

The Text

Romans 1:18–25 (CSB) For God's wrath is revealed from heaven against all godlessness and unrighteousness of people who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth, since what can be known about God is evident among them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, that is, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen since the creation of the world, being understood through what he has made. As a result, people are without excuse. For though they knew God, they did not glorify him as God or show gratitude. Instead, their thinking became worthless, and their senseless hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man, birds, four-footed animals, and reptiles.

Therefore God delivered them over in the desires of their hearts to sexual impurity, so that their bodies were degraded among themselves. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served what has been created instead of the Creator, who is praised forever. Amen.

The Support

Paul speaks twice about "exchanged":

- v22-23a Claiming to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God
- 25 They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served what has been created instead of the Creator, who is praised forever. Amen.

Where did this exchanging all started?

Genesis 3:1–7 (CSB) Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You can't eat from any tree in the garden'?"

The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit from the trees in the garden. But about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, God said, 'You must not eat it or touch it, or you will die.' "

"No! You will certainly not die," the serpent said to the woman. "In fact, God knows that when you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." The woman saw that the tree was good for food and delightful to look at, and that it was desirable for obtaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

We were given the temptation of the first exchange: that we will be like God.

Jesus confronts this idolatry when quotes Asaph in Psalm 82 when the Pharisees were about to stone him for blasphemy.

John 10:29–38 (CSB) My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all. No one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

Again the Jews picked up rocks to stone him.

Jesus replied, "I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these works are you stoning me?"

"We aren't stoning you for a good work," the Jews answered, "but for blasphemy, because you—being a man—make yourself God."

Jesus answered them, "Isn't it written in your law, I said, you are gods? If he called those to whom the word of God came 'gods'—and the Scripture cannot be broken— do you say, 'You are blaspheming' to the one the Father set apart and sent into the world, because I said: I am the Son of God? If I am not doing my Father's works, don't believe me. But if I am doing them and you don't believe me, believe the works. This way you will know and understand that the Father is in me and I in the Father."

Make no mistake: Jesus is not calling them gods as though they are on the same level as him.

Here is Psalm 82 and look at the judgment of God:

Psalm 82 (CSB)

God stands in the divine assembly;
he pronounces judgment among the gods:
"How long will you judge unjustly
and show partiality to the wicked? Selah.
Provide justice for the needy and the fatherless;
uphold the rights of the oppressed and the destitute.
Rescue the poor and needy;
save them from the power of the wicked."
They do not know or understand;
they wander in darkness.
All the foundations of the earth are shaken.
I said, "You are gods;
you are all sons of the Most High.
However, you will die like humans
and fall like any other ruler."
Rise up, God, judge the earth,
for all the nations belong to you.

By quote Psalm 82 and calling it to be law, he is judging them on their own idolatry. Whatever idols that they have created in their minds and hearts, when confronted, it was enough to kill the Son of God who was the Prophet of their day.

When somebody--somebody you trust and they know you deeply--confronts you on your sin and idolatry, what is your first reaction? Anger of the "gods" because you have made yourself a little god? Or do you quickly repent and confess of your sin because Jesus paid for all of your sins.

I am going to go out on a limb here. When you heard me say, "someone who knows you deeply", I am wondering if some of you recoil at the thought. And I wonder if some of us recoil at the thought of someone knowing us deeply because either a past sin that you don't want to reveal or you are in the deep pit of sin right now. You must know that God knows all of that. All of it. Even that gross sin. Even at that sin you are trapped within right now. And God does not recoil. He comes to you and sits with you and calls you out.

How do I know this? He sent His Son. He knows you cannot do this. He knows you cannot be perfect because He knew you in your sin and depravity. And then He sent His Son to live and die for you.

Our sin is too much. It weighs so much that it will eventually kills us. By birth and by nature and choice, we have all exchanged God for our idols, philosophies, desires, and ourselves.

God

We must understand the the Lord God, He is one.

Deuteronomy 6:4–9 (CSB) “Listen, Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart. Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them be a symbol on your forehead. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your city gates.

We must not try to be god, keep making gods that we want to control but will not come rescue us because gods that we create in our mind and hearts cannot rescue us. Only the Lord God who created us and fashioned us in his image can save us.

Exodus 20:1–6 (CSB) Then God spoke all these words: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery. Do not have other gods besides me. Do not make an idol for yourself, whether in the shape of anything in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters under the earth. Do not bow in worship to them, and do not serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, bringing the consequences of the fathers' iniquity on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate me, but showing faithful love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commands.

If we are the adopted children of God who have been bought with the price of His crucified Son, then I promise you our idols will be demolished.

1 Samuel 5:1–5 (CSB) After the Philistines had captured the ark of God, they took it from Ebenezer to Ashdod, brought it into the temple of Dagon and placed it next to his statue. When the people of Ashdod got up early the next morning, there was Dagon, fallen with his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD. So they took Dagon and returned him to his place. But when they got up early the next morning, there was Dagon, fallen with his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD. This time, Dagon's head and both of his hands were broken off and lying on the threshold. Only Dagon's torso remained. That is why, still today, the priests of Dagon and everyone who enters the temple of Dagon in Ashdod do not step on Dagon's threshold.

The prophet Isaiah says it best:

Isaiah 40:18–31 (CSB)
With whom will you compare God?
What likeness will you set up for comparison with him?
An idol?—something that a smelter casts
and a metalworker plates with gold
and makes silver chains for?
A poor person contributes wood for a pedestal

that will not rot.
He looks for a skilled craftsman
to set up an idol that will not fall over.

Do you not know?
Have you not heard?
Has it not been declared to you
from the beginning?
Have you not considered
the foundations of the earth?
God is enthroned above the circle of the earth;
its inhabitants are like grasshoppers.
He stretches out the heavens like thin cloth
and spreads them out like a tent to live in.
He reduces princes to nothing
and makes judges of the earth like a wasteland.
They are barely planted, barely sown,
their stem hardly takes root in the ground
when he blows on them and they wither,
and a whirlwind carries them away like stubble.

"To whom will you compare me,
or who is my equal?" asks the Holy One.
Look up and see!
Who created these?
He brings out the stars by number;
he calls all of them by name.
Because of his great power and strength,
not one of them is missing.
Jacob, why do you say,
and Israel, why do you assert,
"My way is hidden from the LORD,
and my claim is ignored by my God"?
Do you not know?
Have you not heard?
The LORD is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the whole earth.
He never becomes faint or weary;
there is no limit to his understanding.

God is not calling you just to obey God because He is God. That is reason enough. But our futile minds cannot process that easily. What we do know, if we are truly honest with ourselves, that our idols and our sin demand too much from us. They will keep taking and taking and taking until we die. The wages of sin is death.

But look at what God has in store for you. Continue with verse 29.

He gives strength to the faint
and strengthens the powerless.
Youths may become faint and weary,
and young men stumble and fall,
but those who trust in the LORD
will renew their strength;
they will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not become weary,
they will walk and not faint.

Where do you see God in the text? What does the text say about God?

The Gospel

What is the Good News? There are no other gods. You cannot fashion some other god in order to control your own destiny.

If you do not trust and obey Christ as your Savior and Lord, here is your destiny:

Romans 3:23 (CSB) For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God;

Romans 6:23a (CSB) For the wages of sin is death

John 3:36 (CSB) The one who believes in the Son has eternal life, but the one who rejects the Son will not see life; instead, the wrath of God remains on him.

If you do trust and obey Christ as your Savior and Lord, here is what God predestined you to:

Romans 6:23b but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

John 3:16 (CSB) For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

God knows that sin breaks us because it already has broken us. If we let it continue, it will kill us. Christ commands each and every one of us to give Him our sin in a final exchange for his righteousness:

Matthew 11:28–30 (CSB) "Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take up my yoke and learn from me, because I am lowly and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Our Responsibility

Worship the one God, the only God, maker of heaven and earth.

Stop putting your faith and trust into yourself, your sin, idols, Satan, and demons. They are powerless to help and save you. Stop putting your faith into gods you can create and make. You have power over your idols. Not the other way around.

Just as David, our foreshadow to Christ, slew Goliath. For us, Christ slew and conquers sin and death once and for all. The tomb is empty. It's one and done.

Now, since our Conqueror has won the victory, what are we expected to do? Just like the mighty men of David went on killing the other giants in their land (2 Samuel 21:15-22), God calls us to put the death to sin and idols in our lives:

Romans 8:12–13 (CSB) So then, brothers and sisters, we are not obligated to the flesh to live according to the flesh, because if you live according to the flesh, you are going to die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

Do you think if you just keep playing with your sin, dabble with your sin that you sin is going to leave you alone, creep away and die on its own? Or do you think when you have to kill off sin, that there is hard work to get done and it is going to get messy? What do you think?

How do think you will do it? Romans 8:13 by the Spirit alone.

Pray

MY SAVIOR AND REDEEMER

I have played with my sin all of my life and it has only lead to death.

Take away my sin and lead me to life, fullness of joy, and blissful, satisfying pleasures forevermore.

Amen.

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