

THE ROAD OF THE RIGHTEOUS

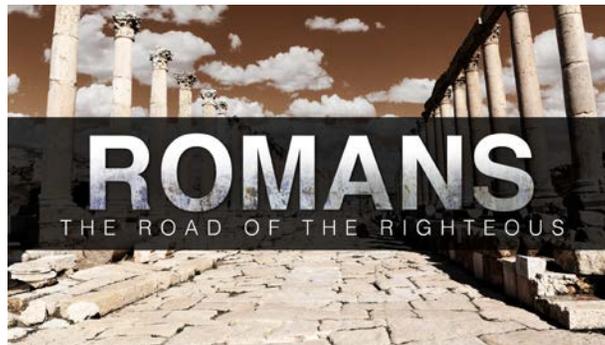
Expositional Study Of Romans

Romans 1:28-32

Written By

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While I attended Azusa Pacific University in from 1976-1980, I worked part-time my junior and senior years for my roommate's father, Gayle Fletcher. He owned the largest boat dealership in Los Angeles at the time, and Brent and I enjoyed the money from selling lake and deep sea boats for him. We also enjoyed picking any boat we wanted, hooking it up to the tricked out company van, and heading for the boss's mobile home on Lake Havesu in Arizona.

On one of our many water skiing trips, Brent informed me he desired to bring a bunch of his non-Christian buddies with us. He also warned me that one of his friend's girlfriends was coming too, and he hoped I didn't mind that they were living (and sleeping) together. He let me know there would be plenty of beer too because these boys liked to party. Believe me, they did not disappoint.

Toward the end of one day of skiing, everyone on the boat decided it would be cool to take a trip up the Colorado River up to the base of the Hoover Dam. I wasn't too excited about the excursion because everyone but me had been drinking *Budweiser* all day . . . including the long-haired driver with the drunk girlfriend.

We made it pretty close to the dam, but for sake of time we decided it wise to turn around and head home. The driver, with beer can in hand, opened up the engine on the nearly flat-bottomed speed boat and we danced across the top of the river. At one point the driver spied a cool tributary heading off the main river, so he asked what we thought about cruising that direction for a while just to see what was down there. Brent said, "We need to be careful because there are submerged sandbars and if we hit one we're goners for it will be difficult to get the boat off of the wet sand." That didn't stop the inebriated driver, nor anyone else in the boat.

I remember when we struck the sandbar. It was like a massive, powerful hand just reached up out of the river and grabbed the speedboat, stopping it in its tracks instantly. The force of the impact threw us around the boat like rag dolls, but since everyone was drunk, but me, they all thought it was funny. They didn't think it was funny as the driver informed us we didn't have enough depth of water to make the Panther Jet propel us forward. Brent stepped in and said, "Boys, it looks like we're going to have to jump out of the boat onto the sandbar, and see if we can lift it up while Larry hits the gas."

Jumping onto that submerged sandbar felt like purposefully stepping into quicksand. Getting firm footing was difficult because your feet and legs simply slid down into the wet, gooey sand. As we positioned ourselves, anyway, around the boat and attempted to lift it to create a better draw for the shallow water to get into the jet. Believe me, the boat felt like it weighed 60 tons. The sandbar also felt like a giant suction cup. The more we lifted, grunted, and groaned the firmer the sand seemed to hold the boat down.

This all occurred in the time before cell phones. If we had a cell phone on board, we would have called 911 and asked for Sheriff support. But we didn't and the sun was setting on the mountains to the west of us. Our studly strength as college men was getting zapped too because you can attempt to pick up an 18ft ski boat only so many times.

What happened? I'll leave the story there. No, just kidding. We eventually were able to slowly move the boat off the sandbar to freedom. We, then, jammed our way back to the mobile home and had a fun story to tell about when we almost didn't make it out of there. God, also, gave me an illustration of the price of living sinfully. We knew we shouldn't have headed down that small, shallow river that late in the day, but we did it anyway. Isn't that the way it is with sin? You know you shouldn't do "x" but, for whatever reasons, you do it anyway for the rush of the moment. And when, not if, you hit a sandbar of sin, you really get stuck in a place that is almost impossible to extract yourself from. And the harder to try to get out of it, the more it seems to draw you into its powerful grasp. And if the good Lord doesn't move in to help you, you'll pay dearly for you are far from much needed food and water. Trust me, beer doesn't help in those situations. It only makes them worse, and such is the path of sin.

Who says water skiing is not a spiritual experience? This historical episode from my life squares perfectly with Paul's matter-of-fact teaching in Romans 1:16-27. God's gospel is like a life-giving river headed to a Christian's eternal home. The intricate and varied topography, coupled with the amazing flora and fauna and wildlife all along the river tells the thinking person there must be a Master Designer who designed all of this. That boater who responds positively to the cosmological revelation which points to God is, in turn, given special revelation so he can learn about the redemptive mission of Jesus. Living eternal water rushes through his soul at the moment of faith, and for the first time in his life he is free to choose a godly life over a godless one.

Those, however, who willfully chose to reject God's general (and special) revelation discover the sober premise Paul develops in Romans 1:18-32:

The Rejection of Divine Revelation is Costly (Rom. 1:18-32)

Costly how? Costly insofar as God gives the sinner over to their sin, and since man knows he must worship something or someone he chooses to worship himself. He devises false systems of belief to keep him shielded from worshipping the true and living God. He, a sexual being, naturally succumbs to worshipping and feeding his sexual appetite. You name the perversion and he will embrace it, enjoy it, demonstrate for it, wave flags for it, make logos for it, persecute anyone who'd dare tell him his sexual choice(s) is abnormal and not normal, and seek to legislate it so no

one can dare tell him how he should live. All of this, of course, leads to two costly outcomes he cannot stop because they are divinely directed.

- *It Leads To Sexual Dishonor, Not Honor* (Rom. 1:24-25). His sexual sin, be what it may (pornography, adultery, sex outside of marriage, etc.), brings shame upon his life . . . and he knows it . . . so he works overtime to silence the inner voice convicting him. As he continues to reject God's design for his sexuality, his perversion(s) guides him to the next divinely ordained judicial destination.
- *It Leads To Sexual Delusion* (Rom. 1:25-27). Both men and women ignore the divine design and purpose of their bodies by choosing to engage in sexuality activity with the same sex. Delusion sets in as they collectively work overtime to make their impure actions appear pure.

Left unchecked, a life opposed to God and God's ways, leads one deeper and deeper into the quicksand of sin. Paul describes it in intricate detail in the ensuing verses of this chapter.

It Leads To Degradation, Not Elevation (Rom 1:28-32)

You, who think your newfound cultural freedom to embrace any and all lifestyles, probably need to read this point again. Your willful activity is not helping you evolve to a higher plane of existence. On the contrary, you are devolving into greater moral and spiritual darkness. You are heading into greater bondage and tyranny and away from true freedom. Yes, when a person purposefully throws off God's design and replaces and/or re-writes (or defies) God's moral, natural, and revelatory laws, he only sinks further into the sandbar of sin. Paul is quite candid about this reality as he presents one of the most detailed vice lists in the Bible. Did I say the word vice? Yes. Man's wicked and clever departure from God leads to vices, which he, in turn, he seeks to display as virtues so he can silence his conscience and rationalize his behavior. Try as he might, the vices are seen for what they are by the living God: sin.

Concerning the detailed list of twenty-one vices, we need to pause and offer a few salient observations.

- The list is not exhaustive, but it is illustrative of the types of sin sinners embrace as they reject God and live for themselves.
- Some of the vices are natural outgrowths of other vices, but this is not always the case.
- It might be possible to group some of the vices together. For instance, the first four denoted in verse 29 have an iota and a alpha ending (ἀδικία/unrighteousness; πονηρία/wickedness; πλεονεξία/covetousness; κακία/maliciousness).¹ This purposeful assonance construction causes the Greek reader to see them as a unit, but this type of construction is not present

¹The Textus Receptus, which is behind the KJV, gives us five vices here: "unrighteousness, fornication/sexual sin (πορνεία/pornia), wickedness, covetousness, and maliciousness." Bruce Metzger, a world-class Greek scholar, says there are two possibilities for this. One, *pornia* accidentally fell out of some ancient readings (leaving us with four vices) because it sounded a lot like *ponaria*/wickedness. Two, some copyists, upon finding *pornia* in some transcripts, supplied it by means of conflation. He concludes that *pornia* should probably be excluded based on the premise that Paul has already spoken about *pornia* in verses 24-25, so why add it again. Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Freiburg: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), 447.

throughout the rest of the words, so it forms a grouping, to be sure, but the rest of the wording may not be as tightly grouped.

- Not every sinner is guilty of every vice; however, there is no way a sinner can possibly escape the sandbar suction of one or more of these vices because he is, by nature, depraved and loves darkness more than he loves light (John 3:19).

If you are running from God, you will find yourself somewhere on this sinful sandbar, and if you are honest, you'll have to admit you are sinking to levels you never dreamed of, morally and spiritually. Please, note the digression, not progression, and mark well how it all starts.

²⁸And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, (Rom. 1:28).

The opening coordinating conjunction “and” (Καί) serves to tie these words to what has just proceeded. The second phrase, viz., *just as* (καθὼς), is one word in Greek. This particular conjunction denotes the reason for why men and women choose to engage in same-sex behavior, and it has nothing to do with orientation and/or love and everything to do with abandoning the knowledge of the living God. This statement, of course, runs completely counter to the cultural myths proposed and pushed in the world today.

According to Paul, when you willfully choose not to acknowledge God and God's ways in your life, you experience God turning you over to a depraved mind, which results in your engaging in activity which is “not proper.” Obviously, we need to dissect the words Paul employs here. “Acknowledge” is from the Greek *dokimazo* (δοκιμάζω), which means to test something to determine its intrinsic worth. Practically, the Greeks used it to explain the process of determining the worth of gold, or whether coins were genuine or not.² Applied to by sinners to God it means they tested Him and found Him unworthy of worship and obedience. You can well imagine the “test.”

- Are God's views of sexuality as fluid as ours, or are they fixed.
- Is God accepting of any and all forms of sexuality as we are, or is He narrow and closed-minded?
- Does God lovingly confirm all sexual and gender choices as we do, or is He one who condemns and restricts people?
- Does God accept all faiths, no matter how diametrically opposed they are to each other, like we do, or is He a divisive absolutist?

You get the picture, I'm sure. When God doesn't pass their selfish, narcissistic tests, they determine, as Paul says, not “to have him in their knowledge.” I know Paul doesn't talk about it, but when they do say they want their perversions masquerading as spirituality and religion/God, they will purposefully reinterpret, twist, modify, or flat out ignore His Word so they can continue to call their vice, virtue.

How does God, who sees and knows all things (Heb. 4:13), respond to such willful sin pretending to be high and holy behavior? He responds in like kind:

²Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick William Danker, 3rd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 255.

God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, (Rom. 1).

In Greek, there is a play on words here. “Depraved” *adokimos* (ἀδόκιμος) is from the same root as “to test” *dokimazo* (δοκιμάζω), which is used by sinners toward God. By adding an alpha privative to the front of the verb it negates the meaning entirely, leaving us with a word which means to fail to meet a given test.³ This is most ironic. They who think they are the supreme testers are, in fact, tested and found to be worthless. Because this is so God makes sure their mind, which guides their thinking and reasoning ability, is the epitome of being worthless, especially from a moral standpoint. And when the mind is worthless and depraved it naturally follows it leads a person to do things which are “not proper.” Like what? Like anything which goes against God’s Word and teachings, or what goes against what is wholesome, logical, prudent, and pure. As you can well imagine, the sky is the limit for how this is applied.

But since sexuality is in view, this is the primary applicational area. How, then, does a depraved mind work?

- It seeks to teach children all about sexual perversion under the guise of that which is pure and acceptable.
- It disciplines those who truly stand up for what is proper.
- It weaves the depravity into every aspect of the culture so it looks normal and acceptable.
- It weaves the depravity into every aspect of the culture so it deadens the conscience of others.
- It readily embraces other new forms of sexual depravity because it has to, by definition. To limit another person’s sexual choices would be to limit theirs, potentially, so they counter by being affirming of anything and everything.
- It borrows key words from Christianity like love and acceptance and gives them new meanings which won’t challenge their depravity.

Depraved. It is one word which captures our carnal culture. You name it and they are for it, so long as it has got nothing to do with God. And to think this all started when they rejected God and elevated themselves to the thrones of their lives.

The consequences of a depraved mind only trend downward into the wet, unstable, and shifting sands below their feet. What else will the depraved person possibly get into? Paul itemizes the list:

²⁹being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; *they are* gossips, (Rom. 1).

“Being filled” is from the perfect passive participle *πεπληρωμένους*. The passive nature of the verb probably underscores how a person’s depraved mind causes other types of sin to flood into his life. The perfect tense is intensive here and denotes the ongoing nature of the filling.⁴ Simply put, it means the life of the depraved person is filled up constantly with all the types of sin Paul will now

³Friberg, *Analytical Greek Lexicon*.

⁴Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 574.

mention. It's not that they live a life of sin here and there, but it is who they are and it is what they do by nature . . . unless, of course, they come to know the living God. So, what are they, by nature, full of? We will click down through them quickly because they do not warrant much comment for they are self-explanatory. Conversely, those words which do call for more analysis will be given a little more time.

²⁹being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; *they are* gossips, (Rom. 1).

- Unrighteousness, *adikia* (ἀδικία) is another alpha private stapled to a positive word, viz., righteousness, in order to negate its meaning. Lexically, it means to complete disregard that which is right. Need we illustrate? The thief who breaks your car window to take your backpack is an illustration of this word. Our culture has its share of people who simply do what is right in their own eyes.
- Wickedness, *poneria* (πονηρία), speaks of a person who lacks moral or social values. Think of a drug dealer who's selling opioids on the street or a sex trafficker and you have the idea of *poneria*.
- Greed, *pleonexia* (πλεονεξία) is best defined by Barclay, "The Greek word is built up of two words which mean *to have more* [emphasis in original]. The Greeks themselves defined *pleonexia* as the accursed love of having. It is an aggressive vice. It has been described as the spirit which will pursue its own interests with complete disregard for the rights of others, and even for the considerations of common humanity. Its keynote is predatory greed."⁵ *Pleonexia* is the person who is hooked on online gambling, who can't pass up a state sponsored lottery ticket machine, and who goes wild with Power Ball, and who can't play golf without having a monetary figure attached to each hole. *Pleonexia* is the mechanic who charges you for things he didn't really do, or charges you for things you really didn't need to have repaired. *Pleonexia* is the person who can't pass up that certain . . . whatever it is. They just have to have it.
- Evil, *kakia* (κακία) is really better translated to be vicious. It represented by the mate who, after the divorce, continues to take you back to court to make your life miserable. It is the new wife of your former husband who purposefully makes the coming and going of your children a nightmare by all of her antics. It is the co-worker who never misses an opportunity to say or do something to make your life tough or to make you look bad before the boss and others. It is the Colonel who won't give you a positive referral for your possible rank advancement because he happened to be under your command you had to reprimand him for a certain military code violation. He never forgot it, and now that he is over you, he can't wait to show *kakia*.
- Envy, *phthonou* (φθόνου) denotes the person who wants what he sees in the lives of others, but since he can't have it, for whatever reason(s), he grows to resent and hate the person in question. He pats a co-worker on the back when she

⁵William Barclay, *Romans* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977), 34.

- makes salesperson of the year, but he'd rather push her over onto the ground for doing better than he did. He's the guy who just can't stand the fact that another person is better looking, has a more beautiful girlfriend, seems to have the Midas touch, doesn't have to study very hard but who still makes straight As, who aced the SATs, and so on. Envy, like the monster in *Alien*, does not look like it is around, but then it surfaces at the most inopportune times.
- Murder, *phonos* (φόνου) is the person who doesn't think twice about killing innocent people. He's the religious zealot who won't think twice about driving his car into people on a bridge in the name of his god. He's the deranged young recluse who lived for walking into Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida for the express purpose of shooting innocent and defenseless high school students. As we see from the news, we are, as Paul says, full of murderous people because God plays no part of their lives. When God is absent from the heart it is easy to devalue others and to see them as things, instead of people created in God's image. We must also be careful because Jesus equated murder with the hate a person has in their heart. Have you checked your heart lately?
 - Strife, *eridos* (ἔριδος) speaks of the person who lives to create contention wherever they go. If they show up at a family gathering, tempers flare when they start talking. If they show up at church, all of a sudden people are pitted against each other. If they happen to attend a meeting, they think it is their spiritual gift to cause division. What's interesting is the motivation behind their strife is usually tied to envy, *phthonou* (φθόνου). Take a hard look at yourself. Do you cause ripples wherever you go? Ever wondered why? It comes naturally to a person who is devoid of God. Are you happy with this occurrence?
 - Deceit, *dolou* (δόλου) is the Greek word for a person who is crafty, shrewd and skilled in the art of deception. They say one thing when they mean another thing. They will lie to get ahead of you. They will make it look like they are your friend when they are a foe. Concerning them, Barclay is worth reading, "it describes the quality of people who have tortuous and twisted minds, who cannot act in a straightforward way, who stoop to devious and underhand methods to get their own way, who never do anything except with some kind of ulterior motive. It describes the crafty cunning of those who plot and scheme and who are found in every community and every society.⁶ Is this you as a daughter toward a father, a son toward a mother, or a leader to another leader? If deceit were taken from the D.C. environment for a month, imagine the forward progress which could be made. The reporting of reporters would be different. The actions of politicians would be different. The decrees of judges would be different.
 - Malice, *kakoetheia* (κακοηθείας), in Greek means to live to put the negative angle on everything and everyone. It's the dad who never sees the good in his son. It's the employer who always casts various employees in a bad light. It's the guy who always follow up your really good news with "Yeah, yeah, I know, but

⁶William Barclay, *The Letter to the Romans*, 3rd ed. fully rev. & updated., *The New Daily Study Bible* (Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 42.

- . . .” It’s the reporter who just can’t say one good thing about the current President no matter what he does. Malice. It’s the scourge of our day. Got any malice in your life? The further you are away from God the easier it is to trash everyone around you in a vindictive fashion. Again, I ask you, Are you happy with yourself?
- Gossips, *psithyristas* (ψιθυριστὰς) is an onomatopoeic word insofar as it sounds like what it describes. Think of bam, bang, clang, clank, clap, clatter, click, ding, swoosh, whizz and so forth. To say it in Greek is to mimic what gossip sounds like, which is nothing more than faint whispers. What is a gossip? It’s describes a person who is probably envious of you and can’t wait to pass around disinformation about you, who can’t wait to post something juicy . . . but erroneous . . . about you on Facebook, and, I’m sure you get the picture. Barbara Hatcher puts gossips in their place when she writes, “Winston Churchill exemplified integrity and respect in the face of opposition. During his last year in office, he attended an official ceremony. Several rows behind him two gentlemen began whispering. ‘That’s Winston Churchill.’ They say he is getting senile.’ ‘They say he should step aside and leave the running of the nation to more dynamic and capable men.’ When the ceremony was over, Churchill turned to the men and said, ‘Gentlemen, they also say he is deaf!’”⁷ Are you a gossip?
 - Slanderer, *katalalous* (καταλάλους), Romans 1:30, is a combination of the preposition “against,” and the verb “to speak.” This person does not flinch at overtly passing around erroneous, even damaging false information about you. They will tell just part of the fact so your character will be instantly maligned and degraded. Between this sin and the last one, the former is harder to deal with because you can never know who the enemy is who is trashing you so. At least with the slanderer you usually know who’s talking smack about you.
 - God-haters, *theostygeis* (θεοστυγεῖς), hate Him because they don’t like His limiting rules and regulations, they don’t like Him speaking into their lost lives, they resist His convicting work in their stained consciences, they cannot stand His absolutist ways, and they certainly don’t like the kibosh He puts on having fun with no holds barred. You see them all over the place, like within the leadership of the California State University educational system. In the fall of 2014 they voted to repeal the club status of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship because the religious nature of the group ran counter to the educational system’s open-mindedness. Seems like they didn’t like the fact the Fellowship would withhold restrictions of leadership from openly gay people, but didn’t mind them being members. Based on this, the school took the “high ground” and ousted the Fellowship from its favored status, even though other groups on campus evidence gender exclusivity for their sorority or fraternity clubs. If a sorority allowed a male in leadership would it be a sorority? If a religious club is forced to go against what is clearly stated in its holy book is this fair? No. It’s just God-haters doing what they do. They shut down anything and everything related to God when and where they can, and they

⁷“Gossip,” *Sermon Illustrations*, accessed February 22, 2018, <http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/g/gossip.htm>

- typically do it in the name of tolerance and pluralism.
- Insolent, *hubristes* (ὕβριστὰς) is our word hubris. What does it mean? It means “excessive pride,” like “over-the-top pride.” Hubris is seen in the person who says things like, “I’m the greatest,” “No one has done this better than I have,” “I am really that good,” “I do what I do, and I do it well,” Hubris is the New Age spiritual teacher and guide Eckhart Tolle who claims in his book, *A New Earth*, that reading and following the teaching of his book will lead a person to true spiritual enlightenment.⁸
 - Arrogant, (ὕπερηφάνους). We all know it when we see or hear it. Consider the unguarded statement of Christina Aguilera, “It’s an amazing thing to say, ‘I’m beautiful,’ without feeling like you’re cocky.” Right.
 - Boastful, *alazon* (ἀλαζόνας). In the Greek culture it denoted a person who wandered about promising things they could not deliver on. In modern times the word is probably akin people in drug commercials who promise this and that, but who can’t deliver because of all of the negative possible outcomes denoted in the small, point 1 font at the bottom of the screen. *Alazon* is also seen in the parent who just can’t stop talking about all the things their kid can do or has done, which, of course, outstrips your child’s abilities and accomplishments.
 - Inventors of evil, *epheuretas kakon* (ἐφευρετὰς κακῶν). Just read the news and you’ll see it every day. One of my favorites are the crooks who stole all the plants from a newly built shopping mall without being seen by the security cameras. How did they do it? Realizing the cameras were on timers which rotated them to various angles every so many minutes, they timed the movements of the cameras, and then drove their trucks and teams to the various locations in the parking lot where the cameras were not looking and simply loaded up. Smart. Too bad their inventive ways are not used for good.
 - Disobedient to parents, *goneusin apeitheis* (γονεῦσιν ἀπειθεῖς). You know the drill. The parents say “x” and the child says, “y,” Why are you laying that rule down? I don’t like it, so I think I’ll do my own thing. If a child will be disobedient and disrespectful to a parent, they will, by default, be disobedient and disrespectful and anyone and everyone else. At that point society begins to break down.

With verse 31, Paul puts a negating alpha privative on five key words to round out how those who reject God typically behave:

ἀσυνέτους ἀσυνθέτους ἀστόργους ἀνελεήμονας·

Undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, [and] unmerciful.

Undiscerning is the person who can’t read a situation correctly to tell whether it is good or bad, and who also don’t typically learn from their sinful mistakes. *Untrustworthy* is the person whose word is never his bond. *Unloving* speaks of the person who does not have natural affection. Instead of loving his mother, he despises her. Instead of honoring his father, he thinks he’s a fool. Instead of

⁸Eckhart Tolle, *A New Earth* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2016), 260.

loving a teenager, he can't wait to show them the door when they turn eighteen. *Unforgiving* represents the person who will nurse his hurts to infinity and who will never, ever forget the wrongs committed against him . . . even if the perpetrator confesses and begs forgiveness. *Unmerciful* is a snapshot of a person who just does not know how to show pity on others who are less fortunate than he is.

These twenty-one vices are the way of a man devoid of God. Surely, you say, if a person saw these dark, destructive, sinful things in their life they would turn to God. Not so, as Paul states in closing:

³²and, 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 (Rom. 1).

“Ordinance,” *dikaionoma* (δικαίωμα) in Greek means requirements, regulations, and commandments.⁹ Tied to the verb “to know” this final statement by Paul is most sobering. Ostensibly, this means the lost know what God commands in their hearts and heads because He has built it into the fabric of their beings. They also know their actions are, at times, so serious that they should be removed from the earth for the sake of justice. However, instead of fearing standing before the God of the Law, they live each day to make sure they teach, through word and example, as many as they can to flout God’s laws and reject Him as they do. Sadly, this is an apt description of the world we live in. As the culture is stranded on a sandbar of sin, its merely sinking deeper and deeper in to the sinister sand with no end in sight.

What’s the solution?

In another vice list, Paul gives us the coveted answer:

³For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. ⁴But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, ⁵He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to *the* hope of eternal life (Tit. 3).

Jesus died to save sinners stranded on the sandbar of sin, sinners like me, and sinners like you. You cannot get “unstuck” by yourself. You need Him in the water lifting your boat to safety. Will you permit Him to do that right now by trusting Him as your Savior?

⁹Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick William Danker, 3rd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 249.