October 25, 2026

Series: “Romans: The Gospel according to Paul”

Sermon: “God’s Wrath Revealed”

Scripture: Romans 1:24-32



Introduction

A. In many surveys today, Christians would agree that man is basically good. Contrary to popular opinion, the apostle Paul makes it very clear that man is not basically good but evil.

B. Like an untended garden, when man is left to himself the bad always chokes out the good because his nature is innately bent toward sin.

C. “Man has no capacity in himself to restrain the weeds of his sinfulness or to cultivate the good produce of righteousness” (John MacArthur).

D. When man persistently abandons God, God will abandon man.

E. But isn’t that what man has been fighting for ever since Adam’s rebellion in the Garden of Eden? Isn’t that what man wants? Yes, it is what man thinks he wants. But the problem is it never turns out the way we anticipated.

F. Big Idea: For people who persist in their rebellion against God, He gives them over to their sinful lifestyles but He does not totally give up on them.

I. God Gave Them over to Impurity (1:24-25)

A. Some people after hearing this letter read must have wondered how God was revealing His wrath from heaven against sin.

B. Paul has made it clear what we have done. We have suppressed the truth about God, refused to worship God as God, and not given Him the thanks He deserves. As a result, we have become futile in our thinking and darkened in our hearts. We’ve become fools and worshiped creation rather than our Creator.

C. But up to this point in the letter we have not been told specifically of anything that God has done to unleash His wrath against His rebellious creation. Now this changes.

D. For the first time in the letter we are told, three times in succession, that God has abandoned sinful man to perversion. (1:24, 26, 28)

E. "Therefore God gave them over." God reveals His wrath against the wicked in divine abandonment. He gives them over to the wicked lusts of their hearts and no longer restrains their sin.

F. "In the lusts of their hearts to impurity." Our lostness is not determined by the outward circumstances of our lives but by the inner condition of our hearts. (Mark 7:14-23)

G. "Lusts" are carnal desires for that which is sinful or forbidden. "Impurity" refers to sexual immorality. Sexual sin is the first consequence of being handed over by God to your sinful desires.

H. "So that their bodies would be dishonored among them." Paul describes the result of sexual perversion, both heterosexual and homosexual.

I. "For they exchanged the truth of God for THE lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen."

J. It is striking to note that while people will not worship the true and living God, they are still worshipers nonetheless. Whatever captures our hearts will always be reflected in our lives.

K. We replace the truth that God is our Creator and believe the lie that we call the shots and determine what is right for us. We reject God as our Creator and also defy His purpose for sex in marriage.

L. But we are only a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. God is blessed forever. Amen.

II. God Gave Them over to Dishonorable Passions (1:26-27)

A. "For this reason God gave them over to dishonorable passions; for their FEMALES exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the MALES abandoned the natural function of the FEMALE and burned in their desire toward one another, MALES with MALES committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error."

B. While both heterosexual and homosexual perversions are in view, the emphasis is on homosexuality.

C. “Why does Paul single out homosexuality then? Because it is so obviously unnatural, and therefore automatically underlines the extent to which sin takes mankind. Other sins are just as evil, but they are naturally evil. God has emphasized the sin of inversion to show us that inside the unbelieving man is a running sore which indicates a far deeper dimension of the wounds of sinful society” (R. Kent Hughes).

D. Homosexuality is not a sickness. It is a sin. And that ought to be encouraging because there are some sicknesses for which there is no cure. But there is a remedy for all sin in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

E. “The context suggests that the ‘penalty’ is not something in addition to homosexuality. The penalty is rather being handed over to homosexuality itself” (Tom Schreiner).

F. Four things we must consider concerning homosexuality and lesbianism:

(1) Both of these sins are an abomination to God. (Leviticus 18:22; Leviticus 20:13; 1 Corinthians 6:9)

(2) The sins of homosexuality and lesbianism are the result of a person denying and disobeying God.

(3) Homosexuality and lesbianism are not to be viewed as the most wicked sins in all the world because Romans 1 lists them along with many other sins people commit.

(4) Although God gave up such people to their sins, He did not give up on them in their sins. There is HOPE for people you know who are committing the sins of homosexuality and lesbianism. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

III. God Gave Them over to Unfit Minds (1:28-32)

A. “And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them over to an unfit mind.”

B. “Unfit” means not standing the test, and the word was commonly used of metals that were rejected by refiners because of impurities. The impure metals were discarded, and “unfit” came to include the ideas of worthlessness and uselessness.

C. “To do those things which are not proper.” The godless mind is an unfit mind and its settled disposition is “to do those things which are not proper.”

D. Paul lists twenty-one sins in verses 29-31. This list of vices is not meant to be exhaustive but rather representative of the endless number of sins we commit.

E. “Having been filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, violent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful.”

F. “And although they know the righteous requirement of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.”

G. The irony here is that, despite our fallen nature, we still know that our sinful conduct is worthy of God’s judgment, even death.

H. “To put it bluntly, we are not only bent on damming ourselves but we congratulate others in the doing of those things that we know have their issue in damnation. We hate others as we hate ourselves and render therefore to them the approval of what we know merits damnation” (John Murray).

Conclusion

A. “But Mr. Edwards, is there no mercy with God?”

B. Hopefully we now better understand the importance of Romans 1:16-17.

C. Colossians 1:21-23

D. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

E. The Gospel Definition