

Romans 1_18-23_01.mp3

Todd Fletcher [00:00:02] Paul writes, "for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppressed 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 honor Him as God or give thanks to Him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 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." Thus read the words of the Lord you may be seated.

Todd Fletcher [00:00:53] So, as I mentioned, wrath is something that many churches today sadly seek to avoid because it's an unpopular topic. But the fact is, is you can't get away from the topic of wrath if you read your Bibles. Some people today don't like the Old Testament because it's full of a wrathful God, an angry God, and they prefer Jesus who never once talked about wrath. Or did He? Jesus talks about wrath more than any other preacher in the Bible, He talks about hell more than any other preacher in the Bible, but people have a misunderstanding of who Jesus is. And I think it's interesting when you follow Paul's lead is Paul begins this amazing book by one introducing himself, introducing his intent to go to Rome. He gives his thesis statement and verses 16 and 17, and then right after that, his first section is about God's wrath. Just a quick outline here for you, versus 18 through 32 focus specifically on Gentile sins. Jews thinking that they had got away from Paul may have thought, yeah, those Gentiles, they're so sinful, they deserve God's wrath. And then he gets to chapter 2, which is, and now concerning you Jews, you also are under God's wrath. And then in chapter 3, we see he turns to everyone, he says there are none righteous, there are none holy, all have sinned, all have gone astray. So then he just says everyone deserves God's wrath.

Todd Fletcher [00:02:30] Well, why does Paul think it's so necessary to begin his magnum opus with two and a half chapters focusing on God's wrath? You you might have heard me say this before, I taught at camp once and I went through Romans 1 through 8 in one sermon. And by the end of it, children were just angry, or repentant, or there was there was an extreme array of emotions. Some some kids didn't want to listen to me the rest of the week. Other kids said, what must I do, you know to be saved? Romans is a very powerful book and the outline itself is very powerful. But as we come to this, we need to talk about the schoolmaster, so that's what I've titled the sermon is "The Schoolmaster." I'm going to read to you another verse that Paul has written in Galatians 3:24, he says this, "wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith," that's Galatians 3:24. And what he means is this, is that the law which reveals our unrighteousness is intended to be a schoolmaster, to bring us unto Christ, you have to have the bad news before you understand the good news, so to say. This word schoolmaster is interesting, it can be translated as tutor, this is a guide or a guardian of boys in ancient times. A tutor was to be with a child until he had specifically reached full maturity and went out into the world. And it was specifically for boys because most of the women in ancient times they would be trained by their mother, they would be trained in how to care for the home. They didn't have washers and dryers and ovens and all the things that make living so easy today. And so most of the time, the young girls would be trained by their mothers and these young boys would be trained by a tutor. The tutor again focused on the moral qualities of the young man. Raising the child in a way that was morally right. The boy couldn't go anywhere without his tutor.

Todd Fletcher [00:04:31] And we also see that beyond that, that this tutor became almost a father figure while the father was out at work. And what Paul says is that the law of Moses is like a tutor that stays with us and brings us into adulthood, leading us to Christ. And his point is, before you can understand the gospel, you must understand the law. Well, why do we need to understand the law, because you are guilty before the law. The gospel makes no sense if you say you can be saved, you can be saved and the person says we'll save from what? You say, I don't know, but you're saved. The point is, is that we need to know what we're saved from by the gospel, and that is the wrath of Satan, wait no, the wrath of God. We need salvation from God. That's where, as Christians, we must begin our understanding of God. God is holy, holy, holy God is set apart, God is righteous. And we see here, Paul begins with the holiness of God, the righteousness of God, and the fact that you have offended God by your wickedness, all of you, everyone in here, whether Jew or Gentile, you stand guilty before God. Not a very popular message, because we believe that we are gods ourselves and we don't, it doesn't matter what God thinks because I'm good with myself, I can live with myself. It doesn't matter if you can live with yourself, what matters is for all eternity, you will stand condemned by God unless you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, that's the truth, that's what the Bible says. Now, many preachers today might say that, but guess what? It doesn't matter what those people say. All that matters is what the Bible says, because the Bible is our only standard for faith and obedience. It's the only measure of truth in a world dying for truth, they have to confront the fact that they stand condemned. Jesus didn't come in, didn't come to condemn the world because the world already stood condemned. He came to save those in the world.

Todd Fletcher [00:06:47] So we see Paul Focus's here on, in these next couple of chapters, on outlining the wrath and he goes to great lengths to say that whether you're a Jew, whether you're Gentile, you stand condemned. So we understand that and we break this little section of verses 18 to 23 into three points. And that is one we see in verse 18 that God's wrath is revealed, no one stands without an excuse. Versus 19 through 20, God's nature is revealed in His creation. And then finally, in verses 21 through 23, we see that man's depravity is revealed. God's wrath is revealed, God's nature is revealed, and man's depravity is revealed in this world. And the fact is, and all I want you to take away from the sermon besides being saved, if you are not saved, is this, that we all stand before the Lord without an excuse. And I'm going to get into the classic rebuttals to that statement today, but the fact is, is the Bible is very clear no one is without excuse, we all stand guilty and our consciences bear witness against us.

Todd Fletcher [00:07:56] So, again, talking about Paul's method, you can say this in one way as he begins with the bad news first, and then when we get to Romans, chapter 3, verse 21, there's an amazing "but now." Let's flip over there over to Romans, chapter 3, verse 21, just to give you hope for the end of this month or so of talking about God's wrath, we will eventually get here, Lord willing, and that is verse 21 of chapter three, "but now," "but now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the law and the prophets bear witness the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ, for all who believe. For there is no distinction for all of sinned, all fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by His blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in His divine forbearance He passed over former sins. It was to show His righteousness at the present time, so that He might be just in the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." So just so you know that's there, we're getting there. But first, we have to deal with God's wrath. I've heard some people say they just

don't like talking about wrath because it closes the door with certain people. You know. I'm talking if I'm trying to get someone to accept the Lord Jesus, why would I ever begin with God's wrath? The answer is because they have to understand the bad news before they'll ever accept the good news, it's like a doctor trying to give you an antidote and you don't even know why you need it. The doctor deals with the diagnosis first, right? If you go to a doctor and you've got a problem and the doctor says, well the problem is...is you've lost your arm. What do I do? Well, I need to bandage it up for you and we need to sew it up and do all the right things, you know? But it's like, oh, I had no idea I'd lost my arm, I guess I guess I do need to deal with this, you know, this gaping wound. Thinking of an old movie that it's not that bad. It's just a flesh wound.

Todd Fletcher [00:09:55] The fact is, is we need to tell people that they stand condemned and that's why they need Jesus Christ, because if they don't know they stand condemned, they're not going to understand why in the world they need Jesus. So we need to diagnose the issue, and that's what Paul does, this amazing move here. He spends two and a half chapters diagnosing the problem, and that is you have offended a holy and righteous God and you stand condemned before Him unless you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. That's Paul's point here and he's trying to bring in both Jews and Gentiles saying whether you're a Gentile or whether you're a Jew, you stand condemned before a holy and righteous God. So now look at your passage, we'll look at verse 17. You need to see the parallelism here, verse 17, "For in it," chapter 1, verse 17, "for in it the righteousness of God is revealed," underline that, "from faith to faith, as it is written, the righteous shall live by faith." That's the thesis statement of Romans, verse 18, "for the wrath of God is revealed." Do you see the parallel there? "The righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth."

Todd Fletcher [00:11:22] So you're going to see this word over and over again throughout Romans, and that is the word righteousness, *dikaious*, this word to be right. Righteousness simply means this, this is all righteousness means, to be in the right. Right standing with God to be in the right. Wickedness means simply to be in the wrong, you are in wrong standing with God. It's very judicial, it's very it's very forensic, it's this idea of you're either right with God or you're wrong with God. There's no one in between, there's no one in the gray area. There's no one who's kind of adopted, but not really no one who's kind of born again, but not really born and there's no gray area, you either are born again or you're not. You're either right with God or you're wrong with God. Those are the only two places that one can stand. And so what we see here is he's talking about the righteousness of God, verse 17, is revealed from faith to faith. Notice whose righteousness it is. It's the righteousness of God, only God is truly righteous. Remember, good teacher, remember the man comes up to Jesus, good teacher, and he says, why are you calling Me good? There is none who is good but the Father, there is none who is righteous but God. Well, what about Jesus or Jesus is God.

Todd Fletcher [00:12:41] There is only one righteous being in all of existence, and that is God. Some have argued that in the garden, and this is this is perhaps getting over our ski tips, as some people say, but in that in the garden, that man could have never lived up to God's standards because he wasn't God Himself. And so perhaps that is why the Fall was to happen, no matter what it was, it was it was an unavoidable consequence of creation because only God is righteous, there's arguments about that and I don't want to get into that, but the point is we need to see that righteousness belongs to God Himself. And that the only way that you could ever be righteous is if you receive the righteousness imputed by God to your account, accredited to your accounts. And now let's get into this, "for the

wrath of God is revealed." But "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men," well what's the wrath of God? It's a fun, fun word, orge, sounds like, I just think of, like wrath and ogres. Maybe it's because I'm a fantasy nerd, but the orge of God, well, what's orge? What do you think of when you think of wrath? You probably think of if you had a if you had an abusive father growing up or or you had a brother or a sister or someone in your family that was prone to wrath, you oftentimes think of things flying right? Irons being cast, you know, like the clothing irons being thrown at someone pans, people yelling, kicking, breaking furniture, punching walls, oftentimes we think of wrath as uncontrolled fire, fury uncontrolled.

Todd Fletcher [00:14:26] Now, let me ask you this question. Has God ever been uncontrolled in His life? Never! He has never been uncontrolled in His wrath, in fact, His wrath has always been perfectly just. This term refers to a settled, determined indignation, not to the momentary emotional and often uncontrolled anger to which humans are prone. God has never experienced a moment of uncontrolled wrath in His existence, which has been for all eternity. It is contrary to His very nature, God's wrath is settled, God's wrath is controlled, and God's wrath is forensic. Are you guilty or are you not guilty? Because if you are guilty, you stand guilty and you will receive God's wrath, His perfect, just, holy wrath. The wrath of God is revealed, this word is apocalyptic, which is where we get apocalypse from this idea of revelation, it's revealed it's seen, what was hidden is revealed and it says His wrath has been revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. Where does the wrath come from? It comes from God's kingdom against man's kingdom. Throughout your whole Bible, you'll see two parallel kingdoms, the kingdom of man and the Kingdom of God, oftentimes typified with the city of Babylon versus the city of Jerusalem, the new Jerusalem, the two cities, the two peoples. And we go to Revelation and we see Babylon, the great prostitute, drunk with the blood of the saints, riding upon the dragon, seeking to bring all of those who are faithful to man's kingdom to destruction. And then you see the new heaven, the new Jerusalem coming down into the new heavens in the new earth, and finally, the people of God, the city of God, reign over all creation. And I pray that every one of us are citizens of the New Jerusalem and not citizens of Babylon.

Todd Fletcher [00:16:33] But what we see here is this, the wrath of God is revealed from heaven, God's place, against all ungodliness and all unrighteousness of men. Notice unrighteousness and ungodliness belong to humanity, not God. Here's an important thing, those are not synonyms, ungodliness and unrighteousness. What is it to be ungodly? Well, ungodly means to be contrary to God, ungodly, unlike God, against God, it's the reverse, it's not being devoted to God, it's not reverencing God, it's not worshiping God. To be ungodly is to raise your fist to God and say, I will do the opposite of what You want me to do, that is ungodly. The "I" here is your vertical relationship and then unrighteousness is your horizontal relationship. Those people who have a wrong vertical relationship with God treat others wrong. If you want a list of unrighteousness, just look down to Romans 1 verse 29, they were filled with all manner of unrighteousness. Well, what's that, Paul? Evil, coventness, malice, they're full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They're gossip, slander, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless, that's what it looks like to be unrighteous. And so these people, all humanity, have offended God in their vertical relationship and in their horizontal relationship, they have sinned against their fellow man.

Todd Fletcher [00:18:20] Now, this has oftentimes been referred to as the two tables, the commandments, the Ten Commandments of God. If you go into the Old Testament, you go into the Torah, if you're going to Exodus, you'll see the two, or the Ten Commandments on two tablets, two tables. And you see that four or five, depending upon you, depending

on how you count, are about God. And then the others are about, man, love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind your strength and the second is like it, you love your neighbor as yourself. The two tables that all people are held accountable to. How do you love God and how do you love your fellow human? And so what we see here in verse 18 is God's wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who by their unrighteousness, suppress the truth. And here's where we get into one very important thing is the reason God's wrath is justified is because not only have we sinned against God, we've sinned against our fellow brothers and sisters or humans. And we try to suppress this reality by keeping it down. I once heard a pastor say you can only keep a beach ball underwater for so long and eventually it will come up. And the idea of suppression is to keep it down, I just need to ignore this reality, I'm going to suppress the truth that God's wrath exists.

Todd Fletcher [00:19:48] And we see this all around the world, don't we? We see this in our country, we see this with our neighbors, they are doing all they can to keep the beach ball underwater. They explain God away as though He doesn't exist. Well, I'm not under wrath because there's no such thing as God. Or they explain it away as, well I'm pretty good for the most part, right? Yeah, maybe I stand condemned a little bit, but isn't there some gray area here? There's got to be some wiggle room with God. But the fact is, is God is perfectly just He's righteous, He's holy, there is no gray area He's a consuming fire. Those who stand before the Lord that are not righteous are consumed by His holiness. RC Ryle talks about it his book, 'Holiness,' the importance of beginning with the understanding that God is holy, that's the very first place to begin with God, He is holy, set apart, perfect, He is righteous. What that means about God is that His character, His attributes define righteousness and He is always in line with His character and His attributes. God never breaks who He is, God never lies, God cannot lie, because that's contrary to His nature.

Todd Fletcher [00:21:02] And the fact is, is that we all know, here's the reality, every human being who has ever existed knows that they are not right with God. Let's talk about the "all" part about this. Well, what about those humans who have never had a chance to hear the gospel, who have never had a chance to read the Scriptures? Aren't they OK? Paul is going to consider that argument in Romans 2, he said those who have the law all fall short of the law and know that they stand condemned and he's pointing to the Jews, yes, you've had the law and you know you've sinned against the law that you no one has kept the law and so we stand condemned under the law. But what about those people that don't have the law? Are they really condemned, can they be condemned because they never knew the Scriptures themselves? The answer that Paul gives in Chapter 2 is, do they not have a conscience? Is not God's law written upon their hearts with their consciences? And has anyone in here ever kept their conscience perfectly? No. So whether you are sinning under the law or you're sinning under your conscience, you know that you've fallen short and that you've offended a holy and righteous God and there's something wrong and you can just see this throughout human history. Well, before countries and various cultures that never had the Scriptures themselves, they would sacrifice regularly to the gods, hoping that somehow they could appease this problem between them and the gods because they were aware that they had offended them somehow, some way.

Todd Fletcher [00:22:45] I was reading about journals from Conquistadores who went over to South America with the Incas and the very various Aztec tribes, and they said that the first thing they saw was bloodshed. They went there and they saw these huge ziggurats, these huge structures. And next to all these ziggurats were bodies piled high to the heavens. Most of these bodies were beheaded, many of them children, many of them

women. It was accounted that they estimated that the Aztecs killed 8000 people a day in the sacrifice to the gods. You would go and you would see entire villages and tribes carried to these sacrificial centers, they'd be taken up to the very top, they would be beheaded, their heads would be thrown behind them their bodies would be kicked in front of them, they would roll down the steps and then they had someone that would collect the heads and pile them up, collect the bodies and pile them up. And the Conquistadores asked the question, why in the world is there so much blood shed, and the only answer is because they were trying to appease who? The gods. There's something broken in humanity and humanity knows it and they are without excuse.

Todd Fletcher [00:24:04] Look now at verse 19, versus 19 and 20, "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, and things that have been made. So they are without excuse." This is a very important sermon or important text when it comes to your evangelism. Is oftentimes we spend all of our time trying to argue with someone for the existence of God, right? We'll go through all the arguments, you know, look at this beautiful creation, don't you see there has to be a creator? Or you know, you look at the moral ethic that all cultures have followed and don't you see there has to be a divine law giver and we go through all these arguments. But the fact is and those are good arguments, but the fact is, is every human being knows God exists. There are no atheists in a foxhole, have you ever heard that before? That in the midst of war, when bullets are flying over your head, all of a sudden all the atheists become theists and they start praying to a God they've never recognized before because everyone knows that God exists. Well, I know some people that really don't think that well, you know what, they suppress that truth with what unrighteousness they try to hold the beachball down, there is no God, I'm God. I'm God of my own kingdom, there is no God, please God, don't let there be a God. Oh, no, there's a God.

Todd Fletcher [00:25:41] We suppress the truth with unrighteousness, and the fact is, is that God has made it plain. Verse 19, for what can be known about God is known. Well, can you know everything about God? Just from nature, no, you can't. But you can know a couple of things, look at this, it's plain to them, it's obvious they can see it, they can use their own eyes. You know, we ignore senses today, we ignore you know, we're talking about this downstairs, we ignore science. And I know that's a word that's become very overloaded. But look at this, oh there's no such thing as a Y chromosome anymore, the sky is not really blue, it's whatever color you want it to be. No, that painting's not beautiful, I know it's a Picasso, I know it's been venerated forever but this this graffiti is more beautiful. We ignore our senses and we say that our senses are lying to us, but the fact is our senses are telling us the truth, there is a God.

Todd Fletcher [00:26:44] You know, we do a hike, every year at camp and we go up to the summit and it's a sunset hike. And oftentimes the sunset hike is the hike that the atheists begin to break. Because they look at the beauty of creation and they just know there's a creator. They may try to deny it, but they look at the stars. How could there not be a God, cause God has made it plain to them, God has revealed Himself, what can be known about God is plain, because God has designed it that way. He's shown it, He's given us this beautiful creation because His majesty is everywhere. Verse 20 for His invisible attributes, actually a literal rendering for the invisible things, namely, is eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen, clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world and things that have been made, so therefore, thus they are without excuse. Meaning that God has revealed two things about Himself in creation, one that He's

powerful. Just look outside, I mean, it's negative eight degrees outside, and if we didn't have our homes and we didn't have furnaces and heaters and fires, we'd all be dead. It would be little ice popsicles, you know, Glory sometimes gets mad at our dogs and wants to leave them outside at night, maybe I shouldn't say this from the pulpit, but I say, if you do they will die because dogs can't even survive a negative 20 degrees. Nature itself is powerful.

Todd Fletcher [00:28:29] Just look at what happened in Texas with the 130 plus car pileup because there was ice on the highways, multiple people died. God's power is all around us. You look at volcanoes and you look at hurricanes and you look at typhoons, you look at all these things that God has given us just to say that He's powerful. I'd say the ancients were smarter than us because they at least attributed those things to Zeus, to god's. But we've become so wise today and we've become so educated today that we can't believe in the gods, we can't believe there's a really a God that's behind the powers of this universe. But Romans 1 says that God has made His power known in His creation more than that, that His divinity is clear. That there is a God behind the powers of creation. This word, divinity, is the only time used in the entire New Testament. It can be translated Godhead or divine or divinity. The idea is this is the God stuff. That He's revealed the fact that He's powerful and that He's God, He's the God stuff, that's the stuff behind all this is God stuff. He's powerful, He's divine, you can see it, and it's been there forever since the very creation of the world, not one human being that has ever existed has gotten away from the reality that there is a God and He's very powerful. It's only today where we see atheists living as though there's no God, living as though there's no reality, but the beachball will come back up.

Todd Fletcher [00:30:13] Idealism only lasts for so long until reality smacks you right in the face. There is a God, and in all the things that He has made, He has done so, so that you are without excuse. Some people say, well it's not fair because God hasn't revealed Himself. It's not fair that some people would perish without hearing the gospel because...because they have, they have an excuse don't they? They have no excuse. They have no excuse. What about the Aztecs? I mean, they never had a chance to hear the gospel, how could God be just and condemn them without having the gospel? They have no excuse. Let's turn to Romans 10, I'm about to drive home a very controversial point, Romans 10 verses 5 through...I'm going to go through verse 17, and we're just going to fly through this, but you need to realize that the gospel is the only thing that saves because everyone is without excuse. "For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them, but the righteousness based on faith says, do not say in your hearts who will ascend into heaven? (That is to bring Christ down) or who will descend to the abyss? (That is to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart (that is the word of faith that we proclaim). because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your hearts that He has risen from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the Scripture says everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame. For there is no distinction between Jews and Greeks for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him."

Todd Fletcher [00:32:19] I'm going to stop there just for a second, because that's where most people do stop. They focus on Romans 10:9, and 10:10, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus Lord believe in your heart that God has risen from the dead, you will be saved. Yes and amen, absolutely true. And that everyone who confesses, everyone who believes will be saved. But notice verses 14, 15 and 16, this is so important, "how then will

they call on Him and whom they have never believed? And how are they to believe in Him, of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone," what? "Preaching?" "And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, how beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!" So here is the very fact that we all need to get through our heads, is that all humanity stands rightly condemned before a holy God, and they are without excuse because God has revealed His power and His divinity in His creation and that everyone knows they are unright before God, they are wicked. They stand judged and condemned and the only thing that can save them is the gospel, where the righteousness of God is revealed from heaven, from faith to faith, for the righteous shall live by faith.

Todd Fletcher [00:33:51] What this means for us today is that we have to get back on gospel mission. There's been a nasty little rumor that has been spread throughout the modern church, and that is that missions are bad because they bring white culture and colonialism. Now, there are bad things that happened during the colonial era and there were bad things that happened that people tried to force other cultures and civilizations into kind of white dress, and and white things. And but there was also a lot of good that came from missions. And the main thing being the gospel salvation. And there's been a lie that we need to stop missions because it's simply colonizing, do you want to know who the world leaders and missions are today? Asia, China, Korea. That the West and America have become so anti missions that we hardly send any missionaries anywhere anymore, because we're afraid of propagating white culture. Let me tell you something, Christianity is not white culture, Christianity was formed and built and made in Palestine, its Middle Eastern. We need to get back on mission and we need to start preaching the gospel again to people, because they stand condemned.

Todd Fletcher [00:35:21] But now, let's look at the final versus here, versus 21 and 22, 23, "for although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and foolish in their hearts which were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things." Here is why we are out without excuse, we have done the unthinkable, verse 21, "for although they knew God" existed, here is the fact that everyone knows that God exists and they suppress that truth and unrighteousness. Here's a quote from an evolutionist. He says, I refuse to believe in God, so what alternative do I have but evolution? The presupposition to evolution is that there is no God. Darwin was the hero of the world because they finally had a theory that got rid of a creator, a creator. They love the idea of random chance being the reason for our existence, and if random chance is the reason for our existence, then we have no need to worry about a God, a moral ethic, because we're all animals and we can all live the way we want to live. And I can pursue every passion and lust and pleasure that I have. This is the message of the world today, isn't it?

Todd Fletcher [00:36:54] You know the church really saw Darwin's theory of evolution as an affront to Genesis one itself. And the evolutionist says, I must believe in evolution because I cannot believe in God. Now, we may have some theistic evolutionists in here that believe that God used evolution to bring about the creation of Adam and Eve. There's a couple of problems with that, one is you have death before the Fall, because the primary mechanism in evolution is survival of the fittest. But we see in Genesis that it says there was no death until the Fall, correct, which was caused by Adam and Eve. So you have that problem, that death preexist the Fall in evolution. The other issue is that you can't really believe in an Adam and an Eve, because what if Jim evolved alongside Adam? Well, yes, Adam's race has fallen, but Jim's race has not fallen, see the problems here? Then you

start questioning Genesis itself, can I really believe in the flood narrative? Because that's pretty spectacular as well, I don't I don't think if we can accept that. So then you get rid of Genesis 1 through 11 and then you start questioning everything.

Todd Fletcher [00:38:08] And all this begins with questioning God's existence, is there really a God? Let's listen to this quote by Barnhouse, this is how horrible what we have done is. He says this, "Will God give man brains to see things and will man then fail to exercise his will towards God? The sorrowful answers that both of these things are true. God will give man brains to smelt iron, to make a hammerhead and nails. God will grow a tree and give man strength to cut it down and brains to fashion a hammer and a handle from its wood. And when man has the hammer and the nails, God will put out His hand and let a man drive nails through it and place Him on a cross and supreme demonstration that men are without excuse." We use the very gift that God has given us to crucify God Himself. We worship animals and creatures rather than God with the very faculties that God has given us in order to worship. We have the intelligence to build iron and to build hammers and to grow trees and to cut down trees only so that we can use that intelligence to crucify God's Son. Do not we stand condemned as a human race?

Todd Fletcher [00:39:30] Listen, verse 21, "for although they knew God they did not honor Him," they didn't glorify Him, they didn't worship Him, or even give thanks to Him. Here's the great sin of humanity, the reason we all stand condemned is because we don't worship our creator and because we're not thankful for what He has given. That's the great sin of humanity. Because they became worthless in their thinking, futile in their thinking, and their hearts were darkened. And there's two things here, one, this idea of we became worthless in our thinking is the idea of a idolatry, you see, that is connected to passages like Isaiah 44. We don't have time to read that but in Isaiah 44, he says that the man takes from the same piece of wood, he makes a chair out of it and he makes an idol out of it and he uses the rest of it to burn. So you're going to take one piece of material, you're going to make one part of it, a sitting, you know, a sitting device, the other part you're going to make a god, and the other part you're going to burn. What foolishness is that, why are you worshiping a piece of wood that you just burnt the other half of? That's what Isaiah, 44, says, but because we've become worthless in our thinking, we've become vain in our thinking. That all of our brilliance has led us to an absolute ignorance or nothingness.

Todd Fletcher [00:41:00] He says you've also darkened your hearts, your hearts have become darkened, meaning that you've just gotten deeper and deeper into sin. You've become deeper and deeper in your love for wickedness. Here's the great problem with humanity is we don't worship God, we don't give thanks to God, we form gods after our own image and then we grow in our wickedness against God. Verse 23, claiming to be wise, they became fools. Wouldn't you say that today's world would say we are the wisest we've ever been? Look at how bright we are with our technology. Look at our power points, look at our beautiful LED screens for high resolution, 4k.resolution, 8k resolution. Look at our sports, our athletes, look at sports science, look at all these things in the world that we have created look how wise we are and God says, you are fools. You're as dumb as you've ever been. Because we're farther away from God than we've ever been as a race. We think we can kill God, but the reality is ultimately we will stand killed before God. All men die. We all give an account and Acts says, "that it is appointed that every man shall die and then comes the judgment." And you're not going to be so wise then. When you stand before the great white throne of judgment, saying that I became my own god and God says you are not God.

Todd Fletcher [00:42:42] It's like trading a Picasso for a meme, isn't it? We've traded God, for ourselves, for animals, for worthless things, now tell me we aren't guilty? There's nothing worse we could do than reject our creator who created us to demonstrate his love in us, who created us to be His children, and then we turned against him and became enemies. And followed His great, the great enemy, Satan. Verse 23, here's the great exchange, they exchange the glory of an immortal God, an uncorruptible God, a God that doesn't die, for images resembling mortal men and birds and animals and creeping things, for corruptible things. We took what was incorruptible, we exchanged it for what was corruptible and we began worshiping the creation rather than the creator Himself. That is why all of us stand condemned before a holy God. And when you go to talk to your neighbor about God and when you go to talk to your friends about God and your family members, or you go to another country that's never heard the gospel before, you begin with the fact that they stand condemned before a holy God. Whether they have the law or whether they just have their conscience, either way, they stand condemned.

Todd Fletcher [00:44:21] And now this is where we will end, the law is a beautiful thing because it shows us that we stand condemned, we need to understand that we're sick before we can begin to deal with the problem, right? We need to begin telling others that they're sick before they can begin to deal with the problem. This is why I've said the answer is not in politics, the answers in the gospel. If you want to see a world change, if you want to see a country change, you begin with the gospel and you end with the gospel. The fact that you stand condemned before a holy God, but Jesus, isn't that the best words, but Jesus? Let me tell you about Jesus and that's where we're going to end today, is the fact that all Jews, all Gentiles, stand condemned because they've exchanged an immortal God for mortal man. They worship creation rather than the creator. But let me tell you this, that God's righteousness is revealed in what? The gospel of Jesus Christ. This is so important, the schoolmaster the law, leads us to the gospel, the offenses that we have against God lead us to the hopes and the glories that we have in Jesus Christ. This is everything that Jesus, embodied God, that is He is the image of the invisible God and that He bore our wrath, this is all of it, this is everything. We all stand condemned before a righteous God, every single person that has ever existed. We all are without excuse and we all must answer for our sins. But God sent His Son to live the perfect life that we could never live and at the Garden of Gethsemane, which is the most beautiful picture in all of Scripture, you have the Son crying out to His Father, God if there is any other way, any other way, please let me go that way because I do not want to drink from the cup. The cup of what? The cup of God's wrath. Jesus is affirmed, it's confirmed that there is no other way that He must drink every drop of the Father's wrath. And so He dies on a cross, He has forsaken by His Father and He receives the whole cup of God's wrath. As Isaiah says, it pleased the Father to crush the Son. Why? Because the Son had become sin and God's very nature compels Him to crush sin.

Todd Fletcher [00:47:10] And Jesus drink every drop of wrath for you. And so there are only three people in this world, three types of people. The first type are those who reject God, and they will too, they will also drink the cup of God's wrath for all eternity. Then there's Jesus who didn't deserve God's wrath, but drank every bit from His cup of wrath. And then there's the third group, those who escape God's wrath by hiding in Jesus. Cathy shared this picture with me downstairs, and this is where will end as there were three people on three crosses. You had the Son and two thieves, above the one thief that denied Jesus, that rejected Jesus, he bore the wrath of God on his own. You had Jesus who didn't deserve wrath but who took the wrath from the other thief hanging upon the cross, He took it Himself. Three people, three crosses, two receiving wrath, one receiving grace by faith, that's the gospel, and we need to get back on mission. So let's pray to our

God and ask that He would continue to show us His grace through His Son, Jesus Christ. So, Father God, we come to You now in the name of Jesus Christ. Lord, all of us have sinned, all of us have gone astray like sheep, all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. There are none righteous, no, not even one and the penalty of our sin is death. But Father, You sent Your Son to bore our sins, to bear our sins upon the cross, He drank the full cup of God's wrath so that we might share in His righteousness. Lord I pray if there's anyone in here that has not accepted that gift today, that they would, that they would not bear the wrath on their own, but that they would receive the grace that's available in Jesus Christ by faith, so we pray this in His name, Amen.