**The wrath of God is being revealed**

Romans 1:18-32

Key Verse: 1:18

**“The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness….”**

We learned the power of the gospel that gives salvation to everyone who believes. Let me ask you a fundamental question. Why do we need salvation? Biblically speaking, all of us are born to be condemned. Ever since Adam’s fall, human beings are polluted by sin and sin demands the death penalty (**Genesis 2:17).** Adam disobeyed God and he brought guilt, condemnation and God’s punishment to human history. Today’s passage starts from the awareness of the condition of the human race that no one is righteous and people are in peril of death and the condemnation. Romans 1:17 says that in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed. This is the theme of Romans. To develop this theme, Paul first explains why we need the righteousness of God and what the consequence is for the unrighteousness.

I. The wrath of God is being revealed(1-23)

Look at verse 18. **“ The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness,”** In this passage, Paul’s goal is not to proclaim the good news, but to demonstrate the absolute necessity of the good news of salvation from God’s righteous wrath.

The wrath of God is different from human anger, which is motivated by selfish personal reasons or by a desire for revenge. We must not forget that the wrath of God is completely righteous in character. God cannot tolerate sin. Sin demands its death penalty. The wrath of God will be poured upon the people who are in sin. But our God is the God of love and patience. God waits until sinners to recognize their sin and return to him but God cannot tolerate sin endlessly. The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven. It means that the human race is under God’s reign. God sees people from above either to bless them or pour out his wrath on them accordingly. When sin reaches its full status, the wrath of God is poured upon the earth from heaven. God swept the corrupt earth completely through the outpouring rain from heaven in Noah’s time. God also destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah by sending the burning sulfur from heaven. God’s wrath is being revealed, not simply against people, but against the godlessness and wickedness of people. Godlessness is ignoring God’s existence and living against God. “Wickedness” is doing evil against other people. Many people justify godless and wicked behavior, thinking there will be no consequence. However, God’s wrath is continually revealed against such behavior without fail.

In fact, such people suppress the truth by their godlessness and wickedness. In verses 19-20 we can see how they do so.

**“...since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature -have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.”**

Simply speaking, God clearly reveals himself to mankind through his creation. We call this “general revelation.” General revelation is made to everyone, everywhere. God plainly revealed himself through the creation of the world. We can clearly see and understand God’s eternal power and his divine nature through mountains, oceans, trees and animals. All the creatures including sun and stars are in perfect order, doing what they were supposed to do according to God’s creation order.

One day, I had some time to talk about God with my mother before she was a christian. I had many thoughts in my mind to convince her so that she may believe in God. To my surprise, she already knew that God does exist even before I was telling her about God’s creation. She said **“it is mysterious to know that the single seed of watermelon has life in it. When I plant it, it grows and produces many sweet watermelons. It must be God who made it possible!** As a farmer, she understood the process of growing the watermelon in God’s perspective and it was easy for me to convince her about the faith in God, the Creator.

My mother graduated from the elementary school only but there was no problem for her to believe in God and his creation.

However many people with degrees and certificates who claim to be intelligent suppress the plain truth of God’s creation. They are the godless who deliberately ignore and deny God. Therefore being atheists means to be people of intensive God-rejecters.

Have you heard about the Atheist Bus Campaign? It was created by comedy writer Ariane Sherine and launched in October 2008 in London by putting the slogan on the bus. **There's probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life."**

This slogan really tells us the sinful men’s mentality. The focal point of this message is that you don’t worry about God’s punishment. Enjoy your life of sin.

To enjoy sinful life, God shouldn't exist for them. But it is their vain wish. The Bible declares that “In the beginning, God created heavens and the earth” and all creatures are testifying to the creator God from the day of creation up until now.

In this part, Paul’s point is that no one has an excuse to deny God’s existence. People who say that there is no God deceive themselves and deliberately suppress the truth. It is man’s willful rebellion against God.

How is this willful rebellion expressed? Verse 21a says, **“For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him....”** The words, **“although they knew God”** restates that no one can deny God’s existence because he revealed himself through creation. Since they know God, they should glorify him and give thanks to him. This is the creation purpose for human beings to give glory to God and enjoy him forever. The Creator God is worthy to receive glory, worship, honor and praise from all human beings (Rev 4:11). However, people neither glorify God as God, nor give thanks to him. This is human pride, the root of sin; it is how willful rebellion is expressed.

Then, what are the consequences of being rebellion against the creator God? Verse 21b says, **“...but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.”** It starts from their thought world. Out of their corrupt minds many useless, worthless thoughts come. These thoughts and ideas make people sick. Furthermore, their hearts become foolish, darkened and fatalistic, which leads to fear and anxiety. Then they look for something to depend on. Finally, although they claim to be wise, they become fools and exchange the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles (22-23).

I read an interesting article a long time ago and the article was about ‘Gosa’. ‘Gosa’ is a traditional Korean ritual with shamanic roots. The ritual asks for good luck when starting a big event. Bowing to the pig’s head is a way of wishing for prosperity. In 1996, there was a Korean-made Satellite launching ceremony in Cape, Florida. Then, Americans were shocked to see that the Korean scientists brought a B.B.Q, a whole pig and they put it on the table. Scientists stood in front of the table and started bowing to the pig, wishing the successful satellite launching and arriving to space. Space science is the most developed technology and the scientists should be the most intelligent people. Indeed, people without faith no matter how smart they are become fools, depending on all sorts of idols, traditions and rituals.

II. God gave them over (24-32)

What happens to idolaters? Verses 24, 26, and 28 include the words **“God gave them over”**. This phrase is important that Paul repeats it three times in this passage. We make a mistake when we think that it is God’s mercy or kindness that allows man to continue in sin. It is actually His wrath that allows us to go on destroying ourselves with sin. There is a certain pattern that God tries to intervene in our life to help us to stop sinning. God gave us conscience to feel guilt when we do something wrong. If we ignore the guilty conscience, doing what is wrong continuously, people close to us start saying **“Dear son and daughter, brother and sister, husband and wife! Please stop doing it. It is not good for you!** They speak the words of encouraging or rebuking to the person whom they love on behalf of God. If the person continues sinning, neglecting the words of his loved ones, God uses a kind of unusual event or accident to let him know that you must stop it. This is the love of God that he wants sinners to stop sinning and live a life to glorify Him. However, those who deliberately deny to repent, God gives them over to their sin. It means that God withdrew himself from speaking, teaching and rebuking. They are completely disconnected from God and they live under their sinful and evil desires. King Saul is an example of this. The sin of greed and pride kept growing in him and he continuously disobeyed God and God’s servant Samuel. Although Samuel waited for him to repent with many words and patience, Saul didn’t listen to him and did what was against God. 1 Samuel 15:35says **“Until the day Samuel died, he did not go to see Saul again, though Samuel mourned for him. And the Lord regretted that he had made Saul king over Israel.”** God gave Saul over his sinful desire. The Spirit of God left Saul and there were no more Gods’ words for him ever since Samuel left Saul. Later part of Saul’s life was so miserable. He wasted his life by the sins of jealousy, pride, fear being tortured by evil spirits. We have been studying 1 Samuel during the HBF meetings. While I was teaching this passage, I emphasized how important it was to live under a spiritual environment. It is so blessed for HBF and CBF members that they have parents who teach the Bible, praying for them and giving spiritual advice when they are in need in the community of God. We must live under the Chrisitan community where we are taught, encouraged and sometimes rebuked to live as God’s children. I pray that all our church families live under God’s care, listening and learning of God’s words and stop doing what God displeases.

What are the consequences if God gives people over their sin? Verse 24 says, **“Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one** **another.”** Sexual immorality follows idolatry, as world history affirms. The result is the ruin of one’s character, broken families, unwanted pregnancies and abortion. In verse 25, he summarized the fallen condition of mankind **“They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator - who is forever praised. Amen.”**

The godless exchanged the truth about God for a lie in regards to the marriage. Once people are enslaved by sexual immorality, they cannot be satisfied with natural relations between men and women. In their shameful lusts, they degenerate into unnatural relationships which is homosexuality. Women have sexual relationships with other women, and men commit indecent acts with other men (26-27a). This is against God’s created order. God created mankind male and female. God instituted marriage to be a union between male and female.

M. Joseph always prays for the ministers and governors of Canada to fear God. Indeed, this country needs to return to God and to the Bible. Marriage definition was the lawful union between male and female but this definition had changed in 2005 as follows “the lawful union of two persons.” This concept of marriage is inclusive of all kinds of gender identities. What is more, there are 3 options for the “gender” field on passports for Canadians and travel documents for non-Canadians: F—female. M—male. X—another gender.

Jesus is clear to define God’s creation on human beings and marriage in Mark 10:6-7 **“But at the beginning of creation God ‘made them male and female.’ ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife”** M. Isaac gave God’s words to Andy and Jane for their engagement yesterday based on Genesis 2:24. He said that they are half way done to establish a house church because they left their parents already. Andy and Jane will be united as one through their marriage in May. Let us pray for them to be faithful to each other and to God, becoming a blessing to others as they establish a beautiful house church.

The consequences of idolatry and sexual immorality are so terrible. But degeneration goes beyond this: **“Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done”** (28). A depraved mind is totally corrupted and enables any kind of evil action. It is the lowest level a person can reach. Paul describes in detail by introducing the lists of wicked and sinful acts in verses 29-31. **“They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy”**

Nowadays, unspeakable evil things have been happening, such as widespread sexual abuse, random mass murders and shootings and serial killings. We wonder why these things are happening continually. It is because people became depraved. This is God’s wrath on those who abandon him. Without God, we gradually degenerate into chaos. The most terrible thing is that people don’t regard sin as sin but justify themselves.

Verse 32 says, **“Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.”** People justify themselves using all kinds of philosophy, psychology, and social media. By doing this they try to get rid of guilt feelings so that people may freely commit sin. This is exactly the mindset of people who say “**There's probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life."**

In conclusion, the world is heading to the end and there will be the second death and eternal destruction for those who think that there’s no God and live in sin. God does exist and his righteous wrath is being revealed to those who do not believe in him. Consequently, the world is getting worse and worse and sinful thoughts, ideas and behaviors overflow everywhere.

In order to live a life that glorifies God, we must start from restoring the faith in God's creation. Let us acknowledge the creator God in every aspect of our lives so that we glorify him and give thanks to him under God’s care and protection in this corrupt world.