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Introduction

Many of the mega church and some even smaller churches today would give a gospel call that sounds something like this. And maybe you've heard this gospel call.

Jesus loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life. You may have heard something like that from many churches today. That is their gospel call. And they give this message because they know that that is what will attract listeners and will keep people in the seats. A nice message like that, that God loves you, and He has a wonderful plan for your life.

But what if churches gave a gospel call like this? God is angry with you. And His wrath abides upon you because of your sin. And you will spend an eternity in hell unless you repent of your sin and put your faith in Jesus Christ. How many mega churches do you think we would have if that was being preached from their pulpits? Probably not a lot.

But that second message there, that is the message that Paul gives to the Romans, that is the message of the Scriptures, that is the gospel call and what we are to call people to. And he gives this message to the Romans as he continues on his letter here to the church at Rome. After he has told them that the gospel is the power of God for salvation, in verses 16 and 17, he then begins to lay out for us and for the Romans, what the gospel is. But you'll notice that he doesn't start off with "God loves you." It's not how Paul starts off his letter to the Romans.

He doesn't say God loves you. But instead, he starts off with the wrath of God. God's wrath is against you. So that he can condemn all men, before he gives them the hope of the gospel. That's what Paul is

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after. He wants to bring condemnation down upon all men, and help them, and help us to understand that we are sinners.

And so let's pick up on our text here. And we're going to look at chapters 1 and verse 18 through 2:16 tonight, we're going to break our passage into three sections here.

1. First, the condemnation of man, we're going to see in verses 18 through 23 of chapter 1.
2. Second, we'll see the consequences of sin in verses 24 through 32.
3. Then finally we'll see the criticism of the Jews in chapter 2 verses 1-16.

1. The Condemnation of Man

And so let's pick up in our first point here the condemnation of man, the condemnation of man, look at verse 18, of chapter 1

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness. (Rom 1:18)

Now, what is Paul mean here by the wrath of God? Well, this is not some uncontrolled emotional anger that God has, as if God is somehow throwing some kind of temper tantrum against those who disobey Him. But this is an attribute of God. The wrath of God is an attribute of God, which shows His justice, and it shows His hatred of sin. God is a just God, and God is a God who hates sin. Because God is equally loving, and just. He is equally loving, and just. His anger is just, and perfect. And it's just as perfect as His mercy and His grace is.

And oftentimes, we'll take attributes of God and we will highlight them and we will put them above others. We've got to understand that the attributes of God are equal across the board. God is just as angry and wrathful as He is loving, and merciful, and gracious. And oftentimes, we want to paint a picture of God that shows His mercy and His grace and His love. But we don't like to hear about God's anger or His wrath.

So many churches have painted an incomplete picture of God because they don't talk about the wrath of God. But Paul knows who God is, and he wants to give us a complete picture of God. That's what he's after. And Paul wants to set forth for his readers, that the reason why the good news is so good, which he will get to in chapter 3, it is so good because of how really bad we are. We are really, really bad. You and I are bad sinners. And he wants to lay out for us what we deserve for our sin, and what do we deserve? He tells us... God's wrath. You and I deserve God's wrath.

Paul says the God's wrath has revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men -- notice he says that there. That means against men who have no regard for God, or who lack a reverence and fear of God. That's what he means by ungodliness there. They have no reverence of God. And then

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how that is displayed and acted out. That is what Paul refers to as unrighteousness. We then act out our lack of reverence of God in our unrighteousness.

Some have said that ungodliness is man's relationship or lack thereof to God. While that unrighteousness there, is man's relationship to man, because mankind has no reverence for God, they act out against people who are created in the image of God in an unrighteous manner.

What do men do? Why are they deserving of God's wrath? Well, he goes on, and he says, because they suppress the truth in unrighteousness. That is, they suppress the truth of God, by their sin, by their iniquity by the things that they do. But some will ask a question, well, what if they don't know about God? What if someone doesn't know about God? In fact, I had a conversation with a guy yesterday who said, Well, what about all those people, those tribes that have never heard anything about God?

Well, Paul answers that question for us. In verse 19, look what he says there,

because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.
(Rom 1:19)

And how did God make it evident to them? Well, Paul will go on and tell us about the conscience. That God has given every one of us a conscience, he'll tell us that in chapter 2 verse 15, and how the conscience bears witness to the law of God, our conscience does. But here Paul is more concerned with what is called the general revelation of God, a general revelation, and what God has revealed that you and I can see, which is what he says in verse 20, look what he says there.

For since the creation of the world, his invisible attributes, his eternal power, and divine nature have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.(Rom1:20)

Paul lays out for us the doctrine of general revelation, that is, God has revealed Himself through what He has made. Ray Comfort often will ask someone that he's witnessing to, "how do you know that that building has a builder?" What's their answer? Because there's a building, right? And that's the same with creation. Creation testifies to the fact that there is a creator, that God is the Creator. But notice the two attributes that Paul lays out for us, that God has put on display for all to see,

First, he says, His eternal power, that God has put on display for everyone His eternal power, that is God's creative power that he has had for all of eternity. For all of eternity God has had power to create. Think about all that God has created. And think about how God created. How did God create? God spoke, and then it was. That's what we call in theological terms *Ex-nihilo* -- Latin for "out of nothing." God didn't need anything to create. God just spoke and it happened. And only a powerful being could speak and cause something to exist. And God has put on display for everyone to see his eternal power. And so, everyone is without excuse.

But secondly, Paul tells us that He's also put on display His divine nature. God has put on display for all to see, His divine nature... that is through creation God has revealed that He is God and there is no

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other. The God who created the universe is the only God and there is no other God, His divine nature is on display. And what then is the result of everyone who has seen God's creation? Who looks at a mountain, who looks at a tree, who looks at the birds flying in the sky? What does Paul conclude about those people? Notice what he says there, they are without excuse. They are without excuse.

No one will be able to stand before God and say, I did not know about You. No one will be able to stand before God and say that because God has revealed Himself. Now is that knowledge enough to save someone? No, it's not. It's not enough knowledge to save someone -- that only happens through the gospel. That's why we must go out and proclaim the gospel to others. That knowledge of knowing that there is a God does not save anyone.

But that knowledge that God has revealed through His creation ought to motivate people and drive them towards God. It should motivate them and drive them towards Him. But what does mankind do? Paul told us in verse 18, that they suppress the truth of God by their sin, by their unrighteousness man loves his sin more than he loves God. And they love their sins so much, that they push their knowledge of God away, and therefore they deny Him. They reject Him, because they love their sin.

Verse 21, goes on to describe fallen man even more. Look what he says in verse 21

[For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile, and their speculations and their foolish heart was darkened.\(Rom 1:21\)](#)

Now, now again, they did not know God in a salvific sense, that's not what he's saying here. He's not saying that they knew God, and in a salvific sense, and that they were saved. But every unbeliever has a knowledge that God exists. And yet, although they know that God exists, they reject Him. They reject Him, how? Paul gives us four ways here.

First, they don't honor him. They don't honor him. You know that God demands glory. God demands glory. God demands worship. God demands praise. That's what He demands from us. As His creation, God is above all to be glorified, and to be honored. And yet unbelievers fail in this because of the pride that is in their heart. They want the honor, they want the glory. And so they don't honor God.

Second, they don't give Him thanks. Even unbelievers receive common grace from God. They receive common grace. Unbelievers get rain, they get food, they get shelter, and they get many other provisions that God has given to them because "Every good gift comes from God." But they don't give God thanks for what He's provided for them.

Third, he says they became futile in their speculations. This means they deny the truth of God, and they replace it with man's wisdom. They have a worldly thinking instead of godly thinking. They think through their own reason in their own minds, instead of thinking through the Word of God, which is how we need to view the world, right? As believers, everything filtered through this Book right here, through the Word of God, but unbelievers, they're futile in their speculations.

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And fourth, he says, their foolish heart is darkened. This means they continue to fall deeper into sin. Darkness often here refers to as sin, you see, darkness, and here it refers to sin in their foolish hearts pursue after sin, instead of on righteousness. So that is what a rejecting, unbelieving heart looks like. And that is the heart of every unbeliever. That's what they look like. That's what Paul describes for us there. Although they don't see it that way.

Look at what he says in verse 22.

Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchange The glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man, and of birds and four footed animals and crawling creatures. (Rom 1:22-23)

Notice what he says here, they think that they're wise. Unbelievers, they think that they are wise those who deny God, they think that they're wise, and they're wise in their own eyes. Just think about all the foolish things that are taught in our universities today that sound like wisdom: evolution, psychology, anthropology, now you have gender being whatever you want it to be. You can just make up your own pronouns now. Foolishness of man, and the foolishness goes on and on. The world says though, that's wisdom. It's wise. God says, No, it's foolishness. Because you've rejected the truth of God.

And all of these areas of life that man thinks are wisdom only puts on display how foolish they actually are. And we as believers who understand the truth of God's Word, and know God's Word, we look at that and we go, that is foolishness. Because it goes contrary to reality, to what God has displayed for us and given to us in His Word. They are foolish, foolish people.

What have they done? He said, they have exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man.

Think about all of the man-made false religions that are out there that man has created. And all of the idols that accompany those religions, lot of idols. What is every false religion done? They've exchanged the glory of God, that is only due to God, and they have given that glory to something or someone else, to another false god. That's what they've done.

Now, what about the atheist who says, "There is no God?" How do they do this? Well, who is their God? They are themselves, they are their own god, and they give themselves glory, instead of giving God glory who deserves all glory. So because man is fallen, fallen man, the unbelieving world, they have done all of this, because of who they are. Paul tells us they are under God's wrath, and they are under the condemnation of God.

2. The Consequences of Sin

Let's go to point number 2, the consequences of sin. We see the condemnation of man. Number 2, the consequences of sin.

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What then are the results of sinners who continue to rebel against God? Well, God eventually gives them over. God gives them over to their sinful desires, God abandons them. And as we're going to see, this is an act of God's judgment upon mankind for his continual sin. God gives them over.

Now think about how much attention we in our western world, give to the human body. Give a lot of attention to the human body. We live in a humanistic society where the body is glamorized. And yet, as the body becomes more glamorized, the sin against the body becomes worse and worse. We have slogans now that say, my body my choice, to demand that we allow women to murder the babies in the womb of their body. And what Paul is going to show here is the downward spiral of God handing people over to their sinful desires. Specifically speaking here of sexual sin.

And there are three stages in this downgrade this downward spiral that we're going to see as God continues to give them over, give them over, give them over. Look at what he says.

First in verse 24.

Therefore, God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. (Rom 1:24)

Notice that first of all, this is the lust of the what? The heart. The heart is where all sin begins. That's the root of all sin. It starts in the heart. And what is the lust of their heart there? It says impurity. The word for impurity there in the Greek means uncleanness. And it's often associated in the New Testament with sexual immorality. And as people begin to love and worship themselves and their bodies, over worshipping and giving glory to God, their hearts and their minds become demoralized, and they begin to dishonor their own bodies.

What Paul is speaking about here is a sexual revolution. There's a sexual revolution then that will take place where purity before marriage, and relations between a man and a woman in marriage is no longer encouraged. Today we have programs that are offered in schools where kids can practice safe sex because sexual immorality is glamorized. It's put on display and glamorized. Given them over. Listen to what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6:18,

Flee immorality, every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. (1 Cor 6:18)

The immoral man sins against his own body. And Paul says in verse 24 of our passage, [their bodies are dishonored](#), you dishonor your own body through sexual sin. What Paul is referring to is being given over to sexual sin, to impurity. And we've seen this in the history of America with the sexual revolution in the 1960s. God has given us over. Our nation, as a society, given over. And we saw that with the sexual revolution.

There's a second giving over though, in verse 26. Look at what he says there.

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For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, 27 and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. (Rom 1:26-27)

Now, what is Paul talking about here? This is the sin of homosexuality. Yes, homosexuality is a sin. Here's the passage, one of many of them. It is a sin. That's why he says there...women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and the men did the same thing. Now want you to notice in verse 27, the phrase "burned in their desire toward one another," you see that there? They burn in their desire toward one another. What is Paul talking about here?

One commentator says, it is clear that Paul condemns not just the activity, but also same-sex lust. It's also the lust. There is no such thing as a gay Christian. There are many books that are being written now, about being gay Christians, that's an oxymoron. It's not true. You cannot be a gay Christian. That sin must be repented of. The lust of that must be repented of, it is a sin. And Paul lays it out for us right here before our eyes, and he says that lust even there is a sin.

And people will say, well, they're not committing the acts. But even the lust of that is a sin. That's what Paul's talking about here. Homosexuality, and the lust of it is sin and is in violation to the created order of God. Which is what is natural. That's what Paul's talking about there. The natural function, the natural thing, which is between one man and one woman in marriage. And in the history of America, we saw the homosexual revolution in the 1980s. We still see it today... and the results of that. God's given us over. He's given us over.

But the downgrade doesn't stop there. There's one more giving over Look at verse 28.

And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind to do those things which are not proper. (Rom 1:28)

The final giving over is that of a depraved mind. The word depraved there means worthless or unacceptable or unapproved. It has the idea of not standing the test and has to do with impurity in metals. So coins that were not pure, were thrown out. They were discarded. This depraved mind is the result of a total rejection of God. And they are so hardened towards God, that they were given over to depraved minds and improper conduct. They, in a sense, don't even think straight anymore.

And that's where we're at in America today. They don't even think straight anymore. We have a transgender movement now of a man thinking that he can become a woman, and a woman thinking that they can become a man. Depraved minds. God has given our nation over, and we are under the judgment of God.

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That's what Paul is laying out for us here. Depraved minds. And then Paul gives a list, not exhaustive, but a list of all the sins that represent the natural man, the unbelieving man. But notice how bad it gets in verse 32. Notice what he says there,

They don't only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them. (Rom 1:32)

To justify your own sin is bad enough. But to approve of and encourage others to sin is even worse. That's our society today. Billboards that flaunt sin, commercials that flaunt sin, we have movies and TV shows, that not only put sin on display, but they also encourage others to practice sin as well.

Turn them over, given them over. And it's a judgment of God. That's the consequences of sin, and the judgment that we are under today.

3. The Criticism of the Jews

Finally, point number 3, the criticism of the Jews, the criticism of the Jews

Look at chapter 2 and verse 1

Therefore, you have no excuse. Every one of you who passes judgment, for that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. (Rom 2:1)

Paul now turns his attention to the Jews. And also implied there are Gentiles who saw themselves as moral. They were moral people. After looking at this list above, it's easy to say, Well, I'm not that bad. That's a good list there, Paul. But that's not me. I'm not that bad. I mean, I'm a very religious and very moral person. But the religious and the self-righteous are just as guilty of sin. And that's what Paul's laying out here.

Remember, this is Paul's whole point is to lay out and to show us how bad man really is. And we are all guilty of sin. And he puts everyone under the weight of sin, to show how depraved the heart of man really is. But Paul here is speaking primarily to the Jews here, who saw themselves as religious and who loved to pass judgment on the Gentiles. Self-righteous.

And the very fact that they were judging shows that they know the difference between right and wrong. You see that? The very fact that they're able to even pass judgment on someone else is showing they know the difference between right and wrong. And Paul says, while you pass judgment, you are guilty because you practice the very things that you are judging the Gentiles for.

He goes on in verses 2-3, and he says, do you think you're going to be able to escape God's judgment? Implied...I don't think so. You're not going to be able to escape God's judgment. And think about the history of Israel, and all the things that God told Israel to do and not to do. Did they obey? No, they did

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not. You're reading through our yearly reading plan right now. You're finding out, boy, they didn't obey God. And it turned out bad for them. Exiled for 70 years. They failed.

What does Paul want to do here? He wants us to ask the question, then, then how can someone escape the judgment of God? Answer: through repentance and faith in Christ alone. Through the gospel.

The Jews needed the gospel just as much as the Gentiles needed the gospel. Their good works could not save them from God's judgment. And the same for us too. Our good works cannot save us from God's judgment. Our good works and our religious duties will not save us. It's impossible. We need the gospel.

Paul then continues on to show how gracious and kind God is. Look at what he says in verses 4-5. He says that God has been patient with them, and kind with them. He has not given them the judgment that is due to them. But His kindness and patience should have led them to repentance. God is patient with you. God is showing His common grace upon everyone that is living today. Every breath that you take is a common grace from God, you realize that? You're not under the judgment of God, because He's being patient with you. And His patience should lead you to repentance, and faith in Christ. That's what Paul is saying here. That's God's common grace.

His patience and His kindness to everyone right now is to lead people to repentance. But what did the Jews do? And what are the people do today? They harden their hearts towards God, and they're storing up wrath for themselves on the Day of Judgment. Remember, Paul already told us back in chapter 1, verse 18, that God's wrath is coming, right? God's wrath is coming.

And what will God do when He comes in judgment? Verse 6, notice what he says there

[He will repay everyone according to their deeds.\(Rom 2:6\)](#)

Now, verses 6 through 11, don't think that Paul is speaking of works-righteous salvation here. He is not speaking of a works-righteous salvation. That is not what Paul is getting at here. Remember what we've studied, in equipping hour a couple Sundays ago, that salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone. But both believers and unbelievers will be judged according to their what? Deeds, according to our deeds, both the bad things and the good things that we do.

As believers, we're going to be judged according to our good deeds, and we will be rewarded for those. But unbelievers will be judged according to their bad deeds, and they will be judged according to those. And Paul says there,

God is not impartial in His judgment.

God is not impartial, which Paul shows in verses 11 through 15. Paul says that those without the Law, namely the Gentiles, will be judged according to the knowledge of God that they have, although they

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may not have the law of Moses, like the Jews have. Paul already told us back in chapter 1, verse 20, that they are without excuse, right?

They have enough knowledge to say, there is a God, to know there is a God, and that knowledge should drive them to God. So they're without excuse. And they will be judged not only by their knowledge, but also by what they have revealed to know about God's Law. They don't have the law of Moses, but they by their own actions and the good things that they do, reveal that the law of Moses is true, that it is from God.

Whenever a Gentile does something that is good, that is according to the law, they show that the law is written on their hearts, and their conscience also bears witness of it. You see that? That's what happens when they do something good. They are giving testimony to the law of God, and that the law of God is good. And that will be enough truth to condemn them. And they will be judged by their knowledge that they have displayed through their good deeds.

Now let me close quickly with this. Look at verse 13. Notice what he says in verse 13. He says,

For it is not the hearers of the law who are just before God, but the doers of the law will be justified. (Rom 2:13)

Look, it is not enough to sit here at Bible study and listen to all of the things that you are being taught. It's not enough. You must obey this. You must obey God's Word. Do you realize that the more that you are being taught, the more responsibility and accountability that you have before God?

That's why James says in James 3:1, "let not many of you become teachers, because there's a stricter judgment" when you teach the Word of God because you're accountable for everything that you teach. But at the same time, you as a listener, are accountable for everything that you are hearing from the Word of God.

And Paul says here, and God says to us, don't be a hearer only, yes, you must be a hearer, but don't be a hearer only. You must be a doer of the Word of God, be obedient to God's Word.

And if you're here, and you're not a believer in Christ, I'm here to tell you that God's wrath is coming, that God's wrath abides upon you. But Jesus Christ came, and He took the punishment for all who would believe in Him, He took the wrath of God upon Himself, so that all who believe in Him will not have to endure the wrath of God. Yes, God's wrath is coming. But Jesus says, Come to Me, and I will give you rest. Come to Me, and I will give you life. Come to Me, and you will not have to endure the wrath of God that is coming, but I will give you the free gift of salvation. Turn from your sin and come to Christ today. Now. Put your faith in Jesus Christ, and you can have eternal life.

And if you're here and you are a believer in Christ, then I encourage you to be obedient to God's Word. Obey Him. Obey the Word that you have heard tonight, and live it out, not for yourself, and not for your own glory, but for the glory of who? Of God.

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Let's pray. Father, thank You for Your Word. Thank You for this, this truth that needs to be preached more. Lord, it is bad news. But we need to hear the bad news before we can hear the good news. Lord, we thank You because this is a reminder of what you have saved us from. That you have saved us from Your wrath that is to come. And Lord, I pray that our hearts would rejoice and be thankful and give You praise and glory and adoration that You alone deserve for what You have saved us from. We thank You for Jesus who died on a cross and took the wrath of God upon Him. And we thank You that He did not stay dead, but that He rose again on the third day, and He offers us life and that through faith in Him we know we can be confident that we can have that we will have that we do have eternal life with You. Help us to live in light of that marvelous and amazing truth. For Your glory alone. We pray in Christ's name, amen.