

Why We Need The Gospel

David Carter / General Adult

Unshakeable: Romans / Romans 1:16–32

Imagine sitting in a doctor's office and hearing him recommend a treatment that sounds drastic—open heart surgery, brain surgery, radiation treatments.

For some of us, we don't even have to imagine.

We've been there ourselves.

Or we've sat beside a loved one and heard those words.

And usually, when you first hear the treatment plan, there's hesitation.

It sounds scary.

It sounds extreme.

You start thinking, *Is this really necessary? Isn't there another option?*

But then the doctor explains the diagnosis.

they tell you how serious the condition is.

They explain what's going on beneath the surface.

And then they walk you through the symptoms—what happens if the condition is left untreated.

And suddenly, the treatment doesn't seem so extreme anymore.

Because you realize that however drastic the cure may be,

remaining in your current condition is far worse.

In a moment like that, you don't argue with the cure.

You embrace it.

That's essentially what the apostle Paul is doing in Romans chapter 1.

We often hear Paul talk about the gospel—its power, its beauty, its hope. And sometimes we wonder, *Why do we really need it?* Why is the gospel such a big deal?

In this passage, Paul brings us into the doctor's office. He begins by telling us about the cure—the gospel, the power of God to save. But then he explains the diagnosis. And then he walks us through the symptoms.

Not to scare us.

Not to shame us.

But so that we would understand the seriousness of our condition—and begin to see why the gospel is not optional, but necessary.

Here's what Paul wants us to see this morning, here's what I'm praying we see...

We need the gospel because only God's saving power can heal what is broken in us and in the world.

Look with me at [Romans 1:16-32](#) this morning.

As we read Paul's words, it's clear that we've moved past the introductory verses and we are now into the body of the letter.

Paul has talked *around* the gospel, he's pointed us to the gospel, he's hinted at the gospel—but now the question becomes, **why do we need the gospel?**

And to answer that question, Paul does something very intentional.

If we keep that doctor's office image in mind, I think it helps us see the structure of this passage more clearly.

In **verses 16 and 17**, Paul gives us the **cure**—the cure for what is wrong with humanity and what is broken in the world.

But if you're sitting in a doctor's office and the doctor immediately recommends a serious, even drastic treatment, the natural question is *why*.

Why do I need this?
What's wrong with me?

So in **verses 18 through 25**, Paul gives us the **diagnosis**. He digs beneath the surface. He explains what has gone wrong and where it all started.

And then in **verses 26 through 32**, Paul describes the **symptoms** — what life looks like when humanity lives apart from God, when sin runs its course, when brokenness is left untreated.

That framework helps us follow Paul's thinking.

So let's start where Paul starts — with the cure.

Why do we need the gospel?

CURE FOR A BROKEN WORLD

Well, in verses 16 and 17, Paul tells us we need the gospel because the gospel is the cure — the cure for a broken world.

Look at what he says.

Romans 1:16–17 (ESV)

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. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, “The righteous shall live by faith.”

Paul opens with this.

He says, “*I am not ashamed of the gospel.*”

Why would Paul even need to say that?

In the Roman world, knowledge and intellect were deeply entrenched in the culture. People loved to gather and talk about different philosophies and competing ways of thinking. And in a culture like that, the temptation would

have been to shy away from the gospel — to keep it quiet, to soften it, or to avoid putting it forward as truth.

But Paul says there's no reason to be ashamed.

The gospel can stand the test of any philosophy, any worldview, any critic, or any intellectual argument.

It's not just advice. It's not just another opinion. It's grounded in truth, in fact, in real historical events. And it has stood up under the scrutiny of thinkers and intellectuals for generations.

Paul is not ashamed...not because the gospel is a clever argument of philosophy. No!

But because, he says, *in the gospel is the power of God.*

Do you see that?

I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God for salvation...

If we're talking about a cure — a cure for what is broken in this world — it shouldn't surprise us that the cure isn't going to come out of our own brokenness. Something that is broken can't fix itself.

If humanity could have fixed itself, we would have done that by now.

With all our education, our social reform, our technological advances, our progress and development — surely, we would have found a solution for everything that's wrong.

But have you seen the news lately?

The world doesn't look healed.

It looks as broken as it's ever been.

That tells us something important. The solution to our problem has to come from outside of us — from a power greater than us. And that's what makes the

gospel powerful. It's not a human invention. It's God's solution to what ails humanity.

The message is simple, but it's filled with power.

God loved you.

God loved me.

And even though we rejected Him and sinned against Him, He sent the solution into the world in His Son.

Jesus came, took on our brokenness, our sin, our failure. He lived the perfect righteous life that we could not. He died in our place for our forgiveness. And God raised Him from the dead so that we could have new life in Him.

Sins forgiven.

Debt paid.

New life in Christ.

And that new life doesn't just change our standing with God — it changes the human heart.

The gospel doesn't just rescue us *from* something; it begins to reshape what we desire, how we live, and who we love. It restores what sin has broken in us and in this world.

That's why Paul says the power isn't in us.

The power isn't in me.

The power isn't in you.

The power is in the message.

That's why we don't have to be ashamed. God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him would not perish but have eternal life. The power of God is in that message — and that message is the cure for what is wrong with humanity.

And notice how powerful this cure really is. Paul says it's powerful enough to save *everyone who believes*. The Jew first, because that's where God first made

His promises — but also the Greek, the rest of the world. No one is outside the reach of this cure.

This is Paul, the doctor, telling us about the treatment — the only one that can reach the deepest root of the problem.

But that raises another question.

What does this cure actually do?

If the doctor recommends an aggressive treatment plan, you want to know how does it work?

Paul tells us in verse 17.

He says, “*For in it the righteousness of God is revealed.*”

See the gospel doesn’t just save us, it begins to produce righteousness in us.

The fundamental problem with humanity is not just behaviour — it’s righteousness. We don’t have it. And behaviour flows from the heart. When our desires are unrighteous, our actions will be unrighteous.

The gospel goes to the root of the problem. Jesus lived the righteous life we could not live, and His righteousness covers our unrighteousness. And through His Spirit, God begins producing righteousness in us — changing our hearts so that we begin to desire and walk in what is right.

That’s the work of the gospel.

But how do we receive this cure?

Paul answers that too.

He says the righteousness of God is revealed “*from faith for faith.*” And then he says, “*The righteous shall live by faith.*”

If you want the cure, it comes by faith.

Faith isn't just agreeing with facts. In Scripture, believing means trusting, relying on, placing your weight on something. It's like stepping out onto the ice, trusting that it will hold you. You don't just believe the ice exists — you step onto it.

The question isn't simply, *Do you understand the gospel?*

The question is, *Do you trust it?*

Are you relying on it?

Are you building your life on it?

Are you staking your eternity on it?

That's why we need the gospel — because the gospel is the cure for a broken world.

But imagine yourself in this conversation with Paul, or even the Doctor Paul and he's telling you about this cure.

This cure that forgives sin, grants salvation, produces righteousness and is received by faith.

You might say, wow, that sounds great, but why do I need it.

See and this where Paul moves to the diagnosis.

See we need the gospel, the hope, the power, the salvation of the gospel because the world and humanity without Jesus is under the wrath of God.

Romans 1:18 ESV

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men...

God's wrath is being revealed from heaven on this world against all ungodliness and unrighteousness.

We struggle with that image don't we, this image of God's wrath. His wrath means that God is angry with this world. And we don't like that image of an angry God, we would much rather have an image of a loving God.

But the truth is you can't have one without the other? God has many attributes. He is holy, He is just, He is righteous and He is love. But no attribute of God is detached from the other. They are all intertwined and influence the other.

Because God is loving, God is angry. And you say well how does that work?

Well ask yourself, how loving of a God would He be if He were indifferent to the evil that is going on in this world?

If the evil in this world didn't make Him angry, could He really be loving?

If I say I love my children, but then watch as someone does them harm and not feel anything, how could I say I love my children?

Because God is loving, His love demands that injustice, evil and wickedness anger Him.

Yet when we think about God's anger, we can't think about His anger as something like our anger where we lose our temper and lose control and take it out on someone, no, no. That's not God's anger.

God's wrath is not a loss of control — it's an expression of His control. It's not reactive or explosive; it's settled, holy, and just.

God's anger is His righteous response to evil, to injustice, and to everything that destroys what He loves.

God's wrath is the necessary response of a holy and loving God to everything that corrupts, distorts, and destroys His good creation.

It's God saying, "*This is not the way it's supposed to be.*"

So when we read of God's wrath, it's not describing a God who doesn't love, but rather a God who loves so much, that he cannot stand by while evil is unfolding in this world.

We need the gospel, we need Jesus, the good news of Jesus because the wrath of God is being revealed from heaven.

Why? The answer Paul gives us is because humanity has rejected God.

WE HAVE REJECTED GOD

We need the gospel, because mankind has rejected God.

That's what Paul is saying in verses 18-21

Romans 1:18–21 ESV

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honour him as God or give thanks to him...

Now I get it, Paul just said a mouthful, so let me walk you through what he is saying here, because it's important.

Ever since the beginning of creation God has been revealing Himself to mankind.

That's why he says there ***what can be known about God is plain to them, because he has shown it to them...***

And you say well how? How has God revealed Himself to mankind.

And Paul answers that question, he says that God has revealed Himself in creation, you see that look at verse 20 ***For his invisible attributes, namely his eternal power and his divine nature have been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made.***

The nature, the character of God can be seen in creation.

Think about the order of the world and the universe.

The universe runs with astonishing order — gravity, seasons, planetary motion,

the laws of physics. Things work. They hold together. They operate with consistency.

The question is who placed those things in order, who designed it that way?

Because whenever there is order, it points to a designer — someone who put that order in place. Chaos doesn't produce consistent structure.

Think about the intricacy of human DNA.

Human DNA contains more information than the largest libraries in the world. Every single cell has systems, processes, communication, repair. Information doesn't just appear on its own. Information always points to intelligence.

Think about how finely tuned the universe is.

The universe exists in an incredibly narrow range that allows life. If gravity were slightly different, if oxygen levels were altered, if the temperature of the earth shifted, or if we were just a bit closer or farther from the sun — life wouldn't exist. Life isn't here by accident. It exists because the conditions are perfectly suited for it.

But even beyond all of that, think about what you instinctively feel.

Think about what goes on inside you when you watch a sunrise or a sunset, when you stand in the middle of a forest untouched by human hands, when you look out over the ocean or the mountain tops, or when you hear a beautiful piece of music or see an incredible work of art.

Beauty does something to us.

And that beauty is pointing beyond itself.

The psalmist says **The heavens declare the glory of God**, and **the** sky above proclaims His handiwork.

It's as if creation itself is constantly whispering — and at times shouting — that there is a Creator, that there is a design, an intention, and order behind all of this.

That's Paul's point. God's invisible attributes are made visible through what He has made.

This is what is called natural revelation, it's God revealing Himself through natural ways. No we can't know about salvation by looking at creation, but they tell us that God exists and call us to seek Him.

The problem is that even though God has revealed Himself in creation, humanity has rejected Him.

That's Paul's point as he opens this section. Look at what he says in verse 18.

Romans 1:18 (ESV)

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

Paul says the issue isn't a lack of evidence — it's suppression.

We don't ignore the truth; we push it down. We explain it away.

God has made His existence plain, visible, obvious through creation — and yet instead of acknowledging Him, we say *no*.

We say, *this wasn't created.*

We say, *this just happened.*

We say the universe came into being over time through random processes, that particles came together by chance, and out of that explosion came beauty, order, design, and intention.

We say, *we exist by chance.*

We develop theories that attempt to explain life without ever needing to acknowledge a Creator. We are far more comfortable with explanations that remove God from the picture — even if those explanations still leave major questions unanswered.

Paul's point is this: when given the choice between worshiping the Creator or explaining Him away, humanity consistently chooses explanation over surrender.

That's what it means to suppress the truth.

It's not that people can't see God's fingerprints in creation — it's that we would rather interpret those fingerprints in a way that keeps God at arm's length.

We need the gospel because God is angry, but the scary thing is that He is right to be angry with us.

He is angry because even though He has revealed Himself in creation enough that we would seek Him out.

We don't. We replace Him with something else.

That's where our passage goes next.

Not only have we rejected God, but we've also replaced Him.

That's why we need the gospel.

We replace Him with false gods and false idols.

WE HAVE REPLACED GOD

It's what Paul is getting at in verses 22-25.

Romans 1:22–25 ESV

Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonouring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

The assumption might be that because we have rejected God, that we don't worship anything.

But understand we all worship something or someone. If you don't worship the one true God, it just means you worship something else.

God has intended that the beauty, the wonder, the order we see in creation would cause us to seek Him out, but we don't, instead we find false gods.

Paul says, we exchange the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man, birds, animals and creeping things.

Several years ago I might have said we don't see idol worship much in our culture, but that has changed a lot in the recent years. All we need to do is take a drive around Brampton and see how we have exchanged the glory of the eternal God for false images of man and animal.

It's a tragedy that we worship something that is created by the hands of humanity rather than worship the one who created the entire universe.

But it isn't just statues and idol, but more prominent in the western society is something far more deceiving.

You may not bow in worship of idols, but we do worship. Mankind is instinctively worshipful.

You see, we were created to worship. That desire didn't disappear when we turned from God. It just got redirected.

And sometimes we think idolatry is a problem "over there."
Statues. Temples. Images carved out of wood or stone.

But Paul's point is broader than that.

In Western culture, we don't think we have idols — we just changed what they look like.

Instead of bowing down to statues, we bow down to success.
We worship money, achievement, comfort, security, productivity.
We give our time, our energy, our affection, and our loyalty to careers, possessions, technology, and lifestyle.

We worship sports stars, and movie stars, music artists.

We give them our time, our devotion, our resources.

You may not worship that true, immortal, eternal God, but you worship something.

You've just replaced Him with something else.

Think about it — what shapes your schedule?
What consumes your thoughts?
What defines your worth?
What do you make sacrifices for?

Those questions reveal what we worship.

And in many ways, the ultimate idol of Western culture is *self*.

Humanism quietly puts humanity on the throne.
God is pushed aside, and we become the final authority — deciding what is true, what is right, what is moral, and what is best.

And Paul says when we worship the wrong thing, it doesn't lead us upward — it leads us downward.

Because we begin to reflect what we worship.

And that's why we need the gospel.

The gospel places our worship where it belongs, to the one and only true God, the immortal, glorious, eternal God of all creation.

So we've got the cure, the treatment, we need the gospel, the gospel has the power to save, because it produces righteousness and is received by faith.

And we have the diagnosis, here's what wrong with the world, humanity has rejected and suppressed the truth of God and chosen to worship anything else but Him.

But then Paul moves to the symptoms, the consequences of these realities.

What does it look like to live in a world, in a society that has rejected God.

And the result that Paul will show us is that we live in a broken world.

You'll notice this phrase that has been used a few times. Do you see it.

in verse 24, it says, ***therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity.***

We see it again in verse 26, ***for this reason God gave them up to dishonourable passion.***

And again that phrase in verse 28, ***and since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind.***

CONSEQUENCES OF LIFE WITHOUT GOD

We are living in the consequences of life without God, in a world without God.

That's why we need the gospel.

See the wrath of God isn't that God send thunderbolts down to strike down people in their sin. No! The wrath of God is that He has given the world over to what it wants.

That's what it means when it says that God gave them up. In essence God has said if you want a world without me, if you want a godless, unrighteous world, and you want to follow all your lusts and your passions, if that's what you want, you can have it and all the consequences that come with it.

Sometimes the consequences of our actions are severe enough, God doesn't have to do anything. He simply allows the logical outcome of our choices to come to fruition.

I've noticed this with my kids, sometimes I don't have to be the one who gives them consequences, they just feel the weight of what they have done and those are consequences enough.

In fact, there are times where I have allowed them to feel the consequences because that's the only way they learn, if we shield them from consequences, they never learn from their mistakes.

God has given this world over to it's ungodliness and unrighteousness because perhaps we will feel the weight of brokenness and turn our hearts towards Him.

We see the brokenness, don't we? In our passions and relationships, that's what Paul is getting at.

Look what he says verse 26.

Romans 1:26–27 ESV

For this reason God gave them up to dishonourable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

Now I know that Paul's words here make some of us uncomfortable.

But we can't ignore them. We can't pretend they're not here.

And we can't reshape God's Word simply because our culture has shifted.

Paul tells us that one of the evidences of a broken world is **broken sexuality**.

Look back at verse 24. Paul says, "**God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts.**"

In other words, when humanity rejects God, our desires become disordered.

And that disorder shows itself in many ways.

It shows up when sexuality is separated from God's design — when it's no longer rooted in covenant, commitment, and marriage, but instead becomes driven by appetite and desire.

When sexual expression is defined on my terms instead of God's terms.

Paul speaks directly about same-sex relationships here, and we need to acknowledge that honestly. He does so not to single people out, but to show how far creation has been inverted when the Creator is no longer honoured.

But it's important to say this clearly:

This isn't the only issue Paul is addressing.

And homosexuality is not presented as some unique sin above all others.

Paul is talking about **impurity** — sexual expression outside of God's design altogether.

That includes sex outside of marriage, pornography, adultery, lust, and yes, same-sex behaviour. All of it flows from the same root: a rejection of God's authority and design.

When we reject God and put ourselves at the centre, we take something God intended to be good and beautiful — intimacy between a husband and wife in marriage — and we redefine it on our own terms. We make it easier. We make it cheaper. We make it serve us instead of sanctify us.

But Paul doesn't stop there. Because broken sexuality is just one symptom among many.

Look at the list that follows.

And be honest — does this not describe the world we live in?

Does it not describe the relational, moral, and spiritual fallout of a society that no longer acknowledges God?

Romans 1:29–31 ESV

They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are

gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

As we read over that list, here's what I know...

We realize the problem that Paul is describing isn't just out there, but it's in here as well. It's in this room; it's in our hearts.

I know that every person in this room is guilty of at least one or more of thing listed.

And I know that all of us have been deeply wounded by someone's sin on that list.

See, we often ask why the world we live in is so broken.

Why so much failure?

Why so much pain?

Why so much injustice and hurt and evil?

Paul is answering that question for us this morning.

When God is not honoured.

When truth is suppressed.

When worship is misdirected.

Brokenness is inevitable.

We are living in the consequences of a world, of a life, that has rejected God and embraced false worship.

And folks, **this is why we need the gospel.**

That's the point.

Because we can talk about the gospel all day long.

We can talk about the beauty of the gospel.

The hope of the gospel.

The power of the gospel.

But until we understand the weight of what Paul has just shown us — until we feel how devastating the condition really is — we will never fully appreciate how glorious the gospel truly is.

Until we understand the severity of the disease, we won't value the cure.

And now you can feel why the cure matters.

Why the gospel is not optional.

Why grace is so beautiful.

Taken on their own, verses 18 through 32 are heavy. They are sobering. They are condemning.

But when we see them through the lens of the gospel — they produce gratitude.

Because if you're a follower of Jesus this morning, these verses don't lead you to despair — they lead you to worship.

They remind you of who you once were.

They remind you of what God has rescued you from.

They remind you that grace is not something you earned, but something you received.

And if you're here this morning and you haven't embraced the gospel yet, hear this clearly — this passage is not here to shame you, but to awaken you.

Not to push you away, but to invite you in.

Paul shows us the disease not to leave us there, but to point us back to the cure — the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.

The gospel says that even though we rejected God, He did not reject us.

Even though we suppressed the truth, He revealed Himself in His Son.

Even though we worshiped the created things, Jesus came to restore us to the Creator.

So the question this morning is simple.

Will you continue to live with the disease — or will you receive the cure?

Because the gospel is still the power of God for salvation.

It is still sufficient.

It is still available.

And it is still calling us to respond by faith.

The gospel is the power of God to save everyone who believes, the question is, will you believe on the Lord Jesus and be saved this morning?