

Ro 1:18–23 (ESV) 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.

1. Paul changes direction in his writing from the good news to the bad news

- A. From how God has graciously moved to save the guilty sinner from the wrath they deserve
To why the sinner is guilty and deserves that wrath
 - 1). He will continue on this topic until Romans 3:20

2. Why are sections like this so important?

- A. So many churches skip sections like this – because they might drive people away
 - 1). Concentrate on entertainment – keep them laughing – but don’t mention sin and repentance
 - 2). Speak about God as one who is only love – who forgives everything we do
 - a). But never speak of hi demanding repentance and obedience – not popular today
- B. The problem with this Bible-lite! Churchianity
 - 1). It is very easy to fill a church with people who think they are heaven bound
But have never heard the truth about God – sin – faith – and are still lost
 - 2). Jesus gave us the example we must follow – he taught the hard truths and the easy truths

Paul said: Ac 20:27 (ESV) I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.

Transition: There are at least two reasons why sections like this are beneficial for the believer

First: They expose the true condition of sinful man

1. They cause us to want God’s solution for sin

- A. IF we remain on the surface – seeing only the easy truths – concentrating only on comfortable passages
 - 1). We won’t see our true condition and be convinced of our need of forgiveness
 - 2). We are skipping those passages that diagnose our problem - *Dangerous*
- B. Example: If there’s a chance we have cancer
 - 1). We don’t want the doctor to skip what is necessary because it makes us feel uncomfortable
 - a). No! Let’s get the biopsy – get in that tube for imaging – we NEED TO KNOW
Don’t worry about my comfort – Do what it takes to save me from death!
- C. That’s what the Bible does in sections like this – God is diagnosing our spiritual sickness
 - 1). It can get uncomfortable – but we need to know our true spiritual state
 - a). We need to be convinced we are in trouble so we’ll seek forgiveness
- D. So Doctor God is diagnosing mankind in Romans 1:18-3:20 – carefully - accurately
 - 1). So we will see our need and be willing to apply the remedy
But I’ve already seen my condition and have gone to Christ... this is still necessary beneficial

Second: Knowing nature of sin will help you cherish the Bible and fall in love with God

1. Once that diagnosis has been made it will drive you to Christ as your only hope

- A. AND It will cause you to be amazed at the grace that has been shown to a sinner like you
- B. You see who you really are and are left with no doubt you deserve wrath
 - 1). But you’re not going to get what you deserve – Jesus got what you deserved
You get what he earned – acceptance with God, blessings of God, heaven as your eternal home

C. As you see who you are and what God done – natural result - you fall in love with him

1 John 4:19 (NKJV) We love Him because He first loved us.

1). You will start to obey him for the right reasons - as an act of worship

Rom 12:1 (NIV) Therefore, I urge you, brothers, *in view of God's mercy*, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—*this is your spiritual act of worship*.

Rom 12:1 (NKJV) I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is your reasonable service*.

a). Surrender is not just a duty you have to do for God

It is reasonable – because of what God has done for you

1a). So you offer yourself to him as an act of worship

Because you've been so merciful to me I want to honor you with my life

2). John says something really interesting

Jn 14:21 (ESV) Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.”

a). This is not a guilt trip – if you love him you will obey him – DO YOU OBEY!

b). This is the natural result of seeing how loving he's been to us

1a). We fall in love with him and express that love in obedience

Notice: John speaks of getting into an incredible cycle of blessing

A. Starts with God loving us – He saves us – we experience his mercy and grace

1). That causes us to fall in love with him – which leads to a worshipful obedience

B. Did you see what happens when we obey?

Jn 14:21 (ESV) Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. *And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.*”

1). God loves me – I return that love – which causes God to pour out more love

Manifesting himself to me – his touch upon my life – he becomes real to me

2). Which causes me to love him more – which causes him to pour more love into my life

a). Manifesting himself in a greater way! *Incredible way to live!*

Summary: The church that fails to look at these things loses this whole dynamic

A. They fail to see the majesty of what God has done in the Gospel for those who don't deserve it

1). Fail to see that he has stooped down in love and rescued us when we are helplessly and hopelessly lost and on our way to hell

B. If we are robbed of this we will miss out on what this truth is meant to produce

1). A desire to flee to Christ as our only hope of forgiveness and heaven

2). Then the joy-filled relationship with Christ driven by the knowledge of how good God's been to us – how loving, gracious and merciful

a). This is the fuel that causes our heart to erupt in love for my Savior

b). Staying in the shallows of the Bible won't produce this

Transition: In v. 18-20 we see mans' sin and God's response

I. THE WRATH OF GOD IS BEING REVEALED

Ro 1:18 (ESV) For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.....

Rom 1:18 (NIV) The wrath of God *is being revealed* from heaven...

1. The wrath of God IS being revealed from heaven right now – present tense

A. This is not something we are being warned about – the consequence *if* we keep sinning

1). This is happening right now – present tense – because *we are* sinning

2. This shows how God feels about sin – he is angry

- A. We have fashioned a god today that arises from our own imaginations – the God we want him to be
 - 1). A god that doesn't like it when we do bad things but really doesn't mind
 - a). His primary characteristic is love so he overlooks our rebellion
- B. Paul says – that's not the case – He is angry with sin and the expression of that anger is called wrath
 - 1). The Greek word orge – expresses an outrage against wrongdoing

Ps 7:11 NKJV “God is a just judge, And God is *angry with the wicked every day.*”

John Murray: “Wrath is the holy revulsion of God's being against that which is the contradiction of his holiness.” God hates sin and is angry with the sinner.

Point: God is angry with sin in his creation every day

- A. The reason we might miss it is because we misunderstand what that wrath looks like
 - 1). We think of wrath in terms of human beings – out of control – over the top
- B. But God's wrath though fearsome is always controlled – perfectly matched to the offense
 - 1). I.E. The degree of wrath dispensed is always in perfect proportion to the sin
- C. That degree is seen in many ways
 - 1). When the ground must open up to swallow rebels such as Korah that will happen – Num 16
 - 2). When fire and brimstone must rain from the sky to destroy a city that will happen – Gen 19
 - 3). In Romans 1 it is much subtler but equally as effective
 - a). In a judicial act God simply withdraws his gracious hand of restraint
And that society under judgment begins to devour itself
 - b). They don't want God – God says “Fine. Live on your own.” Result is horrifying

Transition: That is what the rest of chapter 1 is about – God giving man over to themselves

3. Why is God angry with these individuals?

Ro 1:18 (ESV) For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all *ungodliness* and *unrighteousness* of men.....

- A. **Ungodliness** = refers to man's offenses towards God
- B. **Unrighteousness** = refers to man's offenses against God's law

Point: Rather than an attitude of reverence towards God that works itself out in obedience to his will

- A. It is an attitude of contempt and rebellion that is characterized by disobedience

4. How is man's attitude of contempt expressed?

Ro 1:18 (ESV) For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, *who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.*

- A. Rather than embracing and responding to God's truth – they suppress it
 - 1). Greek = picture of struggling to keep lid of container closed to keep what is inside from escaping
 - 2). Picture a pot of boiling water trying to overflow rim – constantly struggling to keep lid closed

Point: God's truth keeps trying to bubble up but these individuals struggle to keep that lid closed
Stopping the truth from affecting them

5. What truth is being suppressed?

Ro 1:19–20 (ESV) 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.

- A. It is not the truth of the Gospel – not everybody is going to have that
 - 1). It is the truth that there is a powerful creator – a wise and intelligent designer

6. How do they see this truth? Two ways

Ro 1:19 (ESV) For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them.

Ro 1:19 (NKJV) because what may be known of God is *manifest in them*, for God has *shown it to them*.

- A. “Manifest in them” = **Conscience** – see this in chapter 2
- B. “Shown to them” = **Creation** – What we have here in Chapter 1

Ro 1:20 (ESV) For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived (**clearly seen**), ever since the creation of the world, *in the things that have been made*.

Thought: God has placed us in an environment that constantly points to his existence

Psa 19:1-4 (NLT) The heavens tell of the glory of God. The skies display his marvelous craftsmanship. (2) Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make him known. (3) They speak without a sound or a word; their voice is silent in the skies; (4) yet their message has gone out to all the earth, and their words to all the world. The sun lives in the heavens where God placed it.

- A. Every day – everywhere – to everyone
 - 1). From most brilliant professor in our universities
To most primitive native in deepest jungles of Africa
 - a). All sit under the sound of creation’s sermon shouting out *this creation isn’t an accident*
There is a designer behind all this
- B. This sermon is getting louder and clearer all the time
 - 1). As our telescopes get more powerful – we see the *evidence of God’s size and power*
 - a). Keep discovering more galaxies – 200 billion – some believe there are 2 trillion
 - b). The known size of the universe 93 billion light years x 6 trillion
Isa 40:12 (NIV) Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or *with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens?*
 - 2). As our microscopes get more powerful – we see the evidence of design
 - a). The complexity of the simplest cell shouts out *there must be a designer*
 - b). It takes an incredible leap of faith – to believe this happened by accident

Point: We have the inner awareness of the conscience

AND the external witness of creation testifying that there is a creator

- A. God says that is enough information to hold everyone accountable – *without excuse*
Ro 1:20 (ESV) 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.*
 - 1). No one who rejects God will be able to say
“I would have believed in you if I had enough evidence”
 - 2). God will say – “You did have enough evidence because I made sure you did”
- B. This is the answer to the objection: “What about the innocent pygmy in Africa”
 - 1). How could a loving God judge somebody who has never heard the truth
 - 2). The answer is – they have all been given truth through these two witnesses
 - a). The testimony of the inner conscience and the external testimony of creation
 - b). If they would respond to that - God would do what is necessary to reach them
But they reject God at that point and have no excuse
 - 3). Therefore when they are judged it is fair
Spurgeon: If they open their eyes, people who have never heard the gospel can see God in his works. Enough is written on the face of nature to condemn people if they do not turn to God. *There is a gospel in the sea, in the heavens, in the stars, and in the sun; and if people will not read it, they are guilty;* for they are willfully ignorant of what they might know and ought to know.
 - a). They see the external evidence in creation
While at the same time that inner conscience is telling them that God is real

- b). They are without excuse if they suppress that
 - 1a). If they respond – I believe God will do what is necessary to save them

Transition: So man rather than responding to the truth that has been made plain to them
Truth that should cause them to seek the God that truth points to – suppress it instead

- A. I want to take some famous men – heavy hitters and show you how this happens
 - 1). How God has shown them the truth and how they push it away
 - 2). This is specifically through using the theory of evolution as a launching pad to Atheism

II. EXAMPLES OF SUPPRESSING THE TRUTH

1. Watch how God has made the truth plain – and how it is suppressed

Francis Crick (Discovered DNA) “Biologists must *constantly keep in mind* that what they see was not designed, but rather evolved.”

- A. See the hard work of keeping that lid down against truth trying to force its way up
 - 1). Every time they look into a microscope that truth comes bubbling up – there is a designer
- B. They must *constantly keep in mind* what you are seeing is not what they are seeing
 - 1). What lousy detectives – closing their eyes to this obvious evidence pointing to a creator

Richard Dawkins (famous evolutionist) “Biology is the study of complicated things that *give the appearance of having been designed for a purpose.*”

- A. You think! To believe they haven’t been designed takes suppressing the truth those things are declaring
- B. How hard to be an evolutionist – to live in willing deception
“Don’t let the appearance of what you clearly see fool you. Suppress that by telling yourself it evolved”

George Wald – American scientist and 1967 Nobel Prize winner

“When it comes to the origin of life, we have only two possibilities as to how life arose. One is spontaneous generation arising to evolution; the other is a supernatural creative act of God. There is no third possibility...Spontaneous generation was scientifically disproved one hundred years ago by Louis Pasteur, Spellanzani, Reddy and others. That leads us scientifically to only one possible conclusion -- that life arose as a supernatural creative act of God...I will not accept that philosophically because I do not want to believe in God. *Therefore, I choose to believe in that which I know is scientifically impossible, spontaneous generation arising to evolution.*”

- A. Talk about suppression of truth
“There are only two possibilities of how life came about. Evolution or creation. There is no possibility evolution could happen. But rather than choose the only other choice – creation – I choose evolution because I don’t want to believe in God.” What!!!!
 - 1). He believes life must have come from a creator
But is willing to risk eternity to cling to what he KNOWS is a lie!

Transition: There must be a really good reason to do something that foolish! What could be worth it?

2. Why people suppress the truth that God has made clear

- A. Here’s my theory - It is not an intellectual issue – it is a moral issue
 - 1). They love their sin
Jn 3:19–20 (ESV) And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, *and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.* ⁽²⁰⁾ For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.
 - 2). They want to be in control of their own lives
Doing what they want – when they want to do it – with no restrictions whatsoever
 - a). Like those who said about Jesus – We will not have this man rule over us!

- B. Listen to what Jeremy Rifkin said is the result of embracing evolution
 “We no longer feel ourselves to be guests in someone else’s home and therefore obliged to make our behavior conform with a set of pre-existing cosmic rules. ***It is our creation now.*** We make the rules. We establish the parameters of reality. We create the world, and because we do, we no longer feel beholden to outside forces. We no longer have to justify our behavior, ***for we are now the architects of the universe.*** We are responsible to nothing outside ourselves, ***for we are the kingdom, the power, and the glory for ever and ever.***
- 1). Wow! At least he’s honest
 - 2). These guys spew forth their million-dollar words but God simply says
- Thought:** Mr. Rifkin says in his puffed-up assessment of mankind
 “We make the rules. We are responsible to nothing outside of ourselves, we are the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever and ever.”
- A. God listens to these puny little men and says “You claim to be wise but you are a fool” Rom 1:22
- B. One day each one of these men if they don’t change their thinking will stand before God
 And they will quickly discover who makes the rules – and it’s not them
 They tried to be responsible to no one but themselves – but were always responsible to God
- 1). They thought they were powerful but will end in utter weakness
Php 2:10–11 (ESV) so that at the name of Jesus ***every knee should bow***, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ⁽¹¹⁾ and ***every tongue confess*** that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
 - a). Unfortunately for many that will be their last act before they are cast into hell
 - b). I get no pleasure in saying this – no pleasure in anybody ending up in hell
 Therefore I plead – bow now while it can change your eternity
- C. The truth is this – there is a creator – God has made that truth plain in man’s conscience and in creation
- 1). The truth is that man is guilty before God and must be judged – that truth is plain in his word
 - 2). Man can suppress that truth but it doesn’t change that truth being true
 - a). There is only one way of escape – through trusting in Jesus Christ
 Suppress that truth and you will be lost for all of eternity
Spurgeon: Some people attend church for years; and the truth has pricked them, troubled them, made them lie awake at night; but they hold it down. When we are afraid of the truth, we would do well to be afraid of hell also! **When we and the truth quarrel, we had better end our fighting soon, for we will have the worst of it if we do not yield..**