WHEN GOD GIVES YOU WHAT YOU WANT

BISHOP RC BLAKES, JR.

ROMANS 1:28 KJV
And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

Paul wrote to the Jewish and Gentile Christians in Rome, probably from Corinth around AD 57. In this passage he describes humanity rejecting its Creator, especially the idolatrous Gentile world. People suppress the truth, exchange God's glory for idols, and become corrupted in their thinking and conduct.

Then Paul turns toward the person who has been condemning everyone else.

ROMANS 2:1 KJV
Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.

His argument brings everyone under God's judgment and establishes our need for the gospel. The preacher stands beneath this Word alongside the congregation.

"Reprobate" translates adokimos: unapproved or failing the test. Here it describes morally corrupted judgment.

Intelligence remains, but it is enlisted in the service of disobedience. "Not convenient" means morally improper or unfitting.

Beloved, a culture can move away from God while continuing to speak His name. We can want His protection over our nation and refuse His authority over our conduct. We can build churches, sing His praises, and still select only the parts of His Word that leave us unchanged.

The searching question is this: Are we coming to God to be changed, or creating a religion that will give us permission to remain as we are?

1. YOU CAN REJECT THE TRUTH TO PROTECT WHAT YOU WANT

Paul begins with their refusal to retain God in their knowledge. The Creator's authority stood in the way of the life they wanted.

ROMANS 1:21 KJV
Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

They knew enough to honor Him and chose otherwise. Familiarity with God's name cannot take the place of submission to His will.

What happens in our churches when the Word contradicts what we want? We may praise its authority until it confronts the sin we refuse to surrender. Then we begin searching for a message that will leave our decisions untouched.

That appetite can choose a preacher for us. A faithful warning begins to feel like an attack. Soon we are asking for a church where God will speak only on subjects we have approved.

Paul warned Timothy about this very appetite:

2 TIMOTHY 4:3–4 KJV
For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but

after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

Notice who is gathering the teachers. The hearers are finding voices to serve their desires. A congregation can have plenty of preaching and still be turning away from truth. Will we let the Word
correct the very thing we came hoping it would bless?

QUOTE: "You can keep God's name in your vocabulary while shutting His voice out of your decisions."

Beloved, what teaching have we stopped wanting to hear? Bring that resistance before the Lord. Ask for grace to obey before refusing correction becomes our settled way of hearing His Word.

2. YOU CAN GET WHAT YOU WANT AND LOSE WHAT YOU NEED

The words "God gave them over" should make us tremble. God's judgment can take the form of handing people over to the rebellion they insist on pursuing. The desire they would not surrender becomes part of the judgment they suffer.

PSALM 106:13–15 KJV
They soon forgat his works; they waited not for his counsel: But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.

The psalm recalls Israel's wilderness craving. God gave them the food they demanded, and judgment followed. Their request was granted; their rebellion was never approved.

Picture a church that gradually decides people must never leave

uncomfortable. The sermons still mention God, but the passages that call for repentance are quietly passed over. People hear how to fulfill their dreams, yet seldom hear that their desires must answer to the Lord.

Outside its doors, the surrounding culture insists on defining good and evil for itself. Inside, this congregation begins to offer religious approval for the same demand. The Bible remains on the pulpit, while the preferences of the people determine what may be preached from it.

The music continues. The seats may still be filled. But a person can sit there for years, protected from every truth that might call him to surrender. The congregation has obtained the preaching it wanted, while the truth it needed is being withheld.

QUOTE: "When the church makes peace with what God calls sin, the world can feel religious without ever surrendering to Christ."

Beloved, we must stop treating the absence of resistance as proof of God's approval. A congregation may agree with us. Yet the text makes us face a terrible possibility: we may be getting our way because we are being handed over to it.

ROMANS 2:4 KJV
Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

His patience is calling us to repentance. Church, let us tremble at the thought of becoming comfortable without correction. We still need God to tell us the truth about ourselves.

3. YOU CAN START APPLAUDING WHAT APPALLS GOD

Paul carries the warning further: people begin approving in others the evil for which they know God holds them accountable.

ROMANS 1:29–32 KJV
Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

They know God's judgment, yet encourage one another in rebellion. Consider how far a people can travel: the sin that once troubled their conscience becomes the conduct they defend and reward.

This is how a culture can reach the point where a call to repentance feels like an offense. The person who admits wrongdoing is assured there is nothing to repent of. The person who urges obedience is treated as though he has done the harm.

We must see that danger in the church. We can excuse cruelty because the cruel person is gifted. We can protect dishonesty because the dishonest person brings money or influence. We can celebrate someone's ministry while asking the people he has wounded to keep quiet. What are we teaching the next generation about the God we claim to serve?

QUOTE: "When the church applauds what God condemns, it teaches people to feel safe in the very sin from which Christ came to save them."

Beloved, when we need the Bible to stop speaking so our way of life can continue undisturbed, we must face what that reveals about us. We have begun asking the church to protect our rebellion from God's correction.

Let His Word interrupt our applause. What are we defending because it benefits us? What are we blessing because we fear losing people? We cannot lead the world back to a God whose authority we are refusing ourselves.

At the cross, Jesus Christ bore the judgment our sin deserves. He rose again, and His invitation still stands. Bring Him the rebellion you have defended.

JOHN 6:37 KJV
All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

Confess your sin and trust the risen Savior. Whatever the world decides to celebrate, let this church be a place where we still bow before Christ.

Pray: Lord, forgive us for asking You to bless what we would not surrender. Search our hearts and our churches. Through Jesus Christ, cleanse us and renew our minds. Make us willing to obey Your Word, even when obedience costs us the approval we wanted. Amen.

QUOTE: “Lord, do not let me have my way at the cost of becoming someone who no longer wants Yours.”