

sermon study guide

Sermon Summary (see next page for discussion questions)

“Romans” Part 2: When People Suppress the Truth

September 18/19, 2021

Dr. Henry Schorr

Most people don't need much convincing that this world is pretty messed up. The question is: Why is it messed up the way it is? There are many potential answers to this question, including economics, education systems, government, morality, even religion. Many years ago, a British magazine featured a series of articles addressing the question: “What's Wrong With the World?” After reading the articles, G.K. Chesterton sent a short letter to the editor. It said,

Dear Sir: Regarding your article ‘What's Wrong With the World’... I AM. Yours truly, G.K. Chesterton

The Bible is explicit that the heart of man is sinful and is bent toward selfishness and rebellion against God. This in large part explains what is wrong with our world. And God's response to sin and rebellion, according to Romans chapter 1, is wrath. In Romans 1:28-25 Paul, like a prosecutor in the court of law, makes the following case:

Point 1: God has clearly revealed himself to all human beings everywhere – and therefore all are without excuse. God has revealed himself:

- in both the vastness of the universe and the intricacies of the smallest aspects of nature (general revelation) (vv. 19-20)
- through his written Word, the Bible (special revelation)
- through an inner awareness of God: A God-given conscience and moral code written on humans' hearts

Point 2: People have been suppressing the truth of God and replacing God with their own gods or idols. Even though God's existence is clear, people don't want to be accountable to him. They refuse to give him the glory or to give him thanks (v.21). Instead they replace the true God with idols (v.22, 25)

Point 3: Rejecting and replacing God and the truth of God unleashes the wrath of God. God's wrath is based on his justice and flows out of his love for us. Most people are okay with the idea of God being loving but reject a God who is wrathful. Yet think about that for a moment. If one of your loved ones was beaten mercilessly by a group of thugs and left for dead, how would you feel about that? If your child was kidnapped and forced into sex slavery, how would you feel about that? Wouldn't you be absolutely enraged and demand justice? In other words, while you are capable of loving, you are also capable of being enraged and expressing wrath. So why would it be different with God in whose image we are made? It is precisely because God does love that he must also be a God of wrath. God's love and his righteousness demand that wrath is one of his attributes (Romans 1:17).

Romans 1:18 says that God's wrath is being revealed in the present time. His wrath is being revealed in “giving people over” (vv. 24, 26, 28) to their sinful desires. He allows people who push him away to have their own way and live with the consequences. Good thing the book of Romans doesn't end in chapter 1! The good news is made clear in verses such as Romans 5:9 and Galatians 3:13. Jesus took all of God's wrath directed at us upon himself on the cross, so that those who believe in him are made righteous.



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Discussion Questions

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IN - PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. What are some things you have observed in nature that confirm to you that God exists? How might you have missed this before you followed Christ?
2. In casual conversations, what do you hear people saying about what is wrong with the world?

UP - PURSUE GOD

Read Romans 1:18-25

3. In verse 18, what did mankind do when given “the truth” about God? What was the consequence of this response (vv. 21-23)? Describe a time when you may have suppressed the truth?

Read Romans 5:9-10, Galatians 3:13, John 3:36

4. How do each of these Scriptures show God’s response to the dire situation shown in Romans 1:18-25?

OUT - PURSUE MISSION

5. What comes to mind when you hear the phrase ‘the wrath of God’? How would you explain the truth of God’s wrath in light of His love?
6. Think of someone in your life who isn’t following Christ. How might God be calling you to join him in showing that person their need for the Good News found in Jesus?

For Personal Reflection/Prayer:

Read Romans 1:18-25 and Romans 5:1-11. Reflect on what God rescued you from and the relationship you now have with him through Jesus Christ. Which of these scriptures make you less ashamed of the Gospel and more excited to preach it? Commit these to memory.

THE WORD (NIV)

Romans 1:18-25

18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, 19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 20 For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.

24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. 25 They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

Romans 5:9-10

9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him! 10 For if, while we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

Galatians 3:13

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole.”

John 3:36

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on them.



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