

The Wrath of Divine Abandonment

Romans 1:24-32

In the providence of God are now brought to Romans chapter one and we will be examining verses 24 through 32 this morning. Let me read this text to you.

Romans chapter one beginning at verse 24.

Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, that their bodies might be dishonored among them. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error. And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; and, although they know the ordinance 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.¹

This is one of the most sobering and terrifying passages in any of Paul's epistles. This is one that should cause each of us to shudder with solemn reflection about ourselves and about those that we know and love, because, dear friends, here we learn what happens when man rejects God. When man rejects God, God rejects him. And when he does so God lifts his restraining grace. He lifts his restraining grace. He lifts his protective hand and allows man to fully indulge in all of his lusts.

Gradually that man will experience the terrible miseries of his sinful choices. This is what we could call the wrath of divine abandonment. It is a terrifying fate that can lead to eternal abandonment for those who never repent.

As we will learn, God will even at times temporarily and partially withdraw his restraining and protecting grace from his own people, those who persistently refuse to obey him and ignore him.

I have no doubt that some of you are in that category. And unless you come to your senses, unless you repent, your willing enslavement to whatever cherished sins you adore will eventually cause God's chastening to come upon you in ways that you cannot imagine.

¹ Romans 1:24-32.

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But for those who reject a creator God and mock his Word, mock his command to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, for those people, the consequences are unspeakable and unless they repent this abandonment will be eternal.

Now I want you to remember the context here. Paul is building his case for the gospel, the good news. And so he must begin by exposing man's desperate need for a righteousness that is not his own, for a righteousness that must be given to him by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and therefore, as we will see, it is the righteousness of Christ that is imputed even imparted to us so that we can have fellowship with the holy God that created us.

And so Paul is going to build a case for man's need. And we know, biblically, that man without Christ is spiritually dead. He is self righteous. He is self willed. He is self deceived. And therefore Paul must spend a great deal of time exposing man's sinfulness, explaining why man is guilty and condemned before a holy God, because only when a man sees his sin and all of its ugliness that we see the Savior and all of his beauty.

You see, saving grace is only available to the poor in spirit, to those who recognize they have nothing to bring except their sin, who recognize that they are spiritually destitute. And only then will God pour out his mercy upon that individual. Only then will he be born again. This is the glory of the gospel of God, the good news of sins forgiven.

But think about it. Because of our sin nature, because the heart is deceitful above all else as Jeremiah tells us, it is desperately wicked, because of this we are hopelessly blind and biased in evaluating our own condition. Ask yourself about your own sin. If I were to say to you, "What are some of the specific sins in your life right now that are dishonoring to the Lord and robbing you of blessing and perhaps placing you under the cloud of divine chastening," What would you say?

Well, unfortunately for many of us we would have to think for a while to come up with those specific sins, not the general sins we could all say, but the specific sins.

Well, why is that? Because we are innocent? No. It is because sin is so deceptive and it is so delicious to us and because we are so proud and hopelessly biased in our favor.

And think about it. If we are that blind, if we are that biased, having the Spirit of God dwelling within us to bring conviction to our hearts and knowing the Word of God as we do, just think how blind and biased those without Christ would be, those who are dead in their sin.

By the way, as a footnote, God is fully aware of that list in you life. That is why the Lord Jesus lives to make intercession for us, right? In fact, John tells us that if we say that we have no sin we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us, but if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

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Now to explain why man stands guilty and condemned before God, as you have been told before, Paul is going to spend about 67 verses from verse 18 of chapter one to chapter three verse 20 exposing the myth of our perceived, innate goodness and thereby justify God's wrath upon sinners.

And in chapter one here, verses 23 through 32, Paul paints a very, very vivid picture of what happens when a man suppresses the truth in unrighteousness, when he rejects God's revelation of himself in creation and conscience and chooses instead to worship himself, chooses instead to create idols and bow down before them and ends up honoring the creature rather than the Creator. When this happens, man is rejecting God and God ultimately rejects him.

Verse 24, notice.

“Therefore...” In other words, in light of this, “God gave them over...”² a very strong verb in the original language, *paradidwmi* (par-ad-id'-o-mee). It means to deliver up, to hand over. It is used in the New Testament to refer to one who has been given over into the hands of another to be judged, to be condemned, punished, scourged, tormented, put to death. Very, very powerful verb.

And in this context it refers to the wrath of divine abandonment whereby God delivers up or gives man over to the folly of his sin that he might experience the full consequences of his iniquity so that he would finally come to a place of repentance.

So at some level you might see this as the final act of divine mercy in a person's life. Because sin is such a metastasizing corruption it is always going to go from bad to worse. It never comes to a place and just kind of stops. And it certainly never goes backwards. Whatever sins you are dealing with now, unless you deal with them effectively, they are going to be far worse in a month, far worse in a year and eventually they will be extremely bad, devastating, perhaps to the point where the Lord takes you home.

Certainly we witnessed this downward spiral in our modern age. Our culture is literally in a free fall of idolatry and immorality.

We are watching the world being prepared for the deceptions of the antichrist. It is important to note, however, that grace will remain available to the penitent sinner until the Lord closes the door in a man's life. That is a time that only God knows. Or until the Lord returns in all of his glory.

So this is not eternal abandonment. In fact, we see over and over again in Scripture that the Lord is long suffering. He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But we must recognize the context here and it is that of God's wrath being revealed.

² Romans 1:24.

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Remember in verse 18.

And so if a man remains indignant towards God, he will eventually cross a line that is known only to God, a line from which he can never return. And when that occurs God will sentence him and abandon him eternally.

Now we are going to discover that Paul describes three stages of this abandonment, stages that are not necessarily found in every individual, but in a collective whole of the culture that magnifies individual wickedness. And with each stage we will see that the sin becomes progressively worse in its evil and even in its consequence. We are going to see that God gave them over to three things. I want you to perhaps use this little outline, just a little summary.

Number one, he gave them over to sordid immorality. Number two, to shameless homosexuality. And, third, to shocking depravity. We will have time to look at the first two this morning.

First of all notice verse 24, how God gives them over to sordid immorality.

“Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, that their bodies might be dishonored among them.”³

The word “lust” translates the Greek word *epiyumia* (ep-ee-thoo-mee’-ah) which means a desire or a craving. And here it refers to a carnal craving, literally a longing for that which is forbidden.

Paul reminded the saints in Ephesus about this very thing in Ephesians two and verse three. He said, “We too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.”⁴

And what will God rejecters crave? Well, it says that they will crave impurity, *akayarsia* (ak-ath-ar-see’-ah), uncleanness is what it means. It is a term that we find is used to describe the putrefaction of a corpse, the contents of a grave, that which the Jews considered both physically as well as ceremoniously unclean, but it became a synonym for sexual immorality, what I am calling here sordid immorality if you will understand, that which is morally ignoble.

That which is sordid is shameful. It is base. It means vile, depraved, degrading. And, of course, this would include all sexual activity outside of the bond of marriage.

Now this is the idolatry of self, dear friends. You will recall in verse 23 that we are told they “exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man.”⁵

³ Romans 1:24.

⁴ Ephesians 2:3.

⁵ Romans 1:23.

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This is what this is. This is when man worships the human body, when he is ruled by his hormones. The apostle Paul speaks of this in Colossians three and verse five. He speaks of immorality, impurity, same word, passion, evil desire and he says all of this amounts to idolatry.

Paul used the term “impurity” to refer to sordid immorality in 2 Corinthians 12 and verse 21. There he referred to some of the Corinthians as those, quote, who had “sinned in the past and not repented of the impurity, immorality and sensuality which they have practiced.”⁶

It is interesting. Impurity is also one of the deeds of the flesh in Galatians five, that is, in opposition to the Spirit. And we all know that. We have all been tempted in some ways sexually to do things that are not right and we feel as believers that tug of war going on in our souls as the Spirit brings conviction and the flesh says, “No, I want to go in this direction.”

So here we learn that when a man persistently rejects God, God will gradually give him over to these carnal cravings for forbidden forms of sexual immorality. And I want you to notice the close connection between idolatry in verse 23 and immorality in verse 24.

Remember, an idolater is not only one who rejects or ignores God, but it is also one who entertains thoughts about God that are unworthy of him. In both cases these individuals will create a God of their own liking and even their own likeness. And historically wherever you see idol worship which is ultimately Satan worship, wherever you see that, you find that that kind of worship breeds all manner of sexual immorality and debauchery.

Paul would have been very familiar with this in Corinth. That is where he was writing this letter, a place that was notorious for its idolatry and sexual immorality. In fact, the temple there in Corinth had over 1000 priestesses that were nothing more than prostitutes.

So those priestesses were really Satan’s workers and in many places around the ancient world idolatry included male prostitutes as well.

We see this in the idolatry of the Roman Catholic Church where the true God has been grossly distorted and, as a result, we see the scandalous sexual exploits of the popery as well as the priesthood, scandals that are legendary.

But I want you to notice that this lust is in their hearts, it says. The heart is the seat of our thoughts, the seat of our imaginations, our will. You will recall Jesus said in Matthew 15 that evil comes from within, not without.

⁶ 2 Corinthians 12:21.

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He says, “For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. These are the things which defile the man.”⁷

As Solomon tells us in Ecclesiastes 9:3 that, “The hearts of the sons of men are full of evil, and insanity is in their hearts throughout their lives.”⁸

But notice the consequence in verse 24, “...that their bodies might be dishonored among them.”⁹

You see, dear friends, what happens when people indulge in these kinds of sins is that their bodies are treated shamefully. That is what dishonored means, *at imazw* (at-im-ad’-zo) in the original language. It means to treat shamefully, to treat with contempt, to despise.

Now, please understand. While the ultimate outpouring of this wrath upon the body is eschatological, in other words it is reserved ultimately for future eternal wrath upon unbelievers, there are many ways in which the body is dishonored for all of those who indulge in various kinds of sordid immoral behaviors.

We all know that that kind of behavior ultimately brings physical as well as emotional trauma upon the body even while a person is this side of their eternal state.

I have counseled with young people over the years, some just recently, who have contracted sexually transmitted diseases. I remember some who did so on their spring break, diseases of which there is no cure. I have dealt with people, as maybe you have, who are filled with guilt because of abortions and all my Russian friends tell me that the average woman in Russia has had 11 abortions. And they deal with this guilt all the time with their women.

People that deal with the difficulties of single parenting, the trauma associated with relationships that have been built on lust rather than love, violence against women, the self hatred that comes when you use others and allow others to use you sexually, suicides. I have been with prostitutes that in counseling where I have seen women and even some men talk with them and notice that they look 60, 70 years old, but they are in their 20s and 30s. You have all probably seen that before.

Sordid immorality leads to a dishonoring of the body. I have talked with so many men that are addicted to pornography and they find themselves in a vortex from which they cannot seem to free themselves. They hate themselves for it. They end up hating others around them.

⁷ Matthew 15:19-20.

⁸ Ecclesiastes 9:3.

⁹ Romans 1:24.

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Dear friends, you sow the wind, you will reap the whirlwind. This is what happens when you reject God. He ends up abandoning you to the world, giving you over to Satan's kingdom of darkness, a kingdom that is ingeniously designed to destroy you.

I looked up some statistics being curious about this and unfortunately the best I could find were those given to us in 2004 and so we are a number of years past that, but let me give you the statistics in 2004 on pornography.

The size of the porn industry is 57 billion dollars world wide. Internet porn is 2.5 billion. Child pornography is a three billion dollar industry. The United States porn revenue exceeds the combined revenues of ABC, CBS and NBC for a total of 6.2 billion dollars. Child pornography generates three billion dollars annually. That is inconceivable. Pornography revenue is larger than all combined revenues of all professional football, baseball and basketball franchises. There are 4.2 million pornographic websites, 12 percent of them are on the internet or it says 12 percent of the internet. I am sorry.

The average age of first exposure to internet pornography is five years old. The largest consumer of internet porn is the 12 to 17 age group. There are 100,000 websites offering illegal child pornography. Ninety percent of age 16 year olds have seen pornography on the internet. Twenty-nine percent of seven to 17 year olds freely give out their home addresses.

Dear friends, Satan is producing a new generation that is ruled by its sexual appetites. Pornographers, pedophiles, pimps, prostitutes, rapists, homosexuals, adulterers, fornicators.

Again, verse 24.

“...that their bodies might be dishonored among them.”¹⁰

You see, sexual immorality is dehumanizing to the body. This is what the Spirit of God would have us understand. Yet, isn't it interesting how our western culture worships the body.

How ironic. Man will always be destroyed by the idol that he worships. He will buy the lie and die. Because, again, all idolatry is Satan worship. Satan is a liar. Jesus said, “He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him.”¹¹

So man has suppressed the truth. He has bought the lie. And as a result God has given him over to the lusts of his heart, to impurity. And as we see here he craves the unclean thing like a junkie craves dope. It is as though he can't live without it. He is never satisfied.

¹⁰ Romans 1:24.

¹¹ John 8:44.

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Our culture has become one of prowling dogs and alley cats, not only bereft of moral principals and dignity, all virtue is gone. Our women dress like trollups. The more skin they can show the better. The tighter the clothes the better. And our men undress them as they walk by.

And on one seems to care.

You know, we should not be dismayed at the insanity of our political leaders and the demise of virtually every system in our country, everything from education to the economic system. We shouldn't be surprised at that. Because, dear friends, our country is experiencing the wrath of divine abandonment. We are a nation of idolatrous sex worshipers. God has lifted his hand of protection and restraint and allowed those who mock him to pursue their every lust. And, frankly, nowhere is this more evident than in America's rebellion against God's moral order. It seems as though every week we learn of another law that is being passed to somehow protect immorality and the consequences of it, everything from the protection of abortion to the legalizing of homosexuality. There is nothing sacred anymore, not even the sanctity of marriage between a man and a woman.

Dear Christian, our lives must be radically different than the world. If I can pause here for a moment, you must realize that it is not our similarity with the world that draws people to Christ. It is our difference from the world. That is how we should live.

Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians six verse 18:

Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.¹²

The apostle Paul tells us in Romans chapter 13:14 that we are to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, that we are to make no provision for the lusts of the flesh.

Colossians chapter three verse five he says, "Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality."¹³

And here is the same word "...impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. For it is on account of these things that the wrath of God will come."¹⁴

Sordid immorality is pandemic now, isn't it? How does this happen?

Verse 25.

¹² 1 Corinthians 6:18-20.

¹³ Colossians 3:5.

¹⁴ Colossians 3:5-6.

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“For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.”¹⁵

Beloved, this is an amazing principle that God has placed within the moral order of his created universe. You see, the principle is simply this. When a man exchanges the truth of God for a lie, he will be delivered over to that lie to become its slave. And as its slave he will serve that lie until that task master finally destroys him. That is how God has ordered his moral universe.

So this is Paul’s description of the consequences of man’s willful rejection. God will abandon him, first, to sordid immorality.

Think of it this way. Sordid immorality is a perversion of the moral order. It is not the way God intended for sex to operate. But beyond that the second stage is that of shameless homosexuality. This is not just a perversion of the moral order. This is an inversion of God’s moral order.

Verse 26.

“For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions.”¹⁶

Degrading is an interesting term, *atimia* (at-ee-mee’-a). It means vile, disgraceful, shameful. God abandons them to vile affections.

He says, “For their women,” literally their females, “exchange the natural function for that which is unnatural.”¹⁷

Once again we see a willful exchange of truth for a lie, of righteousness for that which is unrighteous, of that which is pure for that which is unclean. And notice they exchanged, it says, “the natural function.”

Natural is *φυσικόν* (foo-see-kos). It means that which is produced by nature, that which is inborn, that which governs our behavior, the instincts that govern our behavior.

And so they have exchanged the natural function *κρησιν* (khray’-sis) in the original language. It simply means use. And here it is referring to the sexual use of a woman. It is referring to sexual intercourse. It is referring to a normal, natural intimacy that a woman would have with her husband.

They have exchanged that for that which is unnatural, in other words, that which is contrary to nature, that which is contrary to which an instinct within us would tell us we should do.

¹⁵ Romans 1:25.

¹⁶ Romans 1:26.

¹⁷ Ibid.

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Obviously this is speaking of homosexuality, homosexual behavior among women. And, again, unlike sordid immorality that is a perversion of God's intention for sexual relations, this is homosexuality that is an inversion of God's intention. Not only of God's intentions, but of our natural instinct that would govern how we would function in this realm of our life.

John MacArthur put it this way, quote, "When man forsakes the author of nature, he inevitably forsakes the order of nature," end quote.

It is interesting here that Paul mentions female homosexuality first and then the male homosexual issue second. As I have thought about this since females in a society are typically far more reluctant to enter into sordid immorality and certainly into shameless homosexuality, perhaps by mentioning them first Paul is describing a culture where this form of idolatry is so rampant that all virtue is now gone. It is disappeared.

That is certainly true in our western culture, is it not?

Verse 27.

"And in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts."¹⁸

The word "burned" here *ekkaiw* (ek-kah'-yo) is a fascinating term. It means to set on fire. It means to ignite or to enflame. And it is interesting in the grammar it is in the passive voice so it could be translated "They are set on fire in their desire." So they become inflamed. They become consumed with this craving, with an appetite, with a longing to be sexually involved with another man.

Over the years I have counseled a number of homosexual men who have described this to me. And I remember one man described it this way, quote, "It is an urge so powerful that I would have to kill myself to stop it," end quote.

It is not at all uncommon for homosexual men to have over 3000 partners per year. With women it is typically only one or two.

You know, for those of us who are not enslaved by this sin it is hard for us to conceive of anything so powerful. But, beloved, this is the power of the flesh.

In Genesis 19 we have an illustration of this. You will remember the story of the two angels that came to visit Lot in the city of Sodom. And upon seeing those men and angels appearing as men coming into town, we read this.

¹⁸ Romans 1:27.

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The men of the city, the men of Sodom, surrounded the house, both young and old, all the people from every quarter; and they called to Lot and said to him, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may have relations with them."¹⁹

Later on in verse nine we read:

So they pressed hard against Lot and came near to break the door. But the men reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them, and shut the door. And they struck the men who were at the doorway of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they wearied themselves trying to find the doorway.²⁰

You would think that the last phrase would say, "So that they repented on the spot and begged for mercy."

Amazing. A lust so strong that even after being supernaturally blinded you still exhaust yourself to find the doorway, to break in and have your way with strange men.

This is the power of the flesh when man rejects God and God gives him over to pursue his lusts without restraint.

You will recall that text goes on to say that the sin of Sodom and that of Gomorrah was so great that God rained down fire and brimstone from heaven and utterly destroyed them. It is interesting. Deposits of sulfur, which is brimstone, can still be found in this area to this very day.

Paul goes on to say in verse 27 that men "abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts."²¹

I think the King James says, "Working that which is unseemly."²²

The term in the original language refers to that which is shameful, that which is unseemly. It is shameless. Males with males perpetrating shamelessness in the King James Version.

It is fascinating how these people want to be called gay. I have counseled with many of them, beloved. I can tell you they are anything but gay. They are filled with unhappiness, with sorrow, with shame, with guilt, with frustration, with hopelessness, with anger, even with rage. And it is sad. We live in a culture today that is so far gone that to even speak

¹⁹ Genesis 19:4-5.

²⁰ Genesis 19:9-11.

²¹ Romans 1:27.

²² Ibid.

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in this way in many quarters is considered hate speech. But I would submit to you that what is hate speech is to allow these people to perish in their sins without being warned.

Yes, but I was born this way.

I have heard it 1000 times. The big debate today.

I have a natural, innate predisposition to want to be involved sexually with another man.

Well, let me put it to you this way. I have a natural predisposition to be sexually involved with other women. Not only that, I am predisposed to everything from road rage to cheating on my income tax. So are we supposed to legalize all of that? Or am I supposed to learn how to deal with my sin?

You see, the point is not that of an issue of predisposition. It is not an issue of sexual orientation or any other kind of orientation, because we all have orientations to all manner or things. The issue is how are you going to choose to deal with your sexual orientation, with your sexuality?

I don't care whether you are gay or whether you are straight.

Of course, God's Word on the matter is meaningless to those who have rejected him.

Let me give you a sample of what God has made clear about this issue.

Leviticus 18 verse 22.

“You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination.”²³

God then goes on to denounce bestiality that will inevitably be a part of an idolatrous culture that embraces homosexuality. Indeed, it is a part of the homosexual community to this day.

Verse 23 goes on to say, “Also you shall not have intercourse with any animal to be defiled with it, nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with it; it is a perversion.”²⁴

Very clear.

Leviticus 20 verse 13.

“If there is a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act; they shall surely be put to death.”²⁵

²³ Leviticus 18:22.

²⁴ Leviticus 18:23.

²⁵ Leviticus 20:13.

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Deuteronomy 23:17.

“None of the daughters of Israel shall be a cult prostitute, nor shall any of the sons of Israel be a cult prostitute.”²⁶

In verse 18 he goes on to call a male prostitute a dog.

Judges 19 verses 22 through 24.

We read there that Sodomites are called worthless fellows that commit wickedness and act of folly against a man.

1 Kings 14:24.

“And there were also male cult prostitutes in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD dispossessed before the sons of Israel.”²⁷

Let me go to the New Testament. 1 Corinthians 6:9.

“Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate...”²⁸

By the way, effeminate refers to the passive homosexual partner. It would also include transvestites and transsexuals.

“... nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God.”²⁹

And I love this.

“And such were some of you.”³⁰

Boy, there is grace, right?

“And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.”³¹

Beloved, there is the hope that we have in Christ.

²⁶ Deuteronomy 23:17.

²⁷ 1 Kings 14:24.

²⁸ 1 Corinthians 6:9.

²⁹ 1 Corinthians 6:9-10.

³⁰ 1 Corinthians 6:11.

³¹ Ibid.

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Ephesians four verse 17 Paul speaks of the unsaved who walk, quote:

...in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart; and they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality, for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness.³²

Chapter five verse 11 of Ephesians he says:

And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret.³³

Having counseled a number of homosexual men and having worked closely with the doctors and the nurses that often treat them in the emergency rooms at local hospitals, I know far more than I wish I knew about the bizarre sexual practices in their community. Hideous acts of physical mutilation that defies explanation along with other practices that, frankly, I refuse to even entertain in my mind, much less would I discuss them in public.

Yet the city government, for example, of San Francisco offers workshops to help protect homosexuals engaging in sadomasochistic sex. The culture is gone, dear friends. They have abandoned God and God has abandoned them.

San Francisco, for example, and other cities around the world there have literally been orgies including sadomasochistic types of things in the streets.

I read of one not too long ago that was sponsored by some major corporations in America including Miller beer and the brewery in Coors beer and so on. Paul speaks of these things that are done in secret. They are so disgraceful. We shouldn't even speak about them.

In verse 27 he says, again, "...men with men committing indecent..."³⁴ that is the shameful, shameless acts.

"...and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error."³⁵

Beloved, can there be a more obvious and tragic example of this than the AIDS epidemic? Not to mention other atrocities that these men perpetrate on one another. It is

³² Ephesians 4:17-19.

³³ Ephesians 5:11-12.

³⁴ Romans 1:27.

³⁵ Ibid.

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will documented by forensic experts which examine thousands of autopsies that homosexual violence committed against another homosexual is among the most brutal.

For example, New York forensic expert Dr. Milton Helpern made this observation, quote, “When we see brutal, multiple wound cases in a single victim, we just automatically assume that we are dealing with a homosexual victim in a homosexual... and a homosexual attacker.” He goes on to say, “I don’t know why it is so, but it seems that the violent explosions of jealousy among homosexuals far exceed those of the jealousy of a man for a woman or a woman for a man. The pent up charges and energy of the homosexual relationship simply cannot be contained. When the explosive point is reached the result is brutally violent. But this the, quote, normal pattern of these homosexual attacks, the multiple stabbings, the multiple senseless beatings that obviously must continue long after the victim dies,” end quote.

The text before us explains us. God abandons people that abandon him and they burn in their desire. They are consumed by it.

You know, it is hard to understand how there are those in Christian churches that seem to have a hard time understanding this issue of homosexuality. And increasingly, many evangelicals seem to get sucked up into this political and religiously correct ideology that would have us believe that you are being intolerant or judgmental or unloving if you condemn homosexuality.

Again, as I have said before. You have got a choice. You can either be faithful or popular. I don’t struggle with the clarity of the Word on this issue. Many do.

Brian MacLaren the leader of the Emergent Church that you have probably heard about sees this as an incredibly complex issue. Despite the straight forward teaching of Scripture, here is what he writes, quote, “Frankly, many of us don’t know what we should think about homosexuality. We have heard all sides, but no position has yet won our confidence so that we can say, quote, ‘It seems good to the Holy Spirit and to us,’” end quote.

He goes on to say, “That alienates us from both the liberals and conservatives who seem to know exactly what we should think. Even if we are convinced that all homosexual behavior is always sinful, we still want to treat gay and lesbian people with more dignity, gentleness and respect than our colleagues do. If we think that there may be actually some legitimate context for some homosexual relationships, we know that the biblical arguments are nuanced and multi layered and the pastoral ramifications are staggeringly complex. We aren’t sure if or when lines are to be drawn nor do we know how to enforce with fairness whatever lines are drawn,” end quote.

Beloved, this is another example of what happens when a man suppresses the truth in unrighteousness. This is not some obscure issue.

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When man rejects the written Word of God he becomes confused and God abandons him to all manner of confusion and deception. We see this principle all the time.

I am going to close with this thought, because we see this issue of God's abandonment in other areas of Scripture. For example, 2 Timothy chapter four and verse three. You can turn there if you would like because this is important. I want to take just a few minutes. We will close with this thought.

2 Timothy chapter four verse three.

Paul says, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine."³⁶

Here is a great example. What I just read, they will not endure sound doctrine, all right? They are just not going to put up with it.

"...but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires."³⁷

To say it differently, they will exchange the truth of God for a lie. And then notice how the divine abandonment begins to play itself out in verse four.

"...and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths."³⁸

Now this is very important. Where it says, "Turn away their ears from the truth..."³⁹ that is in the active voice. That means this is a deliberate, conscious choice to reject the truth.

But then notice the next phrase .

"...and will turn aside to myths."⁴⁰ That is in the passive voice. That means that the subject receives the action. Literally it says that they shall be turned unto fables.

So the point is when you hear the truth and you say, "I don't like that. I want nothing to do with that," then the lies are going to take you over. What it is saying here is the turning away is voluntary and the turning aside is involuntary, another example of the wrath of divine abandonment. When a man deliberately rejects the truth of God he becomes vulnerable to Satan's deceptions, deceptions that will overtake him and make him a slave to those lies, lies that he has unwittingly embraced.

Another example, I will just mention it in passing, Romans 12:2. We are told, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."⁴¹

³⁶ 2 Timothy 4:3.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ 2 Timothy 4:4.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Romans 12:2.

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“And do not be conformed,”⁴² in the passive voice once again. It is literally telling us there that you are not to let the world fashion you into its likeness without you realizing that it is happening.

Let me give you an example of that. You go to a church where the Word of God is consistently ignored, where it is not taught, where people become undiscerning, where unbelievers begin to fill the place and little by little people will begin to think things that are not consistent with truth, but consistent with a lie. Before you know it, that church becomes like the world. Why? Because they have rejected the truth and they have been turned over to the myths.

Another example, you let your children watch enough television and they are going to begin to look like the world. They are going to begin to talk like the world. They are going to act like the world. They are going to fall more deeply in love with the world.

Scripture is very clear, 1 John 2:16. The world is characterized by “the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh and the boastful pride of life.”⁴³

Again, you let you kids watch enough television and you are going to see those things manifested in them. Why? Because the world takes them over, squeezes them into its mold. They don’t even realize it. It just happens.

“If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”⁴⁴

Christians, be warned. And dear homosexual friend, whether you are a man or a woman listening to me today. I want you to know of my sincere love for you. And I want you to also know that because of Christ there is hope. I want you to know that it is God’s desire for you to be saved by his grace, for you to be radically transformed, for you to be declared righteous because of the righteousness of Christ that can be yours. I want you to know that you can be washed clean from all of your sins by the blood of the Lamb. I want you to know that when this happens you will be immersed into the body of Christ, the true Church that is made up exclusively of sinners saved by grace, ex homosexuals, ex adulterers, ex fornicators, ex thieves, idolaters, swindlers, drunkards, you name it. Come join us by God’s grace. And only then will you truly be gay, because then you will be released from the bondage of sin. You will have supernatural power to gain victory over it. You will have the joy of sins forgiven and you will have the hope of heaven. That is the good news of the gospel.

Let’s pray.

Father, thank you for these eternal truths. Cause them to bear much fruit by the power of your Spirit I pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ 1 John 2:16.

⁴⁴ 1 John 2:15.

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