

**March 15, 2026**

**God's Good News Story: The Church Alive & Growing**  
**Romans: For Today's World – Part 3**  
**Breaking Bad: Not Good (News)**

Paul's letter to the Romans, written around A.D. 57 while he was in the city of Corinth, Greece. It was written to a diverse group of Jewish and Gentile Christians in Rome, addresses the challenges of unity and faithfulness in a multicultural, often hostile environment. It appears that this letter was hand delivered by a faithful servant and friend of Paul, a lady by the name of Phoebe, from a nearby port city town of Cenchrea. The Letter to the Romans centers on humanity's universal need for salvation, justification by faith in Jesus Christ, the transformative power of grace, emphasizes unity between Jewish and Gentile believers and the call to live by the Spirit. "*Romans For Today's World*" highlights how these foundational truths call the modern church to embrace grace, pursue righteousness, break down barriers of division, and embody Christlike love and service in a complex world. In other words, Romans is a life changing, purpose directing book that hopefully will bring a great effect upon us today in 2026.

*Last week we ended on these two key verses.*

**ROMANS 1:16-17...**<sup>16</sup> *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.* <sup>17</sup> *For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."*

Today we move from the GOOD NEWS of the Gospel (*that has the power to save us and bring us into a righteous position with God through faith in Jesus*) to the BAD NEWS of mankind's failure and sin in rejecting the Gospel.

"The series 'Breaking Bad' tells the story of how one man's small compromises and desperate choices lead him deeper into darkness, showing how easily good intentions can spiral into ruin without hope or redemption." "Much like the story of a man whose choices lead him down a path of destruction in the series 'Breaking Bad,' the Bible shows us how humanity's downward spiral can only be reversed by the life-changing good news of the Gospel." <sup>AI</sup>

Let's see what Breaking Bad looks like and the Wrath of God that comes upon it. Romans 1:18-32.

## **OUTLINE**

- I. THE REVELATION OF THE WRATH OF GOD.**  
(1:18-20)
- II. THE REASONS FOR THE WRATH OF GOD.**  
(1:21-23)
- III. THE RESULTS OF THE WRATHY OF GOD.**  
(1:24-32)

First let me clarify a possible ‘elephant in the room’...which is about some people’s idea that God is unjust or not ‘fair’ in His judgment and calling out of sinful behaviors. *Romans 1:17–32* reveals that the wrath of God is not a contradiction to His love, but an essential expression of His character. God’s wrath is His settled, righteous opposition to all that is evil and destructive. It is not arbitrary anger or vindictiveness, but the necessary response of a holy God to sin, injustice, and rebellion. God’s wrath is not a flaw in His character, but a necessary part of His just, holy, and loving nature. It is His determined opposition to all that destroys His creation. Far from being something to hide, the wrath of God magnifies the beauty of the Gospel: that in Christ, God’s justice and love meet, offering salvation to all who believe.

God’s Wrath Flows from His Justice and Holiness;

God’s Wrath is an Aspect of His Love;

God’s Wrath Points Us to the Good News of the Gospel.

(A1)

## **I. THE REVELATION OF THE WRATH OF GOD: God Has Made Himself Known (1:18-20)**

*<sup>18</sup>For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,*

*<sup>19</sup>because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. <sup>20</sup>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.*

### **A. The wrath of God is revealed (v. 18)**

- God’s wrath is not arbitrary or capricious; it is His righteous response to sin.
- This wrath is both present (“is revealed”) and future, showing God’s justice now and in the judgment to come.

### **The Suppression Illustration**

- ✓ Imagine holding a beach ball underwater—it takes constant effort to suppress it.
- ✓ Humanity is constantly suppressing the truth about God. (v. 18)
- ✓ The truth keeps surfacing, but we push it down.

- *Theological Point:* God’s wrath is seen today as He “gives over” humanity to its chosen path, not just in final judgment.

### **B. Humanity suppresses the truth (v. 18b)**

- The problem is not ignorance, but willful rejection—humanity actively suppresses what God has made plain.
- *Theological Point:* This leaves all humanity “without excuse.” No one can claim innocence; all are accountable before God.

### C. God's invisible attributes are clearly seen (vv. 19-20)

- **General Revelation:** General revelation is God's self-disclosure through nature, history, and conscience, making His existence and attributes evident to all people everywhere.
  - **Special Revelation:** Special revelation is God's specific communication of Himself and His will through Scripture and, supremely, through Jesus Christ, revealing the way of salvation that cannot be known through nature alone.
  - **Key Point:** General revelation—God's self-disclosure through creation—makes all people aware of His existence and power, leaving them “without excuse,” but it cannot save; only special revelation, found in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, reveals the way of salvation and imparts the righteousness that comes by faith. The Gospel is God's special revelation, the only means by which faith and righteousness are imparted. **This is why we MUST be a part of God's Good News Gospel Story Telling Team.**
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## II. THE REASONS FOR THE WRATH OF GOD.

### REJECTION: (21-23)

*<sup>21</sup> For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. <sup>22</sup> Professing to be wise, they became fools, <sup>23</sup> and exchanged 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.*

- A. **They knew God but did not honor Him (v. 21a)**
  - Humanity's core sin is not ignorance, but refusal to honor and thank God.
- B. **They became futile in their thinking (v. 21b)**
  - The mind darkens when it turns from God.
- C. **They claimed to be wise but became fools (v. 22)**
  - Human wisdom apart from God leads to folly.
- D. **They exchanged the glory of God for images (23)**
  - *Theological Point:* The root sin is idolatry—worshiping creation instead of the Creator.
  - This “great exchange” is the vertical rebellion that leads to all other sins.

## The Exchange Illustration

- ✓ Trading a Rembrandt for a photocopy
  - ✓ Trading the Creator for creation is the ultimate bad deal (vv. 23, 25)
  - ✓ Idolatry is cosmic treason and cosmic foolishness
- **Key Point:** True righteousness and faith are found only when God is at the center; idolatry is the opposite of faith. Idolatry brings Madness, Misery & Moral Failure.

## III. THE RESULTS: God Gives Them Over (24-32)

*<sup>24</sup> Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. <sup>25</sup> For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. <sup>26</sup> For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, <sup>27</sup> 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. <sup>28</sup> 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,*

*<sup>29</sup> being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, <sup>30</sup> slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, <sup>31</sup> without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; <sup>32</sup> and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.*

### A. First “giving over”: Sexual immorality ( 24-25)

- God “gave them up” to the lusts of their hearts.
- *Theological Point:* This “giving over” is judicial, not arbitrary—God removes His restraining grace, allowing sin to run its course.

### B. Second “giving over”: Dishonorable passions (vv. 26-27)

- God “gave them up” to dishonorable passions.
- These visible sins are symptoms of a deeper spiritual rebellion.

### C. Third “giving over”: A debased mind (vv. 28-32)

- God “gave them up” to a debased mind, resulting in a catalog of sins—envy, murder, strife, deceit, gossip, and more.

## The Downward Spiral Illustration

- A plane in a nosedive—each "giving over" accelerates the descent
- Sin leads to more sin; rebellion leads to deeper rebellion
- Only the gospel can pull us out of the spiral
- *Theological Point:* These horizontal sins flow from the vertical rejection of God.
- *Theological Point:* All humanity is guilty—no one is righteous on their own.
- *Key Point:* This sets the stage for the Gospel—faith in Christ is the only way to receive God's righteousness.

## PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS FOR A CHURCH ALIVE AND GROWING:

### 1. HUMILITY: We Were All "Without Excuse"

- A church alive and growing remembers where it came from
- We were all guilty, all under wrath, all in need of rescue
- **Application:** Guard against self-righteousness. "There but for the grace of God go I."

### 2. CLARITY: We Must Diagnose the Disease Before Prescribing the Cure

- The church must not soften the bad news to make the good news more palatable

- People need to understand their guilt before they can appreciate grace
- **Application:** Are we clear about sin in our preaching, teaching, and evangelism?

### 3. CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT: We Live in a "Given Over" Culture

- Western culture increasingly reflects Romans 1:28-32
- The church must be a counter-cultural community of truth and grace
- **Application:** How do we engage our culture without compromising the gospel or withdrawing in fear?

### 4. EVANGELISTIC URGENCY: People Are Perishing

- "*The wrath of God is revealed*" (v. 18)—this is not theoretical
- A church alive and growing is a church on mission to rescue the perishing
- The downward spiral (vv. 24-32) is heartbreaking—humanity destroying itself
- God's wrath is righteous, but it grieves Him (Ezek. 18:32)
- **Application:** How do we speak about sin and sinners? With truth and tears, not just condemnation. Who in your life is under God's wrath and needs to hear the gospel?

## **Conclusion: The Universal Need for the Gospel**

- Romans 1 is not just a diagnosis of “them out there”—it’s a mirror for all of us.
- General revelation leaves us without excuse, but only the Gospel brings salvation.
- Sin is first against God, then against others, and God’s wrath is both present and future.
- God’s “giving over” is a warning and a call to repentance.
- All are guilty, but the good news is that God’s righteousness is revealed in the Gospel, received by faith (Romans 1:16-17).

## **Call to Action:**

- Let us not suppress the truth but respond in faith.
- Let us turn from idols to the living God.
- Let us proclaim the Gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes

## **The Doctor Illustration**

- A good doctor doesn't say, "You're fine!" when you have cancer
- The church must diagnose the disease (sin) before prescribing the cure (gospel)
- Bad news first, then good news

**"Next week, we'll see that religious people need the gospel just as much as irreligious people. Stay tuned."**

## **CLOSING CHALLENGE:**

“Though our sin leaves us guilty and without excuse, the Good News Gospel is that through faith in Jesus Christ, God offers the righteousness and rescue we desperately need. A church alive and growing faces the bad news honestly so we can celebrate the good news fully”.

## **THIS WEEK:**

- **Confess:** Where have you exchanged worship of God for worship of something else?
- **Grieve:** Who in my life is caught in the downward spiral? Pray for them.
- **Trust:** Remember that the gospel is God's power to save—no one is beyond rescue."
- **Share:** Be sensitive the Holy Spirit’s leading in sharing the Good News Gospel story.

## **Romans 1:18-32**

*<sup>18</sup> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, <sup>19</sup> because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. <sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. <sup>22</sup> Professing to be wise, they became fools, <sup>23</sup> and exchanged 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. <sup>24</sup> Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. <sup>25</sup> For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. <sup>26</sup> For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, <sup>27</sup> 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. <sup>28</sup> 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*

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