

The Whole Truth

The gospel of Jesus Christ is good news to the world, but we can't fully appreciate it without understanding how bad the news is without him. Romans 1:18-3:20 details the guilt of the world before God, and we must not avoid the parts of the book of Romans that expose the brokenness and sin of mankind. To do so would be to ignore God's justice against evil and the need for repentance. The wrath of God is part of the message Paul was unashamed of, and he was a debtor to tell the *whole* gospel.

A Wretch Like Me

It's vital that we recognize our sinful, broken state without God's righteousness, as it is the dark backdrop against which the gospel shines so brightly. In his past, Paul thought Jesus was a false prophet and persecuted his followers unto death. We may think we've never been *that* bad, or that these verses only apply to *really* evil people, but every person is a sinner. Just like Paul, we must change our mind to receive the truth of Jesus and let the gospel transform us.

Understanding the indictment of humankind should motivate us to cry out, "**O God be merciful to me, a sinner!**" It will also help us to better appreciate the victory of Christ by the time we reach the end of chapter 3.

The Wrath Of God

The word "wrath" is used 11 times in the book of Romans. **Without the grace of God, we are all subject to his wrath.** He wouldn't be good if he didn't get angry about evil. But his wrath is not like the wrath of man; it is not hot-tempered and unjust, but deliberate and righteous. He is holding back his wrath for a time, reaching out to let people into his grace through Jesus Christ. So in Christ, it's not that God no longer cares about sin, but he reckons our sin in light of the payment Jesus Christ made on our behalf.

Walking Through 4 Gospel Truths

VERSES 16-23

Paul was ready to preach the gospel. **HOW? WHY?**

Because he wasn't ashamed of the gospel of God. HOW? WHY?

Because it is the power of God unto salvation. HOW? WHY?

Because the wrath of God is revealed against unrighteousness. HOW? WHY?

Because the glory of God in creation is manifest, yet mankind rejects him.

Chapter Takeaways

VERSES 18-23

All humans have a fundamental understanding that God exists, but they ignore him, thinking they can ignore their accountability to him. People suppress the truth in unrighteousness because they love their sin and don't want to be told that they're wrong. But in their conscience, he is evident by the visible creation of the world. **He is invisible, but he has made himself knowable.** They can see the divine artist by means of his design. However, humans did not give him glory and they were not thankful. **Unthankfulness is a sure path to idolatry and all wickedness.** They think they're wise but they're foolish and ignorant, rejecting a good and righteous God.

The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.

PSALM 14:1

VERSES 24-27

Humankind said "we don't want you," and so God gave them what they wanted. He got out of their way and the broken chaos of their evil spilled out into unrestrained depravity. Rejecting God's discernment of good and evil, they embraced unbridled passions. This is in keeping with Satan's lies to Adam and Eve: that they could be like gods, knowing good and evil, discerning for themselves what is right and wrong.

Humans have gone from familiarity with God to vanity, from vanity to idolatry, and from idolatry to immorality.

People substitute the truth of God with a lie. They exchange him for something more acceptable to them, whether that's by reducing him to idols of wood and stone or by reducing him to a construct in the mind. But the Creator cannot be contained and he is blessed forever.

The lusts of unclean human hearts can often be seen in sexual sins, perverting how God made humans to function. It's an obvious indicator of rebelling against God's arrangement, and serving the creation instead of the Creator.

VERSES 28- 31

We see God's wrath revealed in that he gives humanity up to their destructive tendencies until the time he will bring justice to the earth. Although they could see God, they didn't see fit to retain him in their knowledge, so he gives them over to an unfit mind, and to do things that should never be done (See list in verses 29-31.)

We have all done some of these things, because we have radically depraved hearts. We would not want some of our thoughts broadcasted even to other sinful people. How much more shameful to have sin accounted to us before a holy God? This is why the gospel of Jesus Christ's sacrifice for sin is so precious, as we will see in the coming chapters.

VERSE 32

They already know by means of the creation that God and his just judgment are real, yet they celebrate others who sin in solidarity with their rebellion. They say, "Join me in my crimes against God," because it's a relief for them to see others doing it too. The darkness we see in the world today is a result of God withdrawing his restraints from their evil.

Conclusion

Our hearts must be pierced by the whole gospel, not a happy half-truth. Nothing but the power of God in the gospel can rescue us from the bondage, stain, and power of sin that held each and every one of us. We are just beggars telling other beggars where to find the bread of life. Let us tremble at this amazing grace, saving even a wretch like me.

Romans

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