

# Without Excuse

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- When we gave our lives to Christ, something incredible happened to us.
  - He gave us the Holy Spirit to dwell inside us.
  - The Spirit was given to us to accomplish several things.
    - The first would be to seal us as a child of God, we will forever be marked as belonging to Him.
    - The Spirit also is a revealer of truth to us.
      - He opens Gods word to us so that we can understand.
    - He imparts to us spiritual gifts to be used to serve the body of believers and bring Glory to God.
    - It is the Holy Spirit that allows us to bear fruit in our lives. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.
    - The Holy Spirit interceded for us according to Gods will.
    - The Holy Spirit guides us into righteousness.
      - He guides us into sanctification or being made holy and that is where we are going today.
      - That work of the Spirit that directs our path towards a right relationship with God.
- Have you ever felt convicted about something?

- Not like you are sorry that you got caught but the painful “I hurt knowing in some way I brought pain or shame to my Lord and Savior”
  - One of the functions of the Holy Spirit is to bring awareness of sin into our lives.
- My goal today, if you are standing on the edge of conviction, is to push you off that cliff and let you feel the full force of it.
  - Or if you have already experienced that deep conviction, to remind you of that feeling so you do not stray from it.
  - Why would I want to do that?
  - Because if you never get there you will end up living a very shallow life with little meaning and will not fulfill the purpose of your existence.
- What causes us to taste the goodness of God and yet live a distracted life away from Him.
  - Our hobbies, our bank accounts, our image, our selfish desires.... The list is endless of earthly things we prioritize above our relationship with the Lord..
    - If that describes you then you should be shaking in your shoes about now, why?
    - Hebrews 10:31 says *it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*
- Rest assured, one day we are going to stand before God and give an account of our life.



*Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight—That You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge.*

- We also saw this same conviction in the interaction between Jesus and the rich young ruler who thought he had kept the law perfectly. Jesus corrected this man because He knew his heart, telling him to sell all he had and follow him, it says, the rich man became very sorrowful.
  - That sorrow was conviction!
    - You mean you want everything from me Lord?
      - Yes, everything
- I can only hope that all of us get to experience that feeling.
  - That feeling where it hurts deep inside, it disgusts you when you realize how awful you are and how much time you have wasted.
  - I can't think of a single person who would say "Sign me up for that" but it is a wonderful thing.
- Proverbs 1:7 *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.*
- Fear of the Lord is something we should pay strict attention to.
  - Until we understand that the Lord is serious about His relationship with us, we will not be fully prepared to do what He asks of us.

- That flippant, casual, “God is my bro”, or “He gets us” is absolute junk and will lead us down a very destructive path if we stay in that mindset.
- With all of that in mind, we are going to concentrate heavily today on what it means to be “Without Excuse”
  - Our study starts in the Book of Romans, and we will be in the first chapter.
    - This particular chapter, in my mind happens to be the richest chapter in all of the bible concerning theological doctrine and what happens to those who refuse to believe.
    - Paul is clear in telling us what happens, why it happens and what the results are if you choose not to believe in the Lord.
    - I love that he opens this whole letter by giving the gospel message.
    - Then he goes on to tell them his desire to visit and that their faith is known throughout the world.
      - That is a pretty good slap on the back, right?
      - That basically sums up verses 1-15, then we look at verse 16.
- Romans 1:16a *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes*
- We have heard numerous times what the term “Gospel” means haven’t we?
  - Defined as Good News

- In our modern terminology of good, that seems to downplay the importance of it, doesn't it?
  - The greatest thing you could ever hear is only counted as good.
  - So, we must understand that "Good" meant perfect.
    - God saw that it was good
    - Jesus said, No one is good but God
    - If you want to redefine it, then we can say "Perfect News"
  
- Paul is not embarrassed by this perfect news.
  - Why? Because this news carries power.
  
- But even that is absolutely nothing in comparison to the power that the Word of God has.
  - We hold this very precious power in our hands.
    - We can read and feel the power in our hearts
    - We can share this power with anyone and everyone we encounter.
    - Because in it is the power of eternal salvation.
    - The power of that nuke is in a single moment of time, but the power of God is forever!
      - We should look at God's word in awe and total adoration for its power.
  
- It is in the gospel message that God shows us His righteousness.
  - V17 – "For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith"
    - How is His righteousness revealed?

- That He loved the world so much that He gave His only begotten son, that whoever BELIEVES (places their faith) in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.
  - It is our faith in that message that leads us to salvation.
- Paul gives that beautiful gospel message then launches into God's righteous judgement against those who are in opposition to that message.
- V18-20 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are (and all the church says) **without excuse**,
  - Paul says that the wrath of God is revealed, so let's talk about the wrath of God.
    - All of us love to hear about the good things which is what Paul starts with.
    - But that same Holy God is a righteous judge as well.
    - God wouldn't be righteous if sin did not have consequences, would He?
    - What we see in this chapter is God allowing the natural consequences of sin to take place.
      - Like He removes His hand of protection from them.

- Not only do we see this individually, but on a national scale as well.
  - The things that Paul expresses that were obviously happening in Rome are much the same as we see here in our country today.
  - We can look back in history and see how Rome fell based on the societal values they embraced.
  - We will see that play out as we move forward.
- Verse 18 says we suppress the truth.
    - We cover our eyes; we stick our fingers in our ears and make up our own story so that we are not subject to the true God.
    - The rest of the chapter shows the lengths that the ungodly will go to in their quest to deny there is a Holy and true God.
    - Even though God has made it clear He is the Creator.
      - Paul says what may be known of God is manifest in them.
      - Manifest means it is easily understood, widely known, plain to the senses.
        - Its like “If you put your hand in the fire, you are going to get burned” you do not have to experience that to understand it.
          - It is self-evident



- Paul also states that we should be able to comprehend that there is a God based on something we can't see.
  - The attributes of God Himself.
    - What are those invisible attributes that we should be able to grasp simply by what was made?
  
- The first would be **God's Goodness** –
  - The simple fact that the earth, within itself, provides the sustenance that we need for life shows the goodness of God.
  - The earth is currently producing enough food to feed over 8 billion people.
    - We don't make seeds; we plant seeds created by God that grow within themselves into something edible or useful to us.
    - We are totally dependent on the weather to provide life sustaining water.
    - We have the perfect amount of light, the perfect amount of darkness, the perfect amount of gravity, the right mix of oxygen and the list goes on.
    - Even the animal world is in correct proportion for sustaining life.
      - Too many of one species would easily wipe out other species.
      - Some animals live a few days, some a few years, and some live a hundred years.
      - There is an order that is simply beyond just chance.

- All of these indicate that He has personal interest and love for His creation.

- **God's Eternal Nature**

- Ecclesiastes 3:11 says that God has put eternity in our hearts.

- Have you ever looked up at the night sky and thought how massive the universe is and how small a part we are in it?

- Even doing that we understand there is consistency and order in it.
- We use it to guide ships and planes based on where the planets and stars are. They are always so perfectly consistent that times and seasons are set by them.
- The sun comes up and it goes down.
- We understand that order does not come from disorder.

- If I take a smartphone and hit it with a sledgehammer, it isn't going to be smarter than before I hit it?

- The big bang theory requires us to believe that from a massive explosion a perfectly organized universe was made.

- Nothing I have ever blown up was better than before I blew it up!

- **Omnipresence** - He is everywhere and in everything.

- There is no place which His knowledge and power are not present.
- It is un-natural to think that a Creator of such incredible magnificence as we have in our universe, would just abandon it to itself.
  - King David understood this.
  - Psalm 139:7-10 Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me.
- Those are just three attributes of God that are self-evident in His creation that are clearly understood and because of these things we are **without excuse** if we choose not to believe.
- This is the standard that every single person, from Adam to the last person born on earth, is going to be held to.
  - Psalm 10:13 Asks a rhetorical question, then answers it - Why do the wicked renounce God?  
He (The wicked) has said in his heart, “You will not require an account.”
  - To be clear, no one is saved by just the knowledge that God exists.
    - James 2:19 *You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!*

- In an unbeliever's mind there will be no reckoning of sin.
  - Do you know that one day every human will be a believer?
    - There will be “ZERO” unbelievers at the Judgement seat of Christ.
  - Even those who call themselves unbelievers, those who have darkened their hearts to the truth, will face a Holy God, and be found guilty.
  - To the unbeliever, it will be that conviction that will cause them to experience eternal separation from God.
  
- In this next section Paul expounds on why they are **without excuse**.
  - V21-23 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.
  
  - Paul doesn't even afford them the opportunity to say “I did not know God”
    - He says basically “You knew there was a God and choose to do something different”
      - Saying they did not glorify Him as God means they were unwilling to give Him the praise and honor God deserves.

- Have you ever heard people call the Creator God by another name?
  - Higher Power
  - Spiritual Presence
  - Big guy
  - Man upstairs
  - My Co-pilot
  
- Do any of those give God glory? Absolutely not
  - Our God is the God above anything else that calls itself god and there is no other god besides Him. Amen!
  
- Paul goes on to say - Nor were thankful.
  - How important is it that we are thankful?
    - In my opinion there should never be a single prayer that doesn't start with us being thankful.
    - Even in the very hardest of times.
    - God has provided for each of us every day of our lives.
    - Jesus said God feeds the birds of the air and reminds us that we are more valuable than them!
    - God is the ultimate provider of every need we have!
    - Do we take the grace of our Lord lightly?
  
- Besides all of that, what does being thankful do to us?
  - When we are thankful, it reminds us where all good things come from.
  - It does not come from my superior intellect or skill (which doesn't exist), it comes directly from God.

- That keeps pride at bay hopefully.
- Next, he says they became futile in their thoughts and their foolish hearts were darkened.
  - Futile means useless, empty, worthless.
  - Once God is removed from the picture, mankind will go down any number of roads (False religions) to achieve what he wants.
    - The very first sin started with the foolish thought that we wanted to be our own god.
    - Every dictator that I know of has elevated themselves to god status.
    - When we choose to worship a different god, our hearts grow dark towards the God of the Bible.
- Then, calling ourselves wise we come up with every explanation imaginable other than God for our existence.
  - Evolution for example - has so much disproven hypothesis of the origins of life yet it is taught as fact to every child in public schools.
  - UFO's – no comment -
  - Atheism – a religion of no god.
  - Greek mythology – many gods
  - Mormonism – by being a good Mormon you can become a god.
  - Even in false Christianity people believe by their own works they can save themselves.
    - There are countless other religions that take away our being accountable to THE one true God.

- Going down that spiral again.
  - Once we choose to reject the truth, we subject ourselves to foolish things.
    - Worshiping corruptible man was the first one.
      - Many false religions have elevated a person and given them the authority of God.
        - Catholicism with the worship of the Pope and Mary is an example of elevating created beings to a godly status.
        - The prosperity teachers have elevated financial reward as a god.
        - In our own “selfie” world we put ourselves in position as our own god.
  
- Going further downhill, man decide that birds, four footed animals like cows and then all the way down to perhaps the lowest form of creature, insects can be gods.
  - In Egyptian hieroglyphics you see this prominently.
    - There are lions, cows, falcons, crocodiles, frogs and insect gods.
    - Think about it, 1.2 billion Hindus worship animals as gods.
      - Think about that, 1/8<sup>th</sup> of the total population today believes in animal deities.
      - And that is just one religion.
    - As it was true then it is still true today.
  
- *V24-25 Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and*

*served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.*

- One of the most frightening things we will talk about today is how God chooses to deal with those who forsake Him.
  - God gave them up.
    - It is as if God is saying – you want to run away from Me, you want to exchange the goodness that I have for you and dishonor the sacrifice of My Son on the cross so you can make your own gods, then go and suffer the consequences of that.
  
- Uncleanliness here means filth, immoral, impure
  - Which is the natural state of someone who has turned their backs on God.
  - Once we elevate created things over the Creator it causes us to rely on physical needs over spiritual needs.
    - We derive our value from our physical needs at that point.
    - The lust of our flesh has to be satisfied to fulfill our need for self-value.
      - This is what fuels a \$97 billion dollar a year pornography industry in the United States.
      - Because the lust of the flesh is never satisfied, the desires keep going downhill into more filth even to unimaginable areas that we will not mention from the pulpit.



