, but conquered the death that accompanied our sin. He reigns over death, because he was, in fact, resurrected.

[17:14] You know, we're the only religion with a resurrected king. 1 Corinthians 15, 55, and 56, later on in that chapter, Paul writes, O death, where is your victory?

In jest. O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

It's good stuff this morning. But back to our text in Romans. I believe we, as Christ Family Church, as American Christians, have a bit of a problem as we read to this text.

And I think that problem is that the things that Paul is talking about here aren't too incredibly shocking to us. I think we read it in passing.

They go, oh yeah, yeah, those things, yeah. Evil, malice. Of course. Sure. And I think the reason for that is that we're not that much different than the people being described here.

[18:30] I don't think we're that different. I don't think that I'm so different that I look at my neighbor and go, whew, a depraved man lives next door to me who needs the gospel.

Look at those across the street. Look at my coworkers and the way they live. My life looks so drastically different from this that this shocks me.

Oh, people do live this way. Look at the fallen world around us. How horribly entrapped and enslaved it is by sin. Because I think we ourselves live this way.

I think that if we would allow the truth of the resurrection to crack open our cold and hard hearts, we would live a lot differently. If we would actually embrace, hold on to the truth of the resurrection of Christ, we would live as children of a risen king.

We would actually embrace his promises to us and live in light of them. What are some of those promises?

[19:41] Promises that would only be possible if Christ has risen. His promise to be with us always in Matthew 28, 20.

He has promised that all those who belong to him will be saved in John 10, 4. He's promised that those who are saved will never be snatched from his hand.

In John 10, 29. He's promised to give us power for holy living in John 15, 5. And he's promised to return and reign forever in Revelation 3, 11 and 12.

Do our lives reflect a belief in any of these things? I think we should examine ourselves. I think we should let this light expose our hearts.

I think that these are the kinds of messages that our church needs to hear until we start living differently. Radically changed people. People who read a text like this and weep for the lost around us.

[20:57] that's the power of the resurrection for us today. I think the conviction that it brings that we live like the dead when we should be living like the risen.

Those who have life. Those who have a gospel message and like Paul should be obligated to share it with those around us. Should have a compulsion within them to do so.

We've tagged Christianity on to the end of all that we are. Of how we define ourselves. And recognize that that makes us idolaters. Because I worship my job and my car and my house and my

family.

And I put Christianity at the end of all those things. And I'm a guy that goes to church on Sunday. We're idolaters. I think there's no better time than this morning to lay that down and to begin living as the children of a risen king.

In a few moments we're going to worship in taking the Lord's Supper together. And it's a symbol of Christ's broken body for us and his blood spilt for us.

[22 : 20] I can't even eat the cracker. I'm allergic to wheat. And you know what I do? I crush the cracker in my hand to remember what Christ has done. And I stick it in my cup after I've drank the juice.

It's a symbol. It's a symbol that should be taken seriously. Understand what you're doing is that you're joining with the body of believers in celebrating and remembering what Christ has done for us.

Died. Raised again. And what he's promised to do for us. These promises that I read to you.

Looking to his coming. Looking to his power in our life.

So if you take the Lord's Supper while you're harboring sin, shame on you. Have some time. Spend a little time repenting this morning. I hope you'll take advantage of it.

But in closing I want to read to you the lyrics of a song by John Wesley called Christ the Lord is risen today. I'm not going to read the hallelujahs if you know the song.

[23 : 25] So listen to these lyrics. Christ the Lord is risen today. Son of men and angels say raise your joys and triumphs high sing ye heavens and earth reply.

Love's redeeming work is done. fought the fight the battle won. Lo the sun's eclipse is o'er. Lo he sets in blood no more.

Vain the stone the watch the seal. Christ hath burst the gates of hell. Death in vain forbids him rise.

Christ hath opened paradise. Lives again our glorious king where of death is now thy sting.

Once he died our souls to save where thy victory o'er the grave. Soar we now where Christ hath led following our exalted head.

Made like him like him we rise. Ours the cross the grave the skies. Let's pray together.