

Romans 1 (Part 3): 18-34 - The Wrath of God Revealed

Teacher: Pastor Paul LeBoutillier
Calvary Chapel Ontario

Open your Bibles to Romans chapter 1. And this is probably one of the most challenging portions of Scripture. Well, challenging, and it's not challenging from the standpoint of understanding. It is perhaps challenging from the standpoint of delivering it in the United States of America, 2015, because we've taken some huge steps backward, downward, sin-ward in our culture. So we'll have to deal with those things today.

Before we get going with that though, I don't know how many of you like to watch or have liked to watch on TV programs about courtroom scenes or something like that. Some of you might have even worked in the court system and been involved in that.

Some of the rest of us have been fortunate enough to be on jury duty a few times. And so we've been involved in, I had my first introduction to the court scene back when I was, back in the late, early 80s, when I was working at a radio station that was in house with a TV station. And I was sitting out in the TV studio area, well, the newsroom, and I was just doodling on a piece of paper, and one of the news directors noticed that I could draw.

I don't do it that much anymore, but. And he invited me to come and be a courtroom sketch artist. And I actually did that for about a year. And it was fun. And it was particularly fun because I got a crash course on our judicial system. And that was pretty sweet. It was also really interesting, and this is a total side point, but back then, my hair was really long.

It was my experience in the courtroom as a courtroom artist that caused me largely to get my hair cut. Because I was, I suddenly realized I was drawing people who were on trial who looked just like me. Yeah. And in that sense perpetuating the idea that you shouldn't trust people that looked like me. But anyway, that was enough about me.

But anyway, one of the things I learned and even learned as doing jury duty, I've been on jury duty several times. I've actually only sat on a jury on two separate occasions. But in both of those instances, the jury that I was on found the defendant not guilty.

We acquitted the person and then, and it wasn't necessarily because we believed them innocent. You guys understand how court cases work. We acquitted them because we felt the prosecution didn't do the proper job of actually proving their guilt, which of course is what has to happen in a court of law.

And one of the things I've noticed after, being in the court system, watching the court system unfold, is that proving an individual's guilt is difficult. It's a challenging sort of a thing.

That is exactly what the apostle Paul is doing in this book, and particularly in this chapter, and what bleeds over into the next couple of chapters. And he is going to argue for the guilt of the human race. How would you like that job?

And what he is going to do, in order to establish the guilt of the human race, is he's going to divide the human race into three categories, and I'll put these up on the screen for you so that you can see them here together with me.

Establishing GUILT

- The godless (1:18-32)

They are essentially the godless, and that's what we're going to look at here in the rest of Chapter 1. What that refers to is people who just don't care about God. They live a completely godless, heathen sort of life. It's just like, hey, whatever, man, I'm the Lord of my own destiny. And he's going to address that particular genre or category of people.

Establishing GUILT

- The godless (1:18-32)
- The moral (2:1-16)

And then he's going to deal with the moral or who we call the moralist. And these are people who have a conscience and they have a sense of right and wrong. And they believe that they ought to follow their conscience and do what is right and not do what is wrong. But Paul, so Paul is going to argue for their guilt as well. Isn't that an interesting sort of a concept. And he's going to completely blow away the idea that being a moralist is going to save you from the wrath of God.

Establishing GUILT

- The godless (1:18-32)
- The moral (2:1-16)
- The religious Jew (2:2:17-29)

And then finally, he's going to deal with the religious Jew, which in his mind is just a religious person. But today we have religious people who aren't Jews, but we just call them religious people. You're a religious person. And that's a person who believes in God but plays fast and loose with the Word of God, but likes to keep regulations and rules and things like that, but they're a religious individual. And Paul is going to argue for them, for the wrath of God in their life. How do you like that? Boy, just stay tuned. It's going to get interesting.

But you, this is another total side point, but just don't you might be interested to know that these chapters that we're going to be looking at, where Paul argues for the guilt of mankind, were actually used in our laws, a law institution at one time here in the United States of America. Not anymore.

But these chapters were actually studied by law students in some of our major Ivy League schools. Again, this doesn't happen anymore because you'd be laughed at today for bringing the Bible into play. But these arguments that Paul makes are so good that they were used as great examples of arguing for the case of something. In this case, it is the guilt of mankind.

Let's read the verses that we're going to be looking at today and then we'll pray. We're going to need to pray. Verse 18 is where we're picking it up to the end of the chapter:

“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.

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.²² Claiming to be wise, they became fools,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." (ESV)

See why we need to pray? Let's pray.

Jesus, we need Your help to really look into this and see what You want to say to us today. And here we are, Lord, living in the midst of the very things that we're reading.

And we need Your Holy Spirit to just move upon the hearts, our hearts, and God help us in our understanding. Our appropriation and application of the Word that lays before us today.

Use this, we pray. Do what You desire to do with it. We ask it in Jesus' name, amen.

Now, as Paul begins his masterful argument, laying out reasons for the wrath of God that is coming upon mankind and the guilt of mankind, he basically starts off by showing us our number one problem living on planet earth. And, by the way, it's not war, world hunger, domestic violence, or the breakup of the family.

Those are all terrible things, and we hate them all, but they are symptoms of a greater issue. The biggest issue that we have to deal with as human beings living on planet earth is the coming wrath of God. The wrath of God.

Paul begins by saying the wrath of God is coming. Then he begins to outline things that generate or provoke God's righteous wrath. He lists them in order to establish our guilt. He is like an attorney speaking to the jury, saying, what I'm going to do for you is lay out three things that provoke God's wrath. I will show you why God's wrath is justified and why man stands guilty before a holy God.

Let me put these 3 things up on the screen for you. Three things that generate or provoke the wrath of God.

3 things generating the wrath of God

- The suppression of truth

Number one, he is going to talk about the suppression of truth. We'll deal with that. We'll talk about what that's all about.

3 things generating the wrath of God

- The suppression of truth
- Worship of the creature instead of the Creator

Secondly, he is going to talk about the fact that man begins to worship that which is created rather than the One who created it. We're going to talk about how incredibly dumb that is—worshiping the creature rather than the Creator.

3 things generating the wrath of God

- The suppression of truth
- Worship of the creature instead of the Creator
- Perverting nature for lustful reasons

And then, thirdly, he is going to talk about how man has perverted that which is natural—or perverted nature, if you will—for his own personal lustful reasons.

By the way, you're going to see the words, lust and passion, in these verses. Well, you already have, because we've read through them. Isn't it interesting? Those are very key words: lust and passion.

Do you know that's what we live by today? Our culture is driven by lust. It's not driven by reason. It's not driven by logic anymore. It's driven by lust. And we literally justify things because we lust for them.

If I lust for it, it's okay, right? If I want it, it must be okay. It means that it's in me. It means that it's in me naturally. And because it's there, it's all right for me to do it, to go for it, or whatever.

Let's deal with the first thing he brought up—or is going to bring up here—as far as things that provoke the wrath of God. The first one is the suppression of truth.

Look at verse 18 with me once again: *"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men..."* By the way, what's the difference between ungodliness and unrighteousness? Ungodliness is how we live toward God, and unrighteousness is how we live toward our fellow

man. And he says, “...by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.” Mankind is guilty of suppressing the truth.

What is the truth? He goes on in verse 19, look with me there: “*For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.*” So what is man guilty of suppressing? It’s very simply that God exists—that there is a God in heaven. He’s really there. Man suppresses that. There’s no God. God is dead, Nietzsche said. This is something that has been suppressed for a long time.

Why is it being suppressed? Well, that’s obvious. Well, I think it’s obvious. Although there are all kinds of intellectual arguments that are advanced for why we don’t believe in God, it all comes down to the fact that I don’t want Him around because I want to live the way I want to live. God cramps my style. He rains on my sin parade. And so I’m going to believe that He doesn’t exist, right? So I don’t have to worry about it, right?

But Paul says here that man suppresses this truth in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary. What evidence? Nature. Creation. Did you notice what he said here? He says in verse 19, “*For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.*” And he tells why: “*For his invisible attributes...*”

In other words, things you can’t see with your eyes about God are actually seen in nature—things like: “*..his eternal power and (His) divine nature (Look at this—it’s interesting the words Paul chooses, isn’t it?), have been clearly perceived...*” Not basically, or kind of, or arbitrarily, or ambiguously. They are clearly perceived in what has been made ever since the creation of the world. Right?

In fact, Paul says men are without excuse because it is obvious to us that there is a God. It’s obvious. Isn’t that interesting? This is exactly—I think about David when he was a young man lying out in the field taking care of his father’s sheep. He looked up at the sky during the day, the stars at night, and considered the creation of God. Let me show you what David wrote about a thousand years before Christ was born:

Psalm 19:1-4 (ESV)

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims His handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.

The heavens declare (he wrote) the glory of God, and the sky (literally) above proclaims (or declares) His handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. (In fact, he says, you know what?) There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world.

Doesn't matter what language you speak. All you have to do is look up at the sky, look at creation, and see all that has been made. There is a voice speaking in your language that says, God exists. David saw it a thousand years before the birth of Christ. Paul refers to it here as a declaration of His existence and His attributes. He says it is plain to them.

You might say, well, pastor Paul, if the existence of God is so plain and so obvious, then why are there so many scientists today who are convinced that God doesn't exist?

Paul deals with that in the following verse, in 21, look with me there: *"For although they knew God (they knew He was there), they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking (and look at this) and their foolish hearts were darkened."*

Now, reading this verse or quoting this verse in the academic community isn't going to win you any friends or help you win a popularity contest. But this is what God says is going on in our world among those who have chosen to say God doesn't exist, in the face of evidence—and I will tell you, overwhelming evidence—that God exists. He says they become futile in their thinking. Ultimately, their understanding becomes darkened. Their hearts become darkened.

Some of you might still be wondering a little bit, why is it so obvious that, by looking at creation, you can see God exists? And some of you are still wondering, and you're saying, I just don't get it. What is so obvious about looking at creation that says God exists. Well, it all centers around the idea of design. If there's one thing that the creation around us shows us, it's that life and nature have been intricately designed. It's so obvious.

In fact, our bodies are a marvelous example of engineering and design. Biological science is proving this daily. The more we learn about our physical bodies—and we know more about them now than we ever have—the more we see we are fearfully and wonderfully made in intricate design. It is absolutely amazing.

But the thing we understand about design is that when there is design, there must be a designer. That is logic. Again, we don't live by logic anymore. We

don't think using any logical reasoning any longer. But the fact is still true: where there is design, there must be a designer.

The recognition of design and order is something that God factored into all human beings. You don't have to go looking for it. You don't have to take a class to learn how to recognize design. It's just in you.

That's why Paul says here in Romans chapter 1, it is obvious. It is plain. The words he uses: when you look at creation, you see a design. Let me demonstrate by showing you a picture of something on the screen here. That's a very simple picture. You all recognize this as a dress.



Now, it is obvious when you and I look at this that this dress didn't just come into being. It wasn't found under a rock, having been woven together through some random, purposeless phenomenon. You look at a dress like that, and you go, it's obvious that dress had a designer, right? That is what we logically

deduce. No one would dare say about that dress anything otherwise you'd be laughed at if you said no one designed that dress, and it just came into being.

Now, that dress is a very simple design. The fact of the matter is, your body is a very complex design. And yet, you are being told every day that there is no designer for your physical body and no designer for the world in which you live. That is absolutely ridiculous because where there is design, there must be a designer. In fact, I believe in the universe we see overwhelming evidence of both design and order.

What's really interesting is that modern science wants you to believe that order can come out of chaos. They can't prove it. They can't prove it in any capacity or in any sort of thing. But they want you to believe that order comes out of chaos. They believe the universe came about through chaotic, random phenomena, and that order grew out of it.

Is there order in the universe you and I live in? Good grief, yes. You can set your watch by the sun coming up and going down. The seasons—you guys all know that after summer, fall is coming. None of us goes, well, I wonder if fall is going to come this year. We know that it is because the nature around us and the creation has order built into it.

And you know what order implies? Well, more than implies—you know what it proves? Intelligence. Here's the interesting thing: modern science is trying to tell you that there is order in creation, but there was no intelligence behind it.

But do you know what they're looking for in space when they're looking for life on other planets? They're looking for intelligence. Do you know how they're trying to find intelligence? By listening for frequencies in the cosmos. Do you know what they're listening for in those frequencies? They're listening for order.

What they hear is random static that proves it's just noise—just noise from celestial bodies and suns and stars. It's random, and there's nothing orderly about it. But they are constantly listening. Scientists, right now as we speak, are listening, trying to find some sort of clue of intelligence in the universe. They're listening for order in those frequencies because they know—although they deny it in the next breath—they know that order proves intelligence.

And yet, they're telling you that the order of your physical body and the order of creation around you was not made through intelligent processes, but was made through random processes minus intelligence. It is ridiculous. We've been duped.

It's just a product of darkened hearts and futile thinking. As simple as that. I don't know if you can tell, but I'm passionate about this. It's just, hey, we've been duped, okay? That's a hard thing to admit, isn't it? I've been lied to.

This is where Paul goes on to speak of the second thing that generates or provokes God's wrath in verse 22. Look with me there. This is the next thing: "*Claiming to be wise, they became fools* (in other words, they have their PhDs, and all their other piled higher and deeper things at the end of their name.

It says, but they claiming to be wise, they actually became fools) ²³ *and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.*" Of course, this describes the early stages of idolatry.

Aren't you glad we don't have idolatry around today? Oh, yes, we do. Paul may be referring to the early stages of idolatry in the sense that they used to bow down to images and little statues. But don't think that just because you don't have a little statue in your house, you don't idolize things.

You want to see what somebody idolizes? Go to their Facebook page. Yeah. Whatever is the focal point of their lives. And we cannot comfort ourselves by saying that idolatry isn't going on today. There are plenty of things that we idolize today.

Paul goes on to speak of where idolatry takes us in verse 24 and following. It says, "*Therefore God gave them up* (Your Bible may say *God gave them over*—different preposition, but same meaning.) *in the lusts* (look at this, He gave them over 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.*"

Two things—write these things down: two natural results of rejecting the existence of God. First of all, it's impurity. That's the first thing. The natural result of rejecting God is impurity. It says in Romans verse 24, "*...God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity...*"

You know what that means? That means you cannot reject God and then go on to say, but I'm going to live a moral life. You can't do it. You can't go on to say, there is no God, and then in the next breath say, but we're going to live harmonious lives with one another, treating one another honorably, righteously, and purely. You cannot do that.

Paul says the first thing that happens when they begin to do this—when they reject God, and they say—and they suppress the truth of His existence, and in

their own minds say, there is no God—impurity always follows. You begin to have an immoral society.

And we're living that out right now, aren't we? The United States of America—the very things being debated in our court system are the direct result of rejecting God. These things wouldn't even be coming up in the Supreme Court or any other court system if we hadn't rejected God as a nation. That's why we're doing it.

And that's what Paul is saying here. You reject God, you get impurity. It's as simple as that. Notice how he describes that impurity in those verses. He talks about "...*the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves.*" He's talking here about sexual impurity. He hasn't gotten to homosexuality yet. We haven't even gotten there yet.

We're just talking about heterosexual immorality. He talks about the dishonoring of their bodies. That always goes hand in hand with rejecting God. The more a people reject God, the more sexually immoral they become.

I want you to remember that Paul was writing this letter to the Romans from Corinth, where sexual immorality was being displayed around him every day, all day. There were temples that were populated by prostitutes who stood at the doorways of those temples as worshipers came in to have sex with them in the worship of their pagan deities.

Paul saw this every day. He knew and understood that when a society rejects God, they plunge headlong into sexual impurity. It always goes hand in hand, all right.

Do you recall what the writer of Hebrews said about sex, particularly sex within marriage? Let me put this on the screen for you. Just as a reminder, he said,

Hebrews 13:4 (ESV)

Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.

Let marriage be held in honor among all, and (particularly) let the marriage bed be undefiled (He said. Why? Because) God will (is going to) judge the sexually immoral and the adulterous.

What the writer of Hebrews is saying here is, don't live your lives like people who have rejected God. Do you understand, Christians? It is entirely inconsistent to say, I believe in God, and then be sexually immoral. The writer of Hebrews is saying, if you claim to believe in God and to be a believer in

Jesus Christ, but you're living a life where the marriage bed is being defiled and marriage is not honored. What he's talking about is people having marital relations who aren't married—it's called sex before marriage, and it's wrong.

It is immoral. It is called fornication, and it is a sin. It is completely inconsistent for born-again believers because God is going to judge those very sins. Yet you and I are walking in them many times or winking at them like they don't matter. Yes, it matters. It matters big, so, let marriage be held in honor.

Is marriage held in honor in the United States of America? Goodness, the exact opposite. People are shacking up all over the place. They don't see a thing wrong with it. And in the church, we've winked at it. We've said, well, whatever.

Marriage is no longer honored, and the marriage bed is not kept pure. It has been defiled. It's the behavior of a lost and darkened society that Paul is referring to here as he is arguing for the guilt of man.

The second result of rejecting God is found in verse 25, as we're reading into the verse a little bit. It says, "*...they exchanged the truth of God for a lie...*" and they went on to worship and serve things that are created rather than the Creator.

This is an obvious sort of progression. When you reject God, who is the Creator, what do you have left to worship? Just created things. And you might say, well, wait a minute. Why do I have to worship anything? Because you were created to worship.

Do you understand, people? Human beings were created to worship. You take God out of that equation—who is the only one worthy of your worship—you will worship something. You will worship something. You will run after something. You will seek after something. It will be sex, it will be money, it will be power, it will be other forms of pleasure. It will be something. You name it, you will run after something. You can't avoid it.

People say all the time, I don't worship anything. Oh, yes, you do. Look a little deeper into somebody's life, scratch the surface, and you will see what they worship. You will worship somebody or something.

Wasn't it Bob Dylan who came out with the song, Got to Serve Somebody? You will worship somebody. Some of you guys remember Bob Dylan. Some of you don't have a clue who I'm talking about. That's okay—you can still go to heaven. But he actually wrote a song, Got to Serve Somebody, and that's exactly true.

And what's interesting about people who begin to serve the creation—or the creature, and what that means is serving something other than God, something that's been created. It is a denial of rational, reasonable thinking. Because if you think about it: if you're serving something that is created, that means there is a Creator. And yet you're denying the Creator to serve something the Creator made. You're literally worshiping something that's inferior, which is completely illogical.

Now, a minute ago, I showed you a picture of a dress—a very simple picture. Let me ask you a question: which is greater, the design or the designer? I think all of us would recognize that the person who designed that dress is greater than the dress itself. That's why Paul is arguing for the illogic and futility of worshiping created things. Right?

Guys, you can even worship love—that's a created thing. Anything other than God that you run after in your life is worshiping and serving created things rather than the Creator.

But that brings us to the third thing that provokes the wrath of God. Look at verse 26, again here verse 26. It says, *"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."*

Listen, when a society rejects the existence of God, we see this progression. When there is a suppression of what people know instinctively and through creation—when they suppress it and say, no, there is no God, He doesn't exist—it goes like this... it starts with impurity. Right? All kinds of sexual impurity begin to just become the order of the day.

But it doesn't stay there. We enter into this free fall of morality and immorality. And then, we begin to actually... I mean, it was bad enough when we were sinning according to nature—and that means, when a man and a woman have sex outside of marriage—that's called immorality. That's sexual immorality. We talked about that, it's fornication. At least it's according to nature, but it's still a sin. But it doesn't stop there.

Then, Paul says there's a progression to their immorality and their impurity, and it gets worse. What happens is they're not just sinning now against God and against His law—they're sinning contrary to nature. Women begin to burn for other women, and men begin to desire sexually to other men. And Paul refers to this as an exchanging of the natural for the unnatural.

Look again at verse 26, did you see those words?: The women exchanged natural relations. Verse 27: And the men gave up natural relations with women and instead, were consumed with passion for one another. That's the next step—it's the next step in society that rejects God: impurity, sexual immorality, now, and heterosexual immorality, and now homosexual immorality.

It's interesting that once a people give themselves permission to deny the very existence of God and to believe a lie, they are now open to believing anything. They will deny anything, and they will believe anything. That's why homosexuality is such a major issue in our culture.

Some of you might be wondering, why? What is the big deal about homosexuality? Why is this just this big bugaboo that people seem to always talk about and worry about? Here's the reason: it marks a shift in the thinking of society. Because, understand, people—something about homosexuality—it is not just a word. It is an act. Do you understand?

Homosexuality is described as an act. It is the act of two women or two men coming together sexually. That is what we call homosexuality. It is not a thing. It is an act. And when a society can look at two men, for example, and recognize that in the natural order, they're not built for having a sexual relationship—it's just not there.

And when society can look at those two men and think about those two men having a sexual act together and say about those men, that's normal. That's natural. We've lost all our moorings.

We've lost all sensibility. We've lost all logic and understanding. And we are now living by lust. That's the only thing we're navigating by now. That is our barometer, right? Because we're now able to look at these two men or two women and say, that's normal, even though they can't procreate.

And we have seen great sicknesses come down the pike because of their attempt to do this. But we've denied it. We've said, no, that's not true. It's not true. It's normal. It's natural. And now, that society will believe anything.

Here's the point: it still doesn't stop there. You think the Bruce Jenner thing is the end of it? That's the tip of the iceberg. And while Hollywood is literally falling over themselves to congratulate this man for becoming a woman—or so they think—the rest of us, who know God and understand His creation, are grieved in our hearts for the tragedy of this thing.

Not just for this man, but for a culture that applauds it and says, that's normal. That's natural. It's a good thing. And we are grieved to the core of our being

because we know it doesn't stop there. When a society is able to convince themselves of anything, what is the end of that society? The sky's the limit.

You think pedophilia is off the books? You think sex with children is outside of the ability of reason? Think again. It's been 10 years now in Europe that they've been passing laws where the legal age for having sex with a child is now 13. It's been 10 years, longer than 10 years—actually about 13 years—that this has been going on in Europe. Right? The great, wonderful example of how we should pattern our lives.

You think pedophilia is not coming to the United States of America? You think that's not going to be legalized? We have absolutely no right to say to the pedophile, you cannot follow your lusts, when we have opened wide the door to these other situations that are contrary to nature. And if it disgusts you, I'm glad, because it should.

What's the result? Verse 27, look at the end of verse 27: "*...receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.*" And that's what breaks our hearts the most—the price these people are paying to live after their lusts. They're dying.

The average lifespan of a homosexual man is 40. That's not even dying from AIDS. If he dies from AIDS, it's 38. They're paying a price, and we're heartbroken. This isn't us against them. This isn't Christians bashing homosexuals.

This is believers in Jesus saying, you're killing yourself. You're destroying your lives. You're throwing them away so that you can run after your lusts. That's what's going on here. This isn't bashing people. This is truth.

And it just keeps spiraling downward. Verse 28, it doesn't stop with homosexual immorality, it says, "*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*" So it's going on. We're in a moral free fall.

Paul says, “²⁹ *They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness...*” And then he describes all those things that each have their own definition—you can go through them.

And it ends by saying, “³² *Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die...*” They know it by the way, naturally, they know it. I mean they're denying it, but they know, they know it.

It's interesting to me, it's not funny. It's tragic but it's interesting to me how people can deny their lifestyle, and the sinfulness of their lifestyle up until the

point they're confronted with it. And then suddenly, they'll do one of the two things, they'll either recognize it and confess it, or they will just get angry at you, and they want you dead for even suggesting the idea that what they are doing is wrong.

I have sat down with people who are involved in an immoral lifestyle and I've asked them, is there anything in your life that you need to repent of or get right with God about? And they will look me in the eye and say, no, nothing that I can think of. And knowing what I know about what's going on, I will sometimes confront and say, well, what about the person you're living with outside of marriage? And they immediately go, oh, yeah, that's right.

Now, what does that say? It says that they were in denial, doesn't it? Why didn't they? They don't respond to me usually by saying, what do you mean? They know exactly what I mean. They're not saying that's not wrong. They're living like, it's not wrong, but inside they know that it's wrong. And they respond, they go, oh, yeah, And they hang their head, yeah, that's right. It's crazy what we can convince ourselves is right or whatever.

Verse 32 ends by saying, *“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.”* That's it right there, that's where we're headed. We're headed. I mean, this is going to be spoken from the housetops. This is okay. This is good. This is natural. This is normal.

I want to address just a few points in closing, if I may.

Point number 1: If you're taking notes, you can jot down something related to these. First of all, point number one, it is very common today for people to argue that the reason they are justified in their behaviors is because they were born that way.

As Christians, we waste a lot of time arguing this issue of I was born that way. When somebody says, I was born this way, and we argue with them—Christians, stop it. Stop arguing with people about the issue of whether they were born that way. What you're doing is giving credence to the idea that if they can prove they were born that way, then you don't have a leg to stand on.

The fact of the matter is, first of all, our belief about things like homosexuality or other sins is not predicated on whether somebody is born that way. It's predicated on the Word of God, number one, alright? But second of all, even if somebody could prove that they were born that way, it doesn't change a thing. Who cares?

People are born lots of ways today and, frankly, always have been. In my almost 58 years of life, I have uncovered a boatload of things that I was born with that are bad. So, am I going to use every single one of those things as justification for why I should do them?

I happen to believe some people are born with a propensity for violence. So, should we just let them be violent? Do you see? That whole argument of I was born that way is ludicrous. Don't even go there.

When somebody says, I was born this way, say, okay, granted, you were born that way. That's not what I'm arguing. That's not what we're talking about. We're talking about what God's Word says.

Listen, I think many of us were born with certain propensities that we don't like. When we express those tendencies, we find ourselves smack in the middle of sinful behavior. That's why we have to resist those temptations to act out what is inwardly in our hearts.

Listen, I look into my heart and I see gunk that isn't worth looking at. And I think you do too. If you look deeply enough into your heart, you're going to be really depressed by what you see. And guess what? We were born that way. So, is that justification for living it out and expressing it every day? Absolutely not.

As Christians, it simply means that we need to bring those things to the cross and say, Jesus, I need You. I confess that there are these tendencies in me that run so contrary to Your Word as to be scary, but I bring them to You in the name of Christ. I bring them to the foot of the cross, that they might be surrendered there and that I might walk in victory over the impulses of my flesh. Does that sound wise to you? It does to me.

Point number 2: If you hate homosexuals, you need to repent. If you dislike homosexuals, you need to repent. We Christians have no room for hatred or even dislike of those who are living in a lifestyle contrary to what is written in the Word of God.

How in the world are we going to reach these people if we go around hating them? The fact of the matter is, God loves them. He loved them so much that He gave His Son so that whoever believes will not perish—that includes homosexuals—but will have everlasting life.

You and I have no choice in the matter. We must be gay-friendly. That doesn't mean we put up with it, that doesn't mean we acknowledge it as normal, and that doesn't mean we tolerate it as a normal-natural thing. But it does mean we can look the person in the eye and say, Jesus loves you, and so do I.

If there's any other attitude floating around in our hearts and minds, we need to bring that to the cross and recognize that it is just as heinous in God's sight as what they're doing.

Point number 3: If you believe homosexuals can't be healed and restored by the power of God, you need to meet my Savior. I believe with all of my heart, as I stand before you today, that Jesus Christ can change the life of an individual. I don't care who they are, what they've done, or how they've lived.

My Bible says that what is impossible with man is possible with God. If we don't believe that, what are we even doing here? Our God is able to change and bring about a radical change of life for anybody who surrenders that life to Him. I believe that with all my heart.

The final point I want to talk about—that we began this whole section of this chapter began with the wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men and so forth. I want you to know one last thing about the wrath of God that is coming.

Jesus Christ bore that wrath for you. That's the good news, by the way. The wrath of God is coming against mankind, but it is not coming against the church. It's not coming against you. Why? Because the wrath of God has already been borne. It's already been consumed for you and me in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ.

I am so happy to be able to tell you that today. It just delights me no end to say, you know what? I will never experience God's wrath, and neither will you, because Jesus experienced it for us. Right?

It was terrible. It was a terrible thing that He experienced on the cross, but He did it for you. He did it for you. So stop looking a gift horse in the mouth and just accept it and embrace it.

Jesus, I believe You died. You bore the wrath of God that is coming upon this earth. You bore it on my behalf, and I accept it. I believe it. I embrace it. I receive it. The Bible says if you do that, your sins are wiped out—totally forgiven.

Let me end with a wonderful passage that all of you know although, we don't; often read on:

John 3:16-18 (ESV)

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish (Because of their sin) but rather have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." (But listen to this, people—this is very important.) Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe (whoever suppresses the truth, whoever says, God doesn't exist. Jesus didn't come to die, he's) is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

In other words, he's not saved because he has rejected the only means of salvation. You're out there floating in the water, and somebody comes along in a boat. You're dying because you're drowning, and they throw you a life preserver or something like that.

And you reject it. You've got nowhere to go but down. You've got nowhere to go but sink to the bottom of that lake or ocean, wherever you are, because you've rejected the only means of being saved.

That's why we're told here that whoever doesn't believe, whoever doesn't put their faith in Him, is condemned already because they've rejected the only means of having the wrath of God taken away. The wrath of God is now coming.

But praise God, for those of us who are in Jesus, the wrath of God is not coming. The rapture is coming, after which the wrath of God will be poured out.