

God's Wrath Against The Godless & Unrighteous Pleasant Plains 6-2-2019PM NICK ANGEL

- ***READ Romans 1:16,17*** The beautiful truths that are found within these two verses cannot and should not be ignored or understated. Firstly, the Apostle Paul takes an unmistakable stand for God and His Gospel within these two verses. He is putting all of his eggs in the basket of the Gospel, and he is not backing down. He is unwilling to back down because of the second truth...that it is only the Gospel that has the power for man's salvation. Thirdly, this salvation is available to all persons who might come to God in belief whether they be Jews or Gentiles. Fourthly, God's righteousness is clearly seen in the grace and mercy that is seen extended through the Gospel. Fifthly and lastly, those who come to be righteous before God are those who live their lives by faith.
- This revelation given to men through the Apostle Paul by God ought to fill us with joy beyond measure! God's righteous mercy and grace are available to all people! But that leaves me with a question...why is His mercy and grace even necessary? Why are both Jews and Gentiles in need of God's salvation through the Gospel? What are they needing to be save from?
- Thankfully, we are not left without answers. In fact, Paul quickly follows up these encouraging statements with more truths that are not so encouraging...in fact they are quite depressing because we are told of God's wrath that has come against the godlessness and unrighteousness of men, specifically those of the nations of the world (non-Jews). This evening we are going to look at the offenses of these men, God's immediate response, and His ultimate response to these sins of men. As we walk through the text, we will be able to see the roots of sin, its progression, and the results of these offenses against God.

I. What offenses lead to God's wrath coming down upon mankind?

A. The suppression of truth. (v.18-20)

1. Speaking of the nations of the world (**vv.13-15**), Paul states that their initial offense against God was suppressing the truth of God. They actively worked against the truth and reality of God and His will for mankind.
2. We might think about giving the people the benefit of the doubt because maybe we're thinking they just were simply unaware of God, but Paul throws that notion out the window by stating that the nations are without excuse. They are without excuse because the evidence of God that is all around them in the existence of this created world.

B. Failure to glorify God as God. (v.21)

1. Part of their efforts to suppress the truth and will of God was to make sure that they did not give God credit for being the divine Creator of the world. In fact, they would fail to give God any glory that would be due to deity.
2. Proper glory given to God would include not only acknowledgment of Him being God, but it would also rightly include appreciation for everything that has been given to us in the creation of God. If people are going to actively work against acknowledging the reality of God and His divine nature, then we can only expect for them to fail to show proper gratitude for His works.

C. Claim to be wise when foolish. (v.22)

1. Instead of giving God credit and thanks, we find the nations of the world trying to behave as if they were wise and had the ability to provide for all of their own needs. They believed that true wisdom resided within their own wisemen.
2. This makes me think of the stories from Daniel when the kings would have dreams, and every time they would first call the magicians, mediums, sorcerers, and wise men (**Daniel 2:2,10-13**) Upon coming to the king, it is quickly realized that these men know nothing and it isn't until Daniel shows up with the true power of God that the king is able to have his dreams interpreted. Men have always claimed more wisdom than they actually possess.

D. Exchanging the glory of God for earthly images. (v.23)

1. This lack of wisdom and knowledge was especially evident as they rebelled further against God by assigning the glory due His name to mere pieces of wood, stone, or metal that were fashioned into various images and shapes of creatures that are found upon the earth.
2. Instead of bowing themselves before the mighty throne of God, these people would give credit for their blessings to inanimate objects that can do absolutely nothing of themselves. They cannot see, hear, or speak. They cannot move unless someone picks them up. They are nothing, and yet they will receive honor from the one who made them. No wonder God was so angry with the hard heartedness of these people!

E. Exchanging the truth for a lie. (v.25)

- See point A...Also note that our rejection of truth leaves us the only option of believing that which are lies. There are no other choices besides accepting the truth or accepting lies.

F. Worship the creation rather than the Creator. (v.25)

1. See point D...Again, there is only one of two options. We can either worship the Creator or we can worship the creation. Our worship of one automatically lowers the other.

★ All of this could be summed up by stating that what we find in these first few verses is **intentional rebellion** against God. Again, these people had no excuse to be ignorant of a divine Creator. Just as Paul said on Mars Hill in **Acts 17:22-31**, even the poets of the Gentile people recognized that there was a greater divine being over the earth. And yet, instead of embracing the Lord and His will...these people intentionally and actively rebelled against Him. Back in **Romans 1**, we will next find God's response to the nations as they rebelled against Him.

II. For these offenses God delivered them over...

A. ...in the desires of their hearts. (v.24)

1. These people wanted nothing more than to rebel against God and simply do as their hearts desired to do. God responds to these desires of the heart by allowing for people to do as they would like to do. God has given us the gift of choice, and we can make the willful choice to reject God and His will in order to pursue whatever it is that we desire.
2. This is the root of sin. Sin begins in our hearts as desires, and we are presented with the choice as to whether or not we will act upon those desires. Obviously, God wants for us to respect His will for our lives, but He is willing to allow us to make the choice whether or not we will pursue His will for our lives.

B. ...to disgraceful passions. (v.26,27)

1. Unfortunately, anything that goes against God's will for our lives will always land in the area of sin. This means that any passions we have against God will always be evil and disgraceful. God designed for us to behave in a certain way, and when we desire in our hearts to go against His designs then we will only do that which is disgraceful.
2. In this immediate context going back to **v.24**, the sins of the people centered around their unnatural use of their bodies with one another in a sexual manner. The human body's design clearly shows that we are to operate in a certain way, but the disgraceful passions of men that stem from the desires of their hearts will lead them to do that which simply doesn't make sense.

C. ...to corrupt minds. (v.28-31)

1. Therefore, it shouldn't surprise us when they are fully corrupted in their minds to do whatever it is that they desire to do. They will do anything and everything that finds place within their hearts, and we surely recognize that a corrupt heart and mind will only lead to corrupted actions.
2. **Vv.29-31** only further show the true depravity of men. Not only do they commit evil deeds with each other, but they also are full of evil deeds against one another. They care not for God, and they care not for one another. It is as if the days of Noah in **Genesis 6** were happening all over again.

- ★ This section containing the results of rebellion against God show us clearly that intentional rebellion against God will only lead us to a place where we do that which is against God's natural design for us. He created man for woman and woman for man in the beginning. He created them to live in harmony with one another showing kindness for one another. And yet, what we find in the nations of the earth is individuals who only care for fulfilling the desires their own hearts and minds even if those desires are completely unnatural.
- ★ It doesn't matter how much it goes against God's natural design. It doesn't matter how much they might hurt another. All that matters within the heart and mind of the rebel against God is making sure that their own disgraceful passions are being fulfilled. It is worth noting again that God allows for this type of behavior to exist within this world, but we must also note that this type of behavior is not going to go unpunished forever.

III. The result of sins against God?

A. They are deserving of death. (v.32)

1. While God might allow for mankind the freedom to choose how they will behave and carry themselves before Him, that does not mean that they are free from the consequences of their horrible decisions. In fact, Paul states that they even know "*God's just sentence*", and yet they are going to continue to do as they please.
2. This is a result of a heart, mind, and body that has totally been corrupted by wickedness and sin. It is quite possible for some people to become so hardened against God and His will that they would know but ignore the fact that their actions will result in death before God. I have even heard some go so far as to say that they would be happy to go to hell if it meant avoiding an eternity in the presence of the God of heaven.

B. Those applauding deserve the same. (v.32)

1. What's worse is that they not only practice such evil things, but they will also cheer on and encourage others to do the same. It is one thing to do that which will condemn your own soul, but it is another level of evil to encourage others to do join in your wickedness.
2. While the text clearly shows us that it is those who practice such things that are deserving of death, we can also conclude that an unwillingness to stand for God's truth will also put people in a position where they themselves will be guilty of encouraging unrighteousness. All people must be certain to not only avoid sin themselves, but they must also avoid the encouragement of others to rebel and sin against God.

- ★ It could be a temptation for us to become impatient with God's timing in regards to His punishment of the godless and unrighteous. We might find ourselves with a mindset like that of Asaph as he wrote in **Psalm 73:3-5**, "*For I envied the arrogant; I saw the prosperity of the wicked. They have an easy time until they die, and their bodies are well fed. They are not in trouble like others; they are not afflicted like most people.*" We wonder if those who are wicked will ever have to face the consequences for their evident evil deeds, but we must recognize that God will act in His time.
- ★ Wicked people might live their entire lives on top of the world in this life, but they will have to stand before God just like the rest of us. They will answer for their deeds done in the body in this life, and their wickedness will receive its just recompense of death away from the Father for all eternity. We shouldn't desire this for anyone, but it is a reality that is awaiting the wicked when God's wrathful punishment is handed down upon them on the last day.

However, this shouldn't be the bulk of our concern anyways. Instead, our concern should be upon helping people to avoid the wrath of God that will be upon the godless and unrighteous. The Gospel is for all, and it will deliver the faithful from God's wrath. As we go throughout this week, may we lean upon the Good News of Jesus, and take time to share it with any who have need as we have opportunity.