

# THE DEPTHS OF SIN

## *In Romans Chapter 1*

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In preparation for our Wednesday evening Bible studies on the mercies of God in the Book of Romans, my heart was greatly impressed with vv.18-32 of chapter 1. All week long God has been dealing with my heart in regard to that 32<sup>nd</sup> verse, so that is what we're going to speak on by the grace of God, and see what He has in store for us.

In this first chapter of Romans, the apostle Paul tells of the awful plight of the Gentiles. In chapter 2 he tells the awful plight of the Jew. In chapter 3 down to vs. 18, he shows that all men, apart from the grace of God, are under the judgment and wrath of God because of sin, that there is none that understandeth and none that seeketh after God. Then God brings every man to the place where He tells us in verse 19: "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and **ALL THE WORLD MAY BECOME GUILTY BEFORE GOD**", for "**ALL HAVE SINNED** and come short of the glory of God" (vs.23). So we are forever shut up to the awful judgment and wrath of God against sin.

With these verses, as He speaks through Brother Paul, the Holy Spirit also shuts us up to the fact that man cannot and will not bring to God any righteousness that God will accept for a standing before Him. He washes all the sand out from underneath our feet leaving us helpless and hopeless before God, in a guilty, lost and damned state, where we're doomed and lost forever, abiding under the awful wrath of God **UNLESS** the grace, mercy and love of God through Christ Jesus enter in by the work of the Holy Spirit. So in that first and second chapter of Romans, and on through that 19<sup>th</sup> verse of chapter 3, He leaves us shut up to the fact that no man can ever stand before God in himself; neither can any man bring God anything that He will accept for his standing before Him.

Then, after shutting us up completely to our helplessness and hopelessness, and to our condemned state before the holy and righteous God, he comes through with the most precious words in the world in chapter 3, verse 21, "**BUT...GOD**". Here he shows us that God has made a way, and that way is **BY AND THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST** the righteousness of another not mine, but Christ's. This righteousness comes to us apart from any works of our own; it comes to us by and through the grace of God, the mercy and love of God shown to us at the cross where the blood of our blessed Lord flowed forth for sinners; for precious souls who come to understand their lost condition before God.

Now with these thoughts in mind, let us look at our text found in Rom. 1:32: "Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." I don't know of any text in the Word of God that is any more damning to those who are outside of the Lord Jesus Christ than this one particular verse. According to this verse, every sinner stands before God utterly without excuse and without hope. The Amplified reads: "Though they are fully aware of God's righteous decree, that those who do such things deserve to die, they not only do them themselves, but approve and applaud others who practice them." This verse is the final argument of the apostle Paul, of all the arguments in this chapter about the awful state of man in sin and rebellion against God.

There are five things out of this text that we would like to look at by the grace of God. First of all our text teaches us that **MEN HAVE AN INNER KNOWLEDGE FROM GOD OF THE REALITY OF SIN**. Second it teaches us that **MEN HAVE A CONSCIOUSNESS THAT GOD MUST HATE AND JUDGE AND PUNISH SIN**. Third it tells us that **MEN PERSIST IN THE WAYS OF SIN IN SPITE OF THE WARNING OF THEIR OWN NATURAL CONSCIENCE**. Fourth, our text tells us that **MEN COME TO THE POINT**

WHERE THEY CONDONE, THEY APPROVE, THEN AID AND REJOICE IN SIN IN OTHERS. And then last, but I think the most damning, it teaches us that **MEN COME TO THE PLACE WHERE THEY ARE THE SUPPORTERS OF SIN; THEY ARE THE SUPPORTERS OF THE VICES OF OTHER MEN AND THEMSELVES RATHER THAN THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD!**

Follow along in the Word as I read Rom. 1:18-32 in the Amplified, commenting on it as we go, and then look at these particular points we want to cover as the Lord gives us utterance. "For God's holy wrath and indignation are revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who in their wickedness repress and hinder the truth and make it inoperative" (vs.18) . What he is saying here is this: Not only is the love, mercy, and the grace of God revealed from heaven, but this attribute of the wrath of God is also revealed from the same place: it comes from the same holy and righteous God Who sits upon the throne of His holiness (Psa.47:8); and this wrath and indignation is against the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who by their wicked lives are stifling the truth. They repress and hinder the truth, thus making it inoperative in their hearts and lives, for their wills will not break and will not bow to the authority of God.

Listen now to verses 19-20: "For that which is known about God is evident to them and made plain in their inner consciousness, because God Himself has shown it to them. For ever since the creation of the world His (God's ) invisible nature and attributes, that is , His eternal power and divinity have been made intelligible and clearly discernible in and through the things that have been made His handiworks. So men are without excuse altogether without defense or justification (before God)." What he is saying is that there's not a man upon the earth that has ever lived since Adam no matter into whose family or where he was born, but that he knows within himself there is a God, a Creator. And we're going to show you from our text that there's no atheist living upon the earth today never has been and never will be because God says that He's written upon every man's heart the knowledge of sin. Oh that God would take this home to our hearts! **WE ARE WITHOUT EXCUSE!**

Then listen to verse 21: "Because when they knew and recognized Him as the God, they did not honor and glorify Him as God, or give Him thanks, but instead they became futile and godless in their thinking with vain imaginings, foolish reasoning and stupid speculations and their senseless minds were darkened." Certainly this is a picture of man outside of Christ! This is the condition of some of you sitting before me this morning; for when God's Word has been preached and when God has revealed Himself, you have not honored Him as God; when the truth has gone home to your hearts, you've not bowed before Him; you have not honored Him; you've not given Him thanks. Instead, you've gone on in your own "foolish reasonings and stupid speculations" that a profession will hold you in the Day of Judgment without the reality of Christ, without bowing to Him as Head and Lord of your life. You've gone on vainly imagining that somehow, some way, you are going to escape the judgment of God; but my dear friend, you hold the truth in unrighteousness and your foolish heart is darkened, so you are abiding under the wrath of God!

Look at what he says in vs.22: "**CLAIMING TO BE WISE**, they became fools-**PROFESSING TO BE SMART**, they made simpletons of themselves." And this is man today. There is no fool in all the world like one with a mind that is able to figure out all kinds of mathematical equations and science problems, who can do things with his computers even get a man to the moon and back and know the most accurate calculations to the ten thousandths of a second; and yet who looks up into the heavens and says, "No God! All of this has come by chance and by evolution there's no God!" He's made a fool out of himself because there is within every man that knowledge of sin and God, whether he be the greatest mathematician, the most eminent scientist, the most eloquent preacher, the most learned doctor or whatever he is in this world even the barbarian in the South Sea Islands. Also ever individual who denies the Lord Jesus Christ is vain in his own imaginations according to God's Word. Professing themselves to be smart, they have made simpletons of themselves because there is no spiritual light within the soul.

Now hear verse 23 ! "And by them the glory and majesty and excellence of the immortal God were exchanged for and represented by images, resembling mortal man and birds and beasts and reptiles." And this is exactly what man has done. We're living in a day when the human body has become the altar on

which men sacrifice their souls, did you know that? That's right! Everything is offered on the altar of lust today. We talk about the Greeks in Paul's day when prostitution, or the sex act, was a part of worship! And we say, "Oh that's horrible, that's horrible!" But, beloved, let me tell you something, we are living in a day when this very same thing is happening: men have prostituted their worship to the human body and the human soul instead of the Holy God; they have tuned the truth of God into a lie! And they "worship and serve the creature more than the Creator who is blessed for ever".

Look at verse 24: "Therefore God, gave them up in the lusts of their own hearts..."-and I want you to watch these next verses: three times from vs. 24 through vs. 28, God says He gave them up! And beloved, this is not my word I did not make this up this is God's WORD! God condemns every man, I don't; oh no, I would never condemn anybody! But verse 24 says: "Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their own hearts to sexual impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, abandoning them to the degrading power of sin." GOD ABANDONED THEM TO IMPURITY! He abandoned them to let them follow the cravings of their own hearts. In other words, God left them to themselves! Remember, I did not write this, but **THUS IT IS WRITTEN**: "God gave them up"! I don't know of any more awful words in the whole Bible than these other than those words at the judgment: Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, for I never knew you! (Matt. 7:23).

You don't know how I've trembled in preparing for this message; you don't know how I've been on my face, crying unto God to let me preach this with a broken heart because here God says He's given men over to themselves: And how many times have I prayed, "Lord, do anything in the world, but don't give me over to myself! Don't leave me to my mind with all that goes on there! Don't leave me in the place where I have no Christ, no blood to plead, no righteousness to cover me, no altar to come to and no throne to fall down before then I would have no hope; please don't leave me to myself!" But here God said He gave them up- **HE ABANDONED THEM!** Now I don't know how long God bears with men before He abandons them, but I know He told Noah in Gen. 6:3: "My Spirit shall not always strive with man..." And here He tells us: "Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their own hearts to sexual impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, abandoning them to the degrading power of sin." Why? Because "they exchanged the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen." (vs. 25).

"**GOD GAVE THEM UP!**" These men deliberately forfeited the truth of God and accepted a lie in its place. You see, when God comes among us with the truth, holding forth His blessed Word, when He says, "this is truth" and we don't obey it, then we've exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and when we're abandoned to ourselves, we're in trouble! I fully believe in my own soul that there's one thing for which the child of God never gets over praising Him: that God didn't let him go and leave him to himself and that He didn't let him exchange the truth of God for a lie. Instead, He gave him spiritual eyes so he could see and spiritual ears so he could hear; and this man is called blessed in Matt. 13:16. Many a time I could have believed a lie and would have been damned apart from the grace of God. Oh, I praise God for this! This praise goes on in my soul continually: God didn't leave me! He did not say, "I have given him up!" He could have: He should have, but praise God, He didn't! His mercy was extended toward me.

Then look at vv.26-27! I don't know of two more awful verses in the Bible! (And again these are not my words; these are God's words. You see, it's not what I say about the Bible and about God that men hate. it's what God says Himself, and here God is speaking!) "For this reason God gave them over and abandoned them to vile affections and degrading passions. For their women exchanged their natural function for an unnatural and abnormal one: and the men also turned from natural relations with women and were set ablaze (burned out consumed) with lust for one another, men committing shameful acts with men and suffering in their own bodies and personalities the inevitable consequences and penalty of their wrong doing and going astray, which was their fitting retribution." You see, God's Word says that homosexuality is SIN; God's Word says that lesbianism is SIN. God said this and I am to proclaim it! And our nation is given over to this very sin!

Beloved, let me tell you something: God's judgment is not going to fall on this nation-it has already fallen on us! All God has to do is leave man alone and he'll turn on himself. This is the reason for the rapes and murders. This is the reason for our courts being in shambles and hardly anyone being punished any more. This is the reason murderers and rapists, robbers and thieves are turned back on society: God has left this nation alone! They've believed a lie; they've exchanged the truth of God for a lie! And God is here to warn us this morning! We're just a few; only a few are hearing, but oh if we would hear, and God would be pleased in His infinite grace, mercy and sovereign love by His almighty power to make us hear!

This is world wide: men with men with disease and suicide and depression among them you read it in the newspapers as well as I do. Part of the city of San Francisco is turned over to them; they have their own parks and all they want-God has let them alone! He's given them over to what they want to do and brother this is hell while a man is still upon earth! In this promiscuous society in which we live, God has not been asleep you know-HE HAS GIVEN THEM UP! These are His judgments upon us because of sin! You know the disease that's running rampant across this nation; all you have to do is read the newspapers, and it's a mess from beginning to end. God has turned man loose to do what he wants to do; He has given him up. You would think it was bad enough for men, but God said in Rom. 1:26 that even the women exchanged their natural use for an unnatural and abnormal one, that is, they turned against God's natural plan for them and indulged in sex sins with each other. Because they exchanged the truth of God for a lie GOD GAVE THEM UP!

Beloved, I've cried to God to give me a broken heart but I don't know how I can preach a message like this in a soft tone. I'm being perfectly honest with you: God is against sin! He wants us to know the DETRIMENT of it; and in a moment I'm going to show you where it leads.

In verse 28 we hear the judgment continuing: "And so, since they did not see fit to acknowledge God or approve of Him or consider Him worth the knowing, GOD GAVE THEM OVER TO A BASE AND CONDEMNED MIND to do things not proper or decent but loathsome." Do you know what this means? God abandoned them to their own depraved thoughts, saying, "All right, you didn't think I was worthy of your worship; you didn't think I was worthy of your praise; you've seen no need of me. Yet I've fed you, I've clothed you, I've given you drink; I've caused the sun to rise in the East in the morning and set in the West in the evening. I've sent you the sun and I've sent you the rain; I've sent you the snow and I've made your ground to bring forth abundantly that you might be fed; I've caused you to have all types of inventions that you may be able to enjoy life (1 Tim.6:17), and all through my mercy. But you've abandoned Me, so I've abandoned you. You didn't want Me, you didn't approve of Me; I'll not approve of you."

"Pastor, isn't there something else in the Bible but this?" Yes there is but God laid this Word on my heart for you this morning, so I pray you will listen! These are the sins to which men are given over. Let's read verse 28 again, along with 29-30. "And so, since they did not see fit to acknowledge God or approve of Him or consider Him worth the knowing, God gave them over to a base and condemned mind to do things not proper or decent but loathsome; until they were filled permeated and saturated with every kind of unrighteousness, iniquity, grasping and covetous greed and malice. They were full of envy and jealousy, murder, strife, deceit and treachery, ill will and cruel ways. They were secret back-biters and gossipers, slanderers, hateful to and hating God, full of insolence, arrogance and boasting; inventors of new forms of evil..." You can't go a day without reading how man has tried to invent something else to give him a thrill. I heard something the other day on a talk show on the radio coming out of New Orleans which I wouldn't repeat in a mixed audience as to what extent men have gone in order to get a thrill out of life, inventing new and more evil things; man is never satisfied!

And they were "...disobedient and undutiful to parents. They were without understanding, conscienceless and faithless heartless and loveless and merciless.. (vv. 30-31). I believe Whitefield, the great evangelist of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, was right when he said that man, in his natural depravity, is half devil and half beast. Leave him to himself and he'll do anything. You don't believe this? You haven't read your morning papers! Only a man who has been given over to a reprobate mind would walk into a drug store in Chicago and take Tylenol

off the shelves so he could mix the contents with cyanide and then put those bottles back upon the shelves for purchase-he is a sadist! He has a depraved mind! We're living in an evil day!

Let me tell you something: if you're here outside of Christ this morning, you're either in that condition; or, if God leaves you alone. it won't be long and you'll be there! There's some of you over whom I've wept and wept this past week-bitter tears- for God not to let you go, not to let you have your own way; for if you have your way, you're GONE, did you know that? Oh, that God would have mercy upon us! This is awesome, isn't it? But this is the truth. this is the Word of God! And you and I know it's true.

Now look at our text in verse 32: "Though they are fully aware of God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve to die, they not only do them themselves but approve and applaud others who practice them." We couldn't understand verse 32 without the previous verses to see where man is, and how he is without excuse before God; all of this goes together, for when we come to this verse, we are told these five things: 1) man is without excuse before God; 2) he knows the judgment of God; 3) he knows that if he commits sin. he's worthy of death; 4) he knows that God must punish sin, but 5) he yet has pleasure in sin and applauds them that do the same thing he does. If this doesn't make us who know the Lord cry unto God, if this doesn't make us fall on our faces before Him to cry for our children, I don't know what will!

All of this teaches us that man no matter who he is or where he is born stands guilty before God. Why? because our text tells us that MEN HAVE AN INNER KNOWLEDGE FROM GOD OF THE REALITY OF SIN. There's not a man living upon the face of God's green earth-never has been, nor ever will be until the Lord Jesus Christ returns-who has not had the inner knowledge from God Himself of the reality of sin written upon his heart and in his mind. Every man like Adam has run away from God! And why does man run from God? Because he doesn't want his deeds reproved: "Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John. 3:19). Man will not come to the light; he hates the light lest his deeds should be reproved and there's some of you this morning who don't like to come to the light. You don't want to take your Bible and read it, meditate upon it and cry unto God. You don't want to search it. Why? You hate to come to the light because the light reproves.

There's nothing, since God dealt with my soul for salvation, that has ever convicted and searched my heart like that third chapter of James on which I am going to preach tonight. I've never had anything to so search my heart! Do you know why men hate the Word of God? It searches out the heart; it won't let them alone. And, praise God for the day when the Word won't let us alone! When God was dealing with my heart for salvation, that WORD would never let me alone; it followed me. I praise God for this! When I would want to go off greedily after sin, spurning the love and mercy of God, then Matt. 12:43-45 would come home to my heart with such convicting power: "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man he walketh through dry places, seeking rest and finding none. Then he saith, I will return unto my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself..." and that used to scare the living daylight out of me, that if I would sin after I had received the knowledge of the truth, I'd bring seven demons back with me!

Then that Scripture of Hebrews 10:26 also followed me: "For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation..." Oh may the Word of God be that burning sword of Heb. 4:12 that will divide asunder the soul and the spirit, the joints and marrow, and be a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart, so we'll find ourselves naked before Him! We're all naked before Him with Whom we have to do, according to Heb.4:13.

Brethren, let me tell you something: if after reading this first chapter of Romans anyone can believe that man, of his own free will can bring himself up by his bootstraps and save himself, he's spiritually blinded, because man is shut up to himself and his sin! I ask. "How is a man who is in this fix, hating the light and hating God, and doing those things which are not pleasing to God, ever going to get out of it by himself?" If he is ever saved, mercy must come to him; grace must come to him; God must by the power of the Spirit

raise him from the grave of sin and translate him into the kingdom of God's dear Son. The sinner must be given a new heart, a new spirit and a new nature; and only the Spirit of God gives these spiritual gifts.

So this text teaches that **ALL MEN HAVE AN INNER KNOWLEDGE FROM GOD OF THE REALITY OF SIN**. You see, there is no standard of moral right or moral wrong apart from the Word of God. And what's happened today is that the Word of God has been thrown overboard, and every man does what seems right in his own eyes: nothing is black and nothing is white; everything is gray, as they say, "If you want to do it, do it; if it feels good, do it; if it satisfies you, do it." That's the philosophy on which everybody lives today: "Let me do my thing!" "Listen, don't bring me the Word of God don't tell me the ten commandments! Don't tell me what's right or what's wrong, I'm going to do MY thing:" And, beloved, "to do your thing" is to wind up under the judgment of God in the lake of fire!

Listen now! It's "Whosoever doeth the will of God..."; that's the man who will live, not the man who lives for himself! "...but, Lord, Lord, did we not do this did we not do that?" And He said unto them, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, for I never knew you; for it's not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord that shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21-23 paraphrased) . And what is the will of the Father? The will of the Father is to turn your back upon sin, to hate it and to flee unto Christ by faith, closing with Him (Isa. 55:7).

Beloved God sets the moral standard in His Word and He doesn't vary from this at all. There's no gray areas with God. He sets the moral standard according to His own moral Being, and He is holy, righteous and just, so He can do nothing less. And when God made man in His own image and breathed into Him the breath of life that he became a living soul (Gen. 2:7), He made him in the moral likeness of God. And because man fell in the garden doesn't mean that he's been relieved of his responsibility to worship and give holy thanks unto God, and to walk in the way of righteousness and true holiness before God; he finds himself unable to do it but he's not relieved of the responsibility, because God made him in His own moral image, and He wrote His moral law upon his heart!

Our text says, "KNOWING the judgment of God..." I mean, these men who have been given over to reprobate minds KNOW the judgment of God. Man by sin has become estranged from God. He has degenerated in some cases into savagery and lives like the beast of the field, but he still has that mark of God upon him. He might live in arrogant pride and stand out in rebellion against God, but there has been written upon his heart the very moral law of God that he's without excuse. And our text not only says that man has the knowledge of the sinfulness of sin within himself, it goes even further than that: it says that while he is committing sin he is conscious of the fact that "they which do such things are worth of death," and he knows in his own heart that the judgment of God has been pronounced against such things. The fact that he knows the worthiness of the judgment of God proves that he knows the reality of sin.

"...Ah...", you say, "but this man was born in the midst of Africa!" Go among those who have never heard the Word as our missionaries have, and what have they found? They've found men there who knew nothing of the Bible and yet who walked according to the moral code of God's ten commandments; for when a man stole his neighbor's wife, they killed him! When a man committed murder, they killed him; they hated it. The moral law of God was still upon the hearts of these men whom we call heathen. This is clearly brought out in Rom. 2. that the Gentiles or heathen which have not the written law in the Bible as we do, shall yet be judged according to "the law written in their hearts", which was not altogether erased in the fall of man: "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another" (Rom. 2:14-15). So **EVERY MAN IS WITHOUT EXCUSE!** Whether it's in the highest civilization or the lowest civilization, **THE LAW OF GOD AGAINST MURDER IS WRITTEN UPON THE CONSCIENCE OF THE ENTIRE HUMAN RACE!** You cannot tell me that a woman can abort her baby, murdering that unborn child, and not have that upon her conscience and upon her mind. You can't make me believe it, for the Scripture tells me that she did it knowing the judgment of God against it! So she is without excuse. You

can't tell me that a man can go and blow people's brains out and not be conscious of the fact that he has taken life, and that God is against him. This Word says that he is!

Second **MEN HAVE A CONSCIOUSNESS THAT GOD MUST HATE, JUDGE AND PUNISH SIN.** This knowledge is put within man. That's what that 32<sup>nd</sup> verse says: "**WHO KNOWING THE JUDGMENT OF GOD**"! Who's He talking about? He's not talking about saved souls; He's talking about these men and women who committed all these awful sins. They knew while they were committing them that they which do such things "abide under the judgment of God" and that they are worthy of death! So because of this knowledge, every man is without excuse! How awful the conscience must be when it becomes seared as with a hot iron and runs on into sin!

This brings me to say that there is no such thing as an atheist, for Psa. 14:1 says, "The fool hath said in his heart: there is no God." And that word "fool" there in the Hebrew means "the insane man" says in his heart: no God. A man who tells you he doesn't believe there is a God is either crazy or he's lying, because there is written upon the heart of every man, the knowledge that there is a God! He may say "no God", but he's not kidding anybody, for God's Word says that he knows there is a God. Look at the text: "**Who KNOWING the judgment of God...**" So if anybody ever tells you that he or she is an atheist, ask them, "Do you mean it when you say there is no God? If you do, you're either crazy or you're lying!"

Then I'll tell you something else: these men who preach error and heresy, who preach no hell, annihilation, universalism or soul sleep, all **KNOW THEY ARE LYING** when they preach these things, "for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven **AGAINST ALL UNGODLINESS AND UNRIGHTEOUSNESS OF MEN, WHO HOLD THE TRUTH IN UNRIGHTEOUSNESS** (Rom. 1:18). Any man who preaches error or heresy, knows in his own soul that what he is preaching is wrong! He is sinning against God, and yet he goes on because his heart and mind is blinded; he's holding the truth in unrighteousness, preaching a lie. This is awful! God has dealt with my heart all week about this, and I couldn't do anything else but come before you this morning and preach God's Holy Word. And if God gives men up to this, no wonder we are in the fix we are religiously today! Men will deliberately I mean deliberately come into the pulpit and preach what they preach, only for the reason that they might seduce or get money, make a name for themselves, bring somebody underneath their control or put over a program, they **KNOW** they're doing wrong; it's written within their own souls! That's awful, isn't it? that a man would preach error, **KNOWING** that he's feeding people the lies out of hell! Yet he'll go on with it, at the same time applauding his other fellow friend who is doing the same thing in the same way! He is without excuse! Man's conscience convicts him before God!

My brethren, you don't know what an awesome thing it is to stand right here in the pulpit; it's awesome! There's not enough money in this world to make me stand here three minutes or even one minute if I didn't **KNOW** that God had put me here: On my face before God this morning I had to cry, "Lord. I'm going to have to give an account one day of what I say to these people. I'm going to have to give an account unto God for everything that comes out of this mouth at that last great day; I'm accountable!" Again I say, I wouldn't stay here one second if I didn't know that God had put me here; and you wouldn't know how many times I've wanted to throw in the towel and quit, knowing the responsibility. Brother, it would be an awful thing to stand here and to delude the souls of men, did you know that?

Brethren I hate sin! I hate what it does to the human soul! Do you know why my blessed Lord Jesus cried when He came to the tomb of Lazarus? He didn't cry for Martha and Mary because He knew what He was going to do for Lazarus. **HE CRIED BECAUSE OF WHAT SIN HAD DONE TO THE HUMAN RACE.** And it was these filthy, vile, dirty sins that we've read about in Romans 1 all rolled into one, that my blessed Lord became at the cross for us sinners: **HE BECAME SIN**, the very essence of sin; sin was imputed to Him that the righteousness of God may be imputed to His people. If that doesn't break your heart, I don't know what will! God the Son became all of that! No wonder when God the Father looked on Him, He had to turn His back, causing the son to cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" **SIN** was put upon Him and it stunk in God's nostrils; He was of purer eyes than to behold iniquity so He had to turn His back upon Him. That's what makes me appreciate the blood and righteousness of Christ. That's the reason I cry after

holiness and righteousness and a holy walk before Him. That's what breaks my heart when I find out I've sinned against Him; because it was my sin that drove Him to the cross and nailed and kept Him there. He wouldn't come down; He couldn't come down, for He was dying in the place of His people in my place!

In the third place, our text teaches us that **MEN PERSIST IN THE WAYS OF SIN IN SPITE OF THE WARNING OF THEIR CONSCIENCE**. Why? because their hearts are darkened through the deceitfulness of sin. You see, no matter how much man is warned, he will not turn! Why will a man take a pack of about 20 cigarettes which has written on it -and on all the billboards and advertisements in the newspapers and magazines-the sign: "The Surgeon General of the United States has found that smoking cigarettes is hazardous to your health"; why will a man, woman or young person go on feeding all of that into their lungs, knowing it has been proven that smoking causes lung cancer, and that men all across the world are dying like flies because of it? And yet they go on in spite of all the warnings, believing a lie that somehow they will escape the awful consequences! Do you know why? Men's hearts are darkened because of the power of sin! Did you ever try to quit smoking or get rid of nicotine? Have you ever had a habit that you tried to quit? Try it; and this will show you the power sin has over you you will persist in it in spite of all warnings!

Every week the warning of God's Word goes out that the soul that sinneth it shall die, and yet man persists in his ways; he will not come to God. Some of you sitting before me this morning have been knowing for decades that you do not know God; you are warned every Sabbath day that you are without Christ, without hope and without God, and yet you go on in your state of unbelief, hoping against hope that God's going to save you, somewhere, somehow, without your acting upon the light that He has given you, and you've never closed in with the Lord Jesus Christ. Some of you are going to hold on to your little profession until you die and go to hell. Oh, you might bring some tears to your eyes and say that you have great fellowship with God, but there is no life in your soul! Yet you go on, in spite of all the warnings!

Why do men persist in iniquity and rebellion against God, when they have written upon their hearts the certain knowledge of God's holiness and His stored-up wrath against them? Why do men who have professed "no God", saying, "I'm going to have my own way" while they lived, call upon the name of God when they come to die? because God's judgment is written upon their hearts, it's been there all the while. That's what our text says: "Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same but have pleasure in them that do them."

And then our text teaches that **MEN COME TO THE POINT WHERE THEY CONDONE, THEY APPROVE, THEY AID, AND THEN THEY REJOICE IN THE SINS OF OTHERS**. This is the next logical step away from and against God; and my friend, this is the most awful thing in all the world! The text says, "but have pleasure in them that do them", and it means 'agreeing with and consenting to' their sins. They not only commit the sins themselves, but delight in and applaud those that are doing the same thing, knowing that "they which commit such things are worthy of death." You know, it's terrible to go to hell by yourself, but it's worse to drag somebody else with you by applauding and encouraging them in their sins!

In the fifth place, we learn from our text that **MEN COME TO THE PLACE WHERE THEY ARE THE SUPPORTERS OF SIN AND VICES RATHER THAN THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD**. You see, the terrible effects of rejection of truth are seen in the moral ruin of the soul. The final step on this earth is that which leads to the approval and the applauding of the sin of others. Now you listen to me! I think this is the most serious point I'm going to be on this morning: **IT IS THE PUBLIC APPLAUSE OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS**. We have outstanding instances of this every day! When men sit with their black robes in the highest court of this land and approve and legalize abortion, they are applauding what others do! God calls it murder and they call it "legalized"; they approve of it! And the blood of every butchered baby is not only going to be on the hands of the mother the mid-wife or the doctor but on those judges who sat upon that Supreme Court and legalized it! They're going to have to give an account to God for it, for they were put there by the ordinance of God and must bear the responsibility of their office. Every judge on our benches who releases the murderers and rapists to return to society and commit the same crimes will have the blood of those victims on his hands in that day! God put the judges there to restrain! Read the 13<sup>th</sup>



chapter of Romans; I didn't write it, God did. And He's put you and me where we are, my friend, so we'd better be faithful as one who must give an account!

The whole world approves of what's going on today! The approval of society is upon all of this ungodliness out of Hollywood, all of these actors with their many divorces, re-marriages and riotous living; and when we watch their films and love what they portray on the movie or television screens, we are putting our approval on their life style as well as that of the characters they portray! But God says the judgment awaits the soul that puts his approval on sin. If you can watch and delight in these soap operas, and be taken up with all of that infidelity, fornication and whoremongering, lying, stealing, and everything else they portray, you are giving your approval to all of that! But it stinks in the nostrils of God! Brother, if you like that kind of entertainment, if you like to eat that kind of garbage and to drink from those kinds of wells, you are really revealing your heart! You are showing that you approve of sin! I read of a preacher who watched a program on TV with the excuse that he wanted to count how many suggestive things were in it; he counted 31, but admitted he had laughed at every one of them. Now you people know how this pulpit has stood against TV for years, and I'm going to stand against the filth it portrays until I die; for the Word of God says that not only those who commit such things are worthy of death, but they also who have pleasure in (approve of or enjoy) the sins others commit (Rom. 1:32).

Instead of condemning the sins of these men and women out of Hollywood who parade across the movie and TV screens as leprous and infectious to our nation, men have gone after them, bowed down at their shrine and worshipped them. But their life-styles are a stench in the nostrils of God, for He is AGAINST SIN! So let me repeat it: if WE put our stamp of approval on that which is paraded across the TV or movie screens, then WE are taking pleasure in what they do. "Oh no!" you say, "I wouldn't be caught dead doing all of that." But you watch somebody else do it, and take pleasure in that! I'd rather that God would send me on to hell before I'd take pleasure in hearing my God's name vilified and made fun of in talk shows that blaspheme the Word of God and lift up homosexuality and lesbianism! God forbid! God FORBID it!

Listen to me, don't turn me off! May God by His Spirit give you ears to hear, for God has laid this upon my soul! You may never hear me preach again, so listen! God's Word says you are doing the same thing as others, that you are committing the same evil as they when you begin to take pleasure in the evil they do! And that's the last step in the rung of the ladder in the downward path of sin!

When any man or any state or legislature puts their approval on legalized gambling, they're taking pleasure in what others do. Our courts and our judges approve murder, rape and every type of stealing when they let the prisoners go and will not punish them according to the law. That's approving what they're doing! And every shyster lawyer in the nation is going to be responsible for every technicality he has ever used to keep murderers from being punished. Men are responsible to God! And did you know that there is in every man something that secretly hopes the criminal won't get caught or that the murderer will be able to escape? You follow the story and you side with the criminal, don't you? But that's approving sin, and God says we are to hate it. God hates every evil and false way!

Further the ministers and churches who approve the "carnal Christian" theory that's promulgated today are putting their approval upon sin, which God hates. Do you know what they're really saying when they call those people "Christians" who have made a profession and yet live in sin? They're saying, "I would that I could do it and get away with it like you do; go ahead and have your fun, brother, and everything will be okay, because you made a little profession one day, so every thing is okay! NO! It's not okay; that's taking pleasure in what others do instead of drawing the line of demarcation!

You people have been listening to me long enough to know that we're not going to back up for anything when God lays it upon our heart to draw that line of demarcation. He sent us here this morning to preach His word even though I wept my way to the pulpit. I've preached bold, but I've preached in love and tenderness because I know the power of sin. I know what it does; I know how it holds, and I know what happens when a man wants to get out of it. What is he going to do? I know the power that it has upon the soul who's crying unto God for mercy from it, who's trying to flee from it, and who's pleading for deliverance from it! He

finds he's helpless and hopeless before God with no power to deliver himself from the fix he's in. And there he is: he's in the hands of a sovereign God to do with him as He pleases. But, praise God, when we come there, there's help and there's hope because we're beginning to hate sin; we're crying out against and fleeing from it and! And this is part of repentance.

I'm not going to stem the tide. Who am I, one man, against all the advertisement that goes across this nation? Everything in the magazines, the newspapers, the television, the radio, and everywhere you look, is calculated to appeal to the flesh! Everything that's sold has to have a naked or semi-nude woman with it. It is appealing to the flesh! All of the magazines upon the news-stands in our grocery stores are there appealing to the flesh. Every story that's told is appealing to the flesh. I'm not going to change anybody, but I've come to you this morning, peradventure God will be pleased to take His Word home to your heart, because He said, "who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."

You ask, "Pastor, what is my hope?" Our only hope, brethren, is the Lord God of glory! My only hope lies in the shed blood and righteousness of Christ, and in the power of the grace of God to change the hearts of men. If I didn't believe in the sovereign God, and that salvation is of the Lord, after looking at these verses this morning I'd quit preaching and you'd never see me again! If I didn't believe that God was able with His power to change the hearts of men and break them by the love of Christ from the cross; if I didn't believe that in the midst of this wicked and perverse generation in which we live, the power of God was able to bring men down at the feet of the Lord Jesus and break the power of sin, making them new creatures in Christ Jesus, setting their eyes and their feet toward heaven and their back toward hell and sin; if I didn't believe that, I'd quit preaching before daybreak. But I do believe it and I've seen God do it! He did it in my life, and I've seen Him do it in the lives of some of you sitting before me this morning; I know the change that's come upon you and in you. I know God is able to do it!

You ask, "Pastor, what is my hope?" Your only hope and my only hope is THE MERCY AND GRACE OF GOD that He would deliver us spirit, soul and body from this way of sin and bring us into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. This God gives new hearts! This God gives new natures! This God changes a man and makes him ready for heaven by His almighty power. He takes the hammer of the cross and breaks down the heart, making us willing in the day of His power to seek His face and call upon His name. And I'm going to preach it until I die! The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek for therein in the gospel is the righteousness of God revealed (Rom.1:16-17), and that's what we need: the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ, that's what we need! I praise God that He gives it! There's never a soul yet that ever sought Him in vain!

Now we're going to have to do something with what God has said in this message this morning not what I have said, but you have to do something with what God has said! What is it? You have a responsibility before God; you are without excuse, and you'll be without excuse in that day! Are you in Christ? Do you know Christ? Have you bowed to His scepter? Have you closed in with Him? The Lord Jesus is our only Help, our only Hope, our only Salvation. His blood our only cleansing, His righteousness our only covering; and I need none other because He will hold me in the day of Judgment!

My prayer is that God in His grace will grant you repentance to the acknowledging of the truth (2 Tim. 2:25), that you may acknowledge that Romans 1 is a true picture of your heart by nature, and that your need is for godly sorrow over sin which worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of (2 Cor. 7:10). May the Holy Spirit write Isa. 55:7 upon your heart: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon"; and may He thus enable you to turn to God in repentance and to the Lord Jesus Christ by faith, finding in Him the suitable Savior for your soul.

May you see and know that your only hope of salvation and a right standing before a holy and righteous God is in the Person of the bleeding, dying, resurrected Lord Jesus Christ Who Himself became the Substitute for

sinners and Who by Himself suffered the full payment of your sin in His body on the tree. Hear it again: only in Christ can a poor hell-deserving sinner stand righteous before a holy God. ✠

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