

Housegroup Study Notes – 5th October 2017

Romans 1: 18-32

Day 5

As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.

Joshua 24:15

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Jumpers, 4-5 years

Aim of This Study

We should be devastated by the truth that all humankind is facing God's wrath because everyone has wilfully rejected Him.

Read the Passage

Introduction

This is a very challenging passage. At first glance it is a very depressing passage. Although this was written almost 2000 years ago, it is a remarkably accurate picture of our current society.

However, before get too depressed, we should reflect on the last verse of the last previous study.

16. I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

17. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

So, last time we saw the "mince pies", the promise of reward, the carrot.

Today we see the stick.

GOD IS ANGRY AT HUMANKIND'S UNRIGHTEOUSNESS (Verse 18)

1. How does verse 18 follow on from verse 17. Although the NIV does not show this, the first word of verse 18 links back with the for "for" and "but". Why is God angry?

Just as he reveals his righteousness in verse 17, so he reveals his wrath.

2. What exactly is the wrath of God? Is it like the Camp Commandant in Schindler's list taking random pot shots at prisoners in the POW camp?

God's wrath is not like that. It is the result of judgement (even the mass killing in the Old Testament). Deep personal abhorrence of things that are destructive. Holy hostility to evil. The alternative is just neutrality.

MANKIND'S REJECTION OF GOD IS INEXCUSABLE (Verses 19-20)

3. Why is God's anger fully justified? Look at the ESV.

Because mankind has embraced unrighteousness and ungodliness. They have turned their back on God.

4. "Surely God can't blame people who have never come into contact with the Gospel". How does Paul respond?

This is "general revelation" that we studied in Psalm 19.

Through creation (verse 20), everyone can see the results of creation.

What are the alternatives to "Intelligent design"?

- The universe does not exist, it is just in our mind.
- It has always existed.
- It has happened through blind chance

Through conscience (verse 19). Everyone is born with a sense of right and wrong.

GOD GIVES SINFUL PEOPLE OVER TO THEIR OWN SIN (Verses 21-32)

5. These verses give us a deep insight into the nature of sin. What are the hallmarks of our wickedness?

Sin is rebellion against God (vv 21-23). Rejection of God creates a vacuum, which needs to be filled.

This description is reminiscent of the golden calf. What happened?

Then the LORD sent a plague on the people, because they made the calf. (Ex 32v35)

An example of the wrath of God.

Sin is wilful (v21, 23,25,28). They gave up their knowledge of God.

Sin is stupid (v22). Idolatry is forbidden and ridiculed.

4. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. (Ex 20v4)

9. All who fashion idols are nothing, and the things they delight in do not profit. Their witnesses neither see nor know, that they may be put to shame.

10. Who fashions a god or casts an idol that is profitable for nothing? Behold, all his companions shall be put to shame, and the craftsmen are only human. Let them all assemble, let them stand forth. They shall be terrified; they shall be put to shame together.

18. They know not, nor do they discern, for he has shut their eyes, so that they cannot see, and their hearts, so that they cannot understand. (Isa 44:9,10,18)

There is a hint here of God's response in Romans.

6. How would Paul correct the following statements?
"We fall into sin" (i.e. we really can't help ourselves)
Sinning means we are free

Sin is an active wilful choice.

v23 They exchanged ..

v25 They exchanged..

v27 They abandoned..

Repeated sin, dulls the conscience, so in that sense they are free, but as Paul emphasizes later we become "slaves of sin". It becomes normal behaviour.

7. How does God respond to humankind's rejection of Him?

God lets them get on with it. He gives them over to .. v24, 26, 28.

The opposite of love here is not hate it is indifference.

Picture a situation where small children are left unsupervised and allowed to do anything that they want to.

8. Why does Paul include sexual sins? (What truth are people suppressing)
Are sexual sins worse than any of the others that are listed later?

Verse 26 and 27. They had abandoned natural sexual relations for unnatural ones.

What is natural.

Homosexuality is named, not because it is a greater sin than any other, but because it is the clearest evidence of rejection of God's order.

24. Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh Gen 2:24

This and many other places make it clear that the natural order is for sexual relationships as part of marriage between a man and a woman.

9. How can liberals in the Church of England justify the acceptance of homosexual behaviour?

The answer is that they cannot! There is an attempt to interpret verses 26 and 27 as applying only to heterosexuals who exchange natural sexual relations for unnatural ones, and to claim that homosexual relations are natural for people born as homosexuals, but they are denying the clear teaching of the bible.

10. Why does Paul include such a long list of sins in verses 29-31? What does their existence tell us about our world?

All kinds of sins are listed. There is no scale of better or worse. Can anyone read down to the bottom of that list and claim that they have not been guilty of any of them, ever, this week, today?

This leads to an unavoidable conclusion. ALL HUMANKIND is under God's wrath for their rejection of him.

11. What is God's reaction to sin (v32).
When is God's wrath going to manifest itself?
How do we interpret the words in verse 27.

When Jesus returns:

9. For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,

10. and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come. 1Th 1:9-10

Now: As the state operates as an agent of God to enforce the law?

Does verse 27 suggest that AIDS is a punishment from God?

12. How should we correct the following views?

The main problem with sin is that it messes up our lives.

In response to this passage we should stop sinning and live better lives.

The main problem with sin is that it messes up other people lives; it offends God.

It messes up our death (i.e. prospects of eternal life).

We cannot, on our own, stop sinning and live “better” lives. Go back to the list in verses 29-31. Can we really stop doing all those things?

12. How should this passage affect what we say in Evangelism?

We should not be ashamed of the gospel.

We must teach Christ crucified at the centre of the gospel.

We should be tortured by the awareness of the likely impact on those who do not hear and heed the gospel.

Romans 1:18-32

	NIV	ESV	Amplified Bible	New Living Translation	The Message
		God's Wrath on Unrighteousness		God's Anger at Sin	Ignoring God Leads to a Downward Spiral
18.	The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness,	For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.	For [God does not overlook sin and] the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who in their wickedness suppress and stifle the truth,	But God shows his anger from heaven against all sinful, wicked people who suppress the truth by their wickedness.	But God's angry displeasure erupts as acts of human mistrust and wrongdoing and lying accumulate, as people try to put a shroud over truth. But the basic reality of God is plain enough. Open your eyes and there it is! By taking a long and thoughtful look at what God has created, people have always been able to see what their eyes as such can't see: eternal power, for instance, and the mystery of his divine being. So nobody has a good excuse. What happened was this: People knew God perfectly well, but when they didn't treat him like God, refusing to worship him, they trivialized themselves into silliness and confusion so that there was neither sense nor direction left in their lives. They pretended to know it all, but were illiterate regarding life. They traded the glory of God who holds the whole world in his hands for cheap figurines you can buy at any roadside stand.
19.	since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them.	For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.	because that which is known about God is evident within them [in their inner consciousness], for God made it evident to them.	They know the truth about God because he has made it obvious to them.	
20.	For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.	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.	For ever since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through His workmanship [all His creation, the wonderful things that He has made], so that they [who fail to believe and trust in Him] are without excuse and without defence.	For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.	
21.	For 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.	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.	For even though they knew God [as the Creator], they did not honor Him as God or give thanks [for His wondrous creation]. On the contrary, they became worthless in their thinking [godless, with pointless reasonings, and silly speculations], and their foolish heart was darkened.	Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused.	
22.	Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools	Claiming to be wise, they became fools,	Claiming to be wise, they became fools,	Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools.	
23.	and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.	and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.	and exchanged the glory and majesty and excellence of the immortal God for an image [worthless idols] in the shape of mortal man and birds and four-footed animals and reptiles.	And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles.	
24.	Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.	Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves,	Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their own hearts to [sexual] impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them [abandoning them to the degrading power of sin],	So God abandoned them to do whatever shameful things their hearts desired. As a result, they did vile and degrading things with each other's bodies.	So God said, in effect, "If that's what you want, that's what you get." It wasn't long before they were living in a pigpen, smeared with filth, filthy inside and out. And all this because they traded the true God for a fake god, and worshiped the god they made instead of the God who made them—the God we bless, the God who blesses us. Oh, yes!
25.	They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.	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.	because [by choice] they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.	They traded the truth about God for a lie. So they worshiped and served the things God created instead of the Creator himself, who is worthy of eternal praise! Amen.	
26.	Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones.	For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations	For this reason God gave them over to degrading and vile passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural [a function contrary to nature],	That is why God abandoned them to their shameful desires. Even the women turned against the natural	

		for those that are contrary to nature;		way to have sex and instead indulged in sex with each other.	with women, men with men—all lust, no love. And then they paid for it, oh, how they paid for it—emptied of God and love, godless and loveless wretches.
27.	In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.	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 in the same way also the men turned away from the natural function of the woman and were consumed with their desire toward one another, men with men committing shameful acts and in return receiving in their own bodies the inevitable and appropriate penalty for their wrongdoing.	And the men, instead of having normal sexual relations with women, burned with lust for each other. Men did shameful things with other men, and as a result of this sin, they suffered within themselves the penalty they deserved.	
28.	Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done.	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.	And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God or consider Him worth knowing [as their Creator], God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do things which are improper and repulsive,	Since they thought it foolish to acknowledge God, he abandoned them to their foolish thinking and let them do things that should never be done.	Since they didn't bother to acknowledge God, God quit bothering them and let them run loose. And then all hell broke loose: rampant evil, grabbing and grasping, vicious backstabbing. They made life hell on earth with their envy, wanton killing, bickering, and cheating. Look at them: mean-spirited, venomous, fork-tongued God-bashers.
29.	They 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,	They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips,	until they were filled (permeated, saturated) with every kind of unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice and mean-spiritedness. They are gossips [spreading rumors],	Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip.	Bullies, swaggerers, insufferable windbags! They keep inventing new ways of wrecking lives. They ditch their parents when they get in the way. Stupid, slimy, cruel, cold-blooded. And it's not as if they don't know better. They know perfectly well they're spitting in God's face. And they don't care—worse, they hand out prizes to those who do the worst things best!
30.	slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents;	slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,	slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors [of new forms] of evil, disobedient and disrespectful to parents,	They are backstabbers, haters of God, insolent, proud, and boastful. They invent new ways of sinning, and they disobey their parents.	
31.	they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy.	foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.	without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful [without pity].	They refuse to understand, break their promises, are heartless, and have no mercy.	
32.	Although 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.	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.	Although they know God's righteous decree and His judgment, that those who do such things deserve death, yet they not only do them, but they even [enthusiastically] approve and tolerate others who practice them.	They know God's justice requires that those who do these things deserve to die, yet they do them anyway. Worse yet, they encourage others to do them, too.	