

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MARCH 6TH - 7TH, 2021 // BOOK OF ROMANS

LOSING GOD (ROMANS 1:18-23)

GOD DOESN'T PLAY GAMES

- God takes the rebellion of His creation seriously. He isn't sitting on His throne in heaven wringing His hands because He is powerless to judge. The godless and the unrighteous will face God's wrath.

SO, WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

- **We need the gospel because it is the power of God for salvation to the godless and unrighteous.**
- The problem with mankind is that we suppress the truth about God that is available to all people, which is called General Revelation. This is what Psalm 19:1 describes as the heavens declaring the glory of God.
- **This means that there is no one who is born an atheist.**

NO HIDE AND SEEK WITH GOD

- Humanity didn't discover God. God graciously revealed Himself to us. This is important because it maximizes the glory of God and minimizes the pride of man. When we see the beauty of a hummingbird, the power of crashing waves, the vastness of a starlit night, the stillness of falling snow, our hearts should cry out, "There is a God!"

THIS ISN'T ABSTRACT.

- God hasn't left what we see about Him in nature up to us as something we can debate or dismiss. He makes His invisible attributes, His eternal power, and divine nature, clearly visible to everyone in everything He's created, especially in mankind.
- This world is God-centered and God - focused: we have no excuse for unbelief.

REJECTING GOD

- How do we suppress the truth about God seen in nature? First, we don't glorify Him, which means, we don't value Him above all things. And second, we don't show gratitude to Him as our Creator, Provider and Sustainer.
- **Without God, we are doomed to lives of short-lived, empty experiences leaving us desiring Him but not pursuing Him.**

EMPTY KNOWLEDGE

- Humanity loves to boast about its achievements (think the Tower of Babel), its tolerance, its freedom, all apart from God. Without God to hold our hearts in check, our thinking is worthless and without any sense.
- **Humanity thinks itself so wise, but we only reveal that we are fools. How has the wisdom of man done so far?**

THE PROOF

- The wisdom of man leads to idolatry. Idolatry takes creation and substitutes it for God. In the OT, God and His prophets are amazed at the foolishness of Israel for worshipping idols that are made by the hands of mankind and who can't speak, move or act. (1 Kings 18)
- In America, our idols are more sophisticated, but idols, nonetheless.

THE EXCHANGE (ROMANS 1:24-27)

GOD DELIVERS THEM OVER

- Paul uses this phrase 3 times, in vs. 24, 26, and 28. God delivers idolaters, those who have suppressed the truth about God they see in general revelation, over to their passions. In a sense, the very things they think are worthy of worship become the means by which God reveals His wrath.
- Idolatry is quicksand for the soul.

CREATED FOR A PURPOSE

- We're supposed to glorify God and show gratitude to Him for who He is and all He has done and is doing. Instead of living this kind of lifestyle, we take God's good gifts and use them to fulfill the sinful desires we possess.
- **We still give into the Edenic lie from Satan which asks, "Has God really said?" Sadly, we exchange truth for lies.**

WE'RE ALL SEXUAL SINNERS

- There's a tendency within church circles to refine certain sexual sins. "I've lusted, but at least I haven't committed adultery!" Many will jump to vs. 26-27 and quickly condemn those committing homosexual sin while skipping over v. 24 which speaks of any kind of sexual sin. All the Bible is God's truth and suppressing any of it is sin.

PURPOSEFUL AND COVENANTAL

- God made humanity male and female with all the parts working the way they should according to His design. He made one Adam and one Eve. The first wedding was in the garden as God gave away His daughter to Adam. All sexual sin (any sexual act outside a one-man-one-woman covenant marriage) **goes against God's creation design.**

DEGRADATION, NOT ELEVATION

- Paul is appealing to the Romans to see sexual sin as anything but freedom. Running from God's

design doesn't elevate humanity, it degrades humanity. There's a beauty that can only be seen in living according to His design.

- **Followers of Jesus have consistently called the culture, both by words and actions, from judgment to abundant life.**

MORE (ROMANS 1:28-32)

WE NEED A TRUSTWORTHY GUIDE

- If we don't acknowledge God as our source of truth, then all we're left with is our corrupt minds which are anything but trustworthy. Centuries of human history continue to prove that mankind, left to their own designs, leave trails of brokenness, destruction, and death.
- **God basically says, "You want a world without me? Here it is."**

THERE'S PLENTY OF CONDEMNATION FOR ALL

- While sexual sin is a clear demonstration of mankind's idolatry, there are other sins that are just as clear. God leads Paul to describe other symptoms of our idolatrous lifestyles which reveal the real condition of our hearts.
- **Whatever is in our heart (our mind) will eventually come out in our words and actions condemning us as sinners.**

LET'S COUNT THE WAYS

- First, Paul lays out 4 general categories of sinfulness that can describe humanity without Jesus. We can know what's right and do the opposite because our hearts are bent toward evil, because we are greedy, and because our motives are wicked.
- Generally, most people live this way because of their sinful natures.

PAUL ISN'T FINISHED

- Finally, Paul gives a list, not exhaustive, of many types of sins that we can observe in humanity. From so-called minor sins (gossip, boastful) to so-called major sins (God-haters), everyone must say, "I've been on that list."
- **The scary sin on that list is "inventors of evil." Humanity continues to up the ante as to its passion to sin.**

BUT THERE'S MORE

- Second, Paul lists sins that destroy human relationships. We are jealous of others which leads to murder (think Cain and Abel). We argue with people, we lie to people, and we lie about people.
- **If we won't acknowledge God, why would we treat those created in His image any differently?**

The nail in our coffin

- Paul concludes this section reminding us that in the same way all humanity knows there's a God, we also know He is a righteous God and rebellion against Him leads to death.
- But we don't care! Not only do we continue to follow our sinful passions, we encourage others to join us by applauding their sin!

ARE WE PRACTICAL ATHEISTS?

- Do we say we believe in God and love Jesus but live in such a way that we don't give Him much thought?
- Have we elevated the things of this world in such a way that we live for them?
- Is there much difference between what we value and what our lost neighbors value?
- Are we ashamed to shine for Jesus?

THEY/THEM VERSUS WE/US

- Too many of us have forgotten what it was like to be lost.
- We gladly point out the sin in others while ignoring the remaining sin we still battle.
- Do we weep over the lostness of our neighbors because we genuinely love them and want them to be in heaven?
- Will we enter the battle for their souls?

BAD NEWS THAT OFFERS HOPE?

- The gospel is only good news to the perishing.
- We point out sin, not to condemn people, but to offer them the only hope they have.
- Will we be a church that loves and welcomes the lost, no matter their sin?
- If the gospel isn't good news to our neighbors, it can't be good news to us.