

Gender, Sexuality, and the Glory of God

Part 3 – Suppressing the Truth

Romans 1:18-32

Having stubbornly suppressed the truth that he cannot successfully deny, sinful man inevitably makes the tragic exchange of refusing to worship and give thanks to God preferring instead to worship created things. Once he has asserted himself over his Creator, man will inevitably transgress every boundary God has set in place. This he does most noticeably in his enthusiastic rejection of God's boundaries around sexual behavior. Operating as his own moral authority man eventually transgresses even those most obvious boundaries so that what is natural is rejected in favor of the unnatural. What is clearly destructive is chosen over what is clearly good. For this reason God is, even now, pouring out his just wrath upon the unrighteous.

Main Idea: Even now God's wrath is being revealed against those whose suppression of the truth and disordered worship has resulted in the perversion of their desires.

1. The charge is stated (vs. 18)

God has already begun revealing his righteousness to those who come to him in simple faith (vs. 17). But for those who suppress His truth, God has already begun to pour out his wrath. This is more than a process of bad things happening to people who do bad things. God's wrath is the expression of his personal and justified anger against sin and sinners. The unrepentant are guilty of suppressing even that truth which can be seen in creation so that they worship created things rather than the Creator. This exchange of truth and worship inevitably leads to degrading and unnatural sins.

- God's wrath is being revealed presently against the unrepentant.
- God's wrath is just. That is, he is right to be angry.

2. The charge is proved (vv. 19-32)

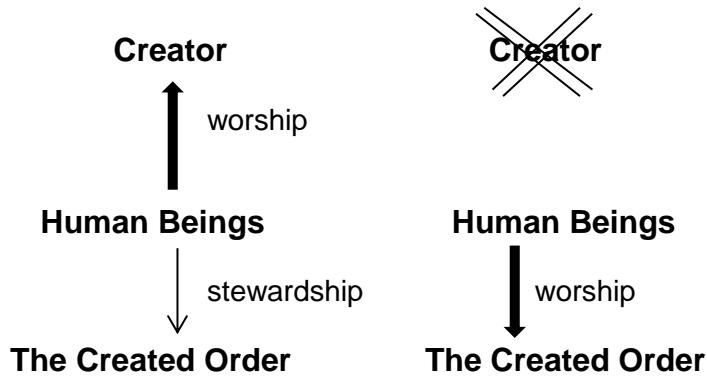
- Like a courtroom prosecutor Paul presents the evidence against the unrepentant. Paul's purpose here is to demonstrate why God is justified in his wrath. In the created order God has revealed his invisible attributes specifically his eternal power and divine nature. Through his handiwork God has proven that he is separate from his creation. That is, man knows that God is not a river or the sun or an emperor or a crocodile. God has proved from what we observe each day that He is powerful and eternal in ways that make him separate from what he has made. So when people worship what is in creation they are acting out of deliberate ignorance.

a) What God has done (vv. 19-20).

- The unbeliever is without excuse because God reveals himself. God has made plain certain things about himself in the created order so that even the un-evangelized are without excuse.

b) What mankind has done (vv. 21-23).

At the heart of the human condition is a terrible exchange. Man has exchanged truth and worship. He exchanges truth for a lie and the worship of the Creator for the worship of the creature.



c) What God has done (vv. 24-31).

Three times Paul states God's response to man's truth and worship exchange: "God gave them over" (vv. 24, 26, 28). Man's disordered worship results in disordered desire. When we exchange truth for a lie and worship the creature rather than the Creator, God hands us over to our disordered desires.

- Why does Paul take homosexual desire as his leading example (vv. 24-27)?
 1. Homosexuality graphically illustrates the exchange between order and disorder. Homosexuality was therefore commonly connected to pagan religions. Disordered worship leads to disordered lives.
 2. Homosexuality was supremely a Gentile sin. When Jews looked upon the Gentile world they were particularly horrified by the prevalence of homosexuality. The "sin of Sodom" was held forth as a particularly grievous sin.

d) What mankind has done (vs. 32).

Paul's final charge against the unrepentant is that they not only proceed full speed into perversion but they created a society where such immorality is given hearty approval. Since the unrepentant cannot completely rid themselves of the knowledge that homosexuality is wrong they must seek out those who approve of their behavior.

Questions for Family Discussion:

1. When you look at creation what are some of the things you can perceive about what God is like?
2. What sorts of conclusions do you think unbelievers draw when they observe creation?
3. What does God say he has revealed about himself in creation? Why do you think unbelievers deny those truths?
4. In addition to what God has revealed about himself in nature, what must people know in order to be saved?
5. What are some of the ways people worship creation in our day? How do we sometimes worship something other than God?
6. In what ways do I want others to approve of my sin?
7. What has God done to save us from his judgment?