

Romans 1:16-25

¹⁶ For I am **not** ashamed of the Good News of Christ, for it is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes; for the Jew first, and also for the Greek. ¹⁷ For in **it** is revealed **God's righteousness** from faith to faith. As it is written, "But the righteous person shall live by faith." ¹⁸ For the **wrath of God** is revealed from heaven against all **ungodliness** and **unrighteousness** of men, who **suppress the truth in unrighteousness**, ¹⁹ because that which is known of God is revealed in them (revealed to them), for God revealed it to them. ²⁰ For the invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are **clearly seen [EVIDENT]**, being perceived (being understood) through (based upon) the things that are **made**, even His everlasting power and divinity [Godhead]; so that they may be without excuse. ²¹ Because, knowing God [knowing that God exists / knowing about God], they didn't glorify Him as God, neither gave Him thanks, but became vain (futile / empty) in their reasoning (logic / ways of thinking), and their senseless heart was darkened.

²² Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and traded [exchanged] the glory of the incorruptible God for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed animals, and creeping things. ²⁴ Therefore God also gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to **uncleanness**, that their bodies should be **dishonored** among themselves, ²⁵ who **exchanged the truth of God for a lie**, and **worshiped and served the creature** rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

God's Salvation that is ONLY found in Jesus Christ (i.e. the Gospel of Christ / the Good News of Christ) is so powerful that God saves, or rescues us from SIN → the sinful path of mankind's natural destiny – a progressive corruption and deeper sinful thinking, sinful living, sinful choices, sinful idolatrous worship and the belief of LIES. That is what Paul is describing here in verses 18-32. Today we will just look up to verse 25.

God's Salvation in Christ... **brings us into God's Righteousness** by our Faith in Him (from faith to faith) ... Righteousness ... we are **declared Righteous in Christ**, just as Righteous as Christ is before God, that is what we are in Christ (we will see this in Chapters 3 through 8). Paul briefly mentions this here in verses 16-17

Then Paul mentions God's Wrath, His Holy, Righteous Judgment against SIN. As we mentioned last week, God is the owner of His universe, He is the Creator, Sustainer and Judge of His Universe. He sets the Rules and He is Holy, PURE, Fair and JUST. Paul is going to give the Reasons Why God is Justified to Have His Wrath Against us (John 3:18-20; 3:36 – God Wrath Abides upon the sinner – we are judged already in Adam – Romans 5:12) **In order to want the Good News, we have to First Hear, Embrace & Know the Bad News**

1. **Ungodliness and Unrighteousness** – our behavior, our thinking, our way of life, our beliefs, our relationships ... are all against God's Ways and are Not Aligned with God's Righteousness
2. **We Suppress the Truth in Unrighteousness** – we are liars ... we lie to others, we lie to ourselves ... in unrighteousness ... deceptively with corruption – **this is the root of #1 above** ... we sin because we are sinners ... and deep inside we don't want the truth... and this is the root of our Ungodliness and our Unrighteousness ... the LIE is what we hold to as truth, we believe the lies (as sinners outside of Christ) [2 Corinthians 10:3-5]
Because of this, we want others to agree that our sinful behavior is really not that sinful [Is. 53:6]

Paul puts forth his case of Why God is **Rightfully Angry with Fallen, Sinful Humans (LEGAL CASE)**

It is all about the TRUTH ... and OUR Suppression of the TRUTH ... we have a way of suppressing the truth, twisting the truth ... it is "natural for us" ... (use the Hiding Place / Corrie Ten Boom, etc... suppressing the truth, but NOT in UnRighteousness, but with Righteousness – that is not what we are talking about)

TRUTH

The TRUTH about the **Existence** of the One and Only, Living and True God, the Creator of the Universe ...

1. **The TRUTH that He Exists & that He Created Everything** – Evidence, Proofs, Facts of God's Design (verses 19-20) [also see Hebrews 11:6]
2. **Since we are His Creation, we are supposed to Worship Him and Be Thankful to Him** (verses 21-22)

When God's TRUTH is SUPPRESSED ... it causes us to:

1. **Not Honor Him as GOD** (Worship, Adoration, Surrender, Obedience, etc.)
A little bit, here and a little bit there ... this is tolerated as being loving toward other people's choices ... and progressively this IGNORING of God, becomes being AGAINST God – we don't want to pressure anyone and confront anyone with the Truth ... and the deceitfulness of sin and of our old sinful flesh deceives us into believing we are being nice, kind and loving ... (verse 21)
2. **Not Give Him Thanks** ... we are NOT Grateful to Him for LIFE, etc.
Some sort of degree of bitterness toward God. Thinking God owes us something. We become entitled. We no longer live to Please God, no longer want to Have God in our Minds, in our thoughts ... we become angry with God because we feel God must do things our way ... He is "our servant" and He works for us... we forget that we are His creations, not the other way around.
So, because God doesn't do things that we want, or we don't like the way He does things, or He doesn't give us what we want, when we want it ... we no longer want God at all ... the next stage is the natural progression ... (verse 21)
3. **Become Arrogant**, Entitled, Boastful, Prideful ... thinking we are WISE but really we are fools (vs. 22)
4. **Worship anything other than God - IDOLATRY** – fans, fanatics, the worship of things, hobbies, celebrities, etc. (we don't have to call them gods... or idols, but in essence that is how we treat them)
Some folks make up a god in their minds that approves of their sinful, ungodly lifestyles and break God's Commandments 1 & 2 (vs. 23) [today this includes **evolution** origins, we came from animals]
5. **Abandon God's Moral Values** that relate to how we use our **bodies** – start using our bodies in sinful ways and think it is normal and OK (we are born this way ... so ...) this causes us to be in bondage, bound up in sin ... addictive, etc.
6. **Reject Common Sense Truth of Reality and Exchange it for a "convenient" LIE** ... and we end up serving created things instead of our Creator ... sad state of being.
This is Bondage to LIES and loving it. They would rather believe the LIE, because the Alternative means that they are accountable to a Holy and Righteous God who hates and judges sin.

This is a **Natural Downward Progression** of Mankind as Sinfulness is embraced, placated, appeased, etc... it will this specific – step-by-step progression, always... it is a **Predictive Model**. This happens when Sin is appeased, "we turn the other way", we tolerate sinful behaviors, choices, beliefs... when sin is allowed to take its natural course from generation to generation ... it will become worse and worse with each decade, each generation until ... we will see next week the end-game.

What Paul is reminding us here, is how all of mankind **IS**, since the time Adam and Eve sinned, until now, societies at large have become so infected with Sin and move in this **similar pattern of step-by-step** progression of a downward spiral and will end of destroying themselves, being taken over by another country or nation... or be destroyed by God's Judgment of some sort (think Noah's Flood, think Babylonian Captivity of Israel, think the demise of the ancient Egyptian, Greek, Roman empires... etc.)

Paul is describing these are the kinds of sinful people **we are called to** explain the Gospel to. We are going to meet folks at various stages of rebellion and being God's enemy. Depending on how far sin has gone into a society at large will be the hardness of heart of most of the individuals of that society we are seeking to reach with the Gospel. All sinful folks, no matter who they are, are somewhere in these stages of bondage and deception. And, knowing this helps us to help them out of their hardness and blindness into the life and light of Jesus Christ.

We **MUST** help people see that they are sinners **FIRST** ... **BEFORE** we help them understand GOD'S LOVE Revealed in Jesus Christ. Just saying that God Loves them is utter foolishness to them in their state of mind and heart. Once they understand the God Loves them **while** they are sinners and Christ **died for them while they were sinners** (Rom. 5:8)... that is God's Goodness that leads them to repentance (Rom. 2:4). God's Righteousness, God's Wrath, God's Judgment is because of our SIN. The sinner must embrace & believe this **FIRST**, then the Understanding of God's LOVE makes sense. Christ died for my SINS - it makes sense. **HUMILITY** must come **first** because God opposes the Proud but gives Grace to the Humble (Proverbs 3:34; James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5)