

*"For the wrath of God is revealed."* -Romans 1:18

Last week we read, "The righteousness of God is revealed." We have a parallel statement. The righteousness of God is revealed, and the wrath of God is revealed. The word "revealed" is not super clear for us in the way we use it in our language. To reveal is the same as revelation. It's to reveal a revelation. It's to make something known, to display it, and it's displayed among men. From heaven to men.

This means the wrath of God is operative in the world today. The wrath of God is here, from heaven to men. To nations. To individuals. To families. To churches. To nation states. The wrath of God is not something that is only in the future, in hell. Just like the righteousness of God, the wrath of God is currently being displayed on earth. The righteousness of God and the Gospel is operative in the world, going out as the Gospel, and so too is the wrath of God revealed and operative in the world, simultaneously.

Those are the two revelations of God from heaven: wrath and righteousness. Have you ever had feelings of wrath? It's probably not like God's. Human wrath is when you freak out and beat your kid or punch a hole in the wall. That's not the wrath of God. God doesn't freak out. He's not emotional. His wrath is judicial. It's legal. It's justly deserved. It's not cold and dispassionate; God loves people. God is love. But it is white-hot legal, judicial justice and fury against mankind. When we see wrath, we should not think about anything that people do, when they get upset or they feel like they have been wronged. No, this is just, pure, white-hot fury against anything and everything that is unrighteous and ungodly.

The wrath of God is revealed, and it's from heaven, so that means from the throne room of heaven. From sovereign decree. It's "from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness." Ungodliness is what we usually think of as idolatry, anti-godliness. What does idolatry lead to? It always leads to perversion, immorality, the filthier side of life. It always

begins with turning your back on God and developing new doctrines and new religion and it evolves into grotesque sin.

That's the unholy order. Unrighteousness follows ungodliness. Paul explains how this transpires throughout the rest of the chapter. "The ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" is true of everyone, but he is specifically referring to Gentiles in this verse. Later in chapter two he talks about the Jews. He says "The wrath of God is to the Gentiles," then, "It's also to the Jews. It's the whole world."

He concludes in Romans 3 by saying, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. There is none righteous; no, not one." No one seeks after God. And then he goes on to say, "But God..." So he makes his whole case about why the world needs a savior and needs the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which he unfolds throughout the whole book. He starts with the Gentiles, who are receiving the wrath of God.

Our world cries for justice, doesn't it? Well, this is justice. The world may not know what they're asking for. When you demand justice, you'd better be sure you're going to be wrapped up in the mix. You can claim to be the victim and you can point the finger all day long, but the Bible says sin originates in the heart. Sin doesn't originate out there. Temptation is out there, trial is out there, but sin starts in the heart. It's when temptation meets the sin in the heart that it conceives and brings forth the little baby child of sin. That's what James teaches us.

So when we demand justice and we want justice *now*, we need to remember what we're talking about is wrath. If the world would have immediate justice right now, it would all be a parking lot. That's why we need the Gospel of Jesus Christ, where Jesus takes on the wrath of God on the cross as a substitute for us so that we can forgive and reconcile and work towards peace on earth.

Three main reasons why God judges nations are unrequited bloodshed, sexual immorality, and apostasy. That's why he judged Edom and Moab and all the other nations, and our nation ticks off all three. Unrequited bloodshed is when bloodshed isn't answered with justice. Apostasy is turning your back on the truth.

I say often that our nation is under judgment right now. God's judgment is not total yet, thank God. It's not the end of human history. It's not the final judgment yet. But his judgment is being revealed. God sends a plague and panic as judgment, or a chaotic political landscape. I think it's clear that our nation has rejected the truth of God's Word.

And if you reject truth long enough, God eventually is like, "Oh, you don't want truth. Okay, you don't even get to know anything now. You don't even get to know what a boy is. You don't even get to know statistics without it being twisted into some kind of political mind-bending game. You don't get to know anything." You get 75 versions of the simplest of facts. I think that's what we're experiencing, for sure.

Later in the passage Paul says that God gives them over to their lusts, to perversion, to do unnatural things. When Jesus came to earth, he said, "Behold the year of the Lord's favor" to the synagogue in Nazareth. "The blind receive sight, good news for the poor and the oppressed and those in bondage to slavery," that's all jubilee language. He's quoting the book of Isaiah, chapter 61, the proclamation of jubilee.

Jubilee was the 50th year. After the seven Sabbaths (seven sevens, 49 years) in the 50th year they would blow the trumpet and everyone would be freed. It's an amazing concept. All debts were released. The contracts of bond slaves ended at jubilee, setting them free. God said his people would not go back into slavery. At that time, everyone's property would go back to the original families that God had assigned it to.

The point that I'm trying to make is that Jesus called that the year of the Lord's favor. That sounds blessed. Young men who didn't have an opportunity for employment or were working for a dowry like Jacob did for Laban would have finished their term, and the trumpets would blow, and it would be liberation.

In the year of the Lord's favor, there were giant family reunions. All the families would come back to the land. And when Jesus says, "Proclaim the release of the captives," that's what he's talking about. It's this huge gathering of his people having been set free to return to the land that God had promised them originally. It's a beautiful metaphor of salvation, of this earth, and of everything in perfect justice and favor.

But then Isaiah says that it's also a day of vengeance. For everyone who refused to believe, for everyone who wouldn't take Jesus, they don't get the Sabbath rest. They don't get the jubilee good news. They don't get the freedom, the liberation. They don't get the spiritual and physical sight and healing. They don't get the benefits of this new kingdom era, which is essentially jubilee for all the peoples.

Say a young man comes to me claiming he's enslaved to debt and covetousness. He's repentant. He's been living a covetous life, and he's turned to Visa as his little god. Visa gets him everything he wants instantly. He supposedly turns rocks into bread with that card. He says, "I have a problem. I repent, but now I'm in tons of debt. What do I need to do?" I would recommend Dave Ramsey, but first, I tell him that he has to get his thinking about provision and property and money and Jesus in order.

I ask if he trusts me, and he says yes, but when I tell him, "The first thing you need to do is tithe," he balks. I don't have 20 years to reteach him everything I've learned, and he just became a Christian last week. It'll take some time for him to come along and see how this works. I tell him, "Tithe. Cut up the credit cards. Jesus says if he sets you free, you are

free indeed, and that means spiritually and that means in every area of life." But he doesn't believe it. He thinks Jesus just deals with inside stuff, invisible things, that he doesn't deal with finances or money or debt. That's not his prerogative. Then what does he get to be? In debt.

He doesn't get the favor. He doesn't believe. I knew a young man who was a miserable workaholic and complained to me about it. I asked him if he'd ever heard of Sabbath and that he shouldn't work on Sunday. "Come to church and worship with the people of God," I said. He said, "I can't. I have too many bills." But I said he can. "But I need more money!" He didn't understand where money came from. He thought money came from his work. No, it comes through his work but from God. He had all his priorities wrong.

The first thing you need to do is rest in the provision of the Lord. He can make bread fall from the sky. When you were two years old, how were you fed? Did you work for it? Did you earn it? Did you pay for it? No. Did you still get fed? Every day. Probably all the way up until about 15 or 16 when you finally had to get a part-time job. Everything is given to you for free until then. But then you turn 18, and you suddenly have to do it on your own. Have you forgotten your entire childhood, in which you didn't do anything on your own? You didn't learn the lesson. Trust God, Sabbath, tithe, rest.

The miserable young man wouldn't believe me. He thought I was trying to pull some sort of a power trip on him to make him go to church on Sundays. I said, "It's not for me. It's for you. Life goes on whether you come or go. I'm trying to help you." But he talked to somebody else and they said he didn't have to go to church on Sundays. He could be with God in the fishing boat or on the internet. I said, "That's not true." He wouldn't believe me. Guess what? He's still working like a dog. He's a slave. He's a slave to Visa, he's a slave to his lusts, he's a slave to banks, he's a slave to corporate headquarters. Slave, slave, slave. Working like a dog and he's got no property, because slaves don't get to have property.

I think that is, on an individual level, God's judgment. A nation that rejects the blessings of God, the favor of the Lord, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ is a whole nation under God's judgment. Not total judgment, but judgment nonetheless. Not blessings, but curses. "He rules the nations with a rod of iron" (Revelations 2:27). That's not for politely petting. Psalm 2 says, "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way."

When you have kings and presidents and politicians like our country's had for the last decades who reject the righteousness of God, who reject the law of God, who reject Jesus, who do not believe they need to submit to King Jesus (and I mean *all* of them), you have a nation that is in rebellion against God and you can expect judgment.

Proverbs says "A righteousness exalts a people, but sin is a reproach to any people." That's nation, church, family, individual. The wrath of God is revealed. There are blessings in this life right now, and there are curses for those who reject him, don't trust him, and don't walk in his statutes. Have you learned that in your life? Have you felt any blessings after obeying him and trusting his way? Of course. Does that mean you're not going to suffer trial? No. But it means that the trial is used for good. All things are used for good (Romans 8:28).

Does it mean that wicked people don't get rich sometimes? They do, but their riches corrupt them, and they don't get to enjoy them. And the rust eats their soul as James says. It's hyperbole. "The moth and the rust that doth corrupt," the King James says in Matthew 6. It corrupts their soul. Have you ever known a rich man that had all the money in the world but could never enjoy any of it? That's a form of judgment.

"The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who *by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.*" Have you ever tried to hold a beachball under water? You have to

maintain active suppression, because as soon as you let go, it bursts out. That's like the truth, the truth that is obvious from the things that God has made, the truth of the Scripture, especially if you live in America. There's Bibles everywhere. The truth of God's Word is out there.

But men in their unrighteousness hate the light, because their deeds are evil, and they actively suppress the truth (John 3). A lack of education is not the problem. The will needs to be regenerated by the spirit of God. There are two categories of truth that they're suppressing: God's Word, which is special revelation, and God's Creation, nature, through which God reveals his character, "the invisible attributes of God by the things which are made" (Romans 1:20).

They know what boys are. They know what girls are. They suppress that truth. They say there are no boys and there are no girls; don't be a feminist or don't be a chauvinist. They know they can't have it both ways. They are suppressing the truth of nature. You don't even have to have a Bible to know the difference between a boy and a girl. Every culture on the planet has known the difference, since the dawn of time. We're the first to go this far in our rebellion.

My family lives on a small farm, and my kids know the difference between boys and girls. They say, "Daddy, it doesn't work that way," when the male ducks try to mate with other males. You don't have to have the Bible to know these things, but people suppress it. And they suppress the truth of the Bible, too.

If you were to go back to the 40s and 50s, maybe 60s and 70s too, you would see that what was hip and cool was the idea of moral relativism, in which truth is relative. If you download sermons from the 90s, you hear preachers busting on it all the time. "Truth isn't relative; it's absolute. Things aren't just subjective. Something is either good or bad. True or false." But secular philosophers throughout the late 1800s, the Enlightenment philosophers, began to teach this idea that goodness is

relative, truth is relative, and beauty is relative. When I say that a piece of art is beautiful or sublime, these moral relativists would say what I'm actually saying is "It makes me feel sublime," that it's not objectively sublime.

They began to reject this idea of a natural order, of obvious truth that everyone can see even without the Bible. Paul says in Romans 2:14 that "the Gentiles who do not have the law yet do the things of the law demonstrate that they have the law within their heart." That's why Aristotle knew murder was wrong. That's why Aquinas knew it, Plato knew it, Confucius knew it. All the teachers of Daoism and Taoism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism all over the world, everyone understood adultery is wrong, marriage is for a man and woman, and murder is wrong.

There is a universal moral law, or moral revelation, that people just know. This was common knowledge. When our founding fathers wrote out the constitution, what did they say? "These truths are self-evident." There's a lot of things that are self-evident. You don't need to have met Jesus to know them: life, liberty, property, the pursuit of happiness, the dignity of man. These things are self-evident. We all have that knowledge.

Enlightenment thinkers began to teach these things were actually relative, that there is no universal order, because Charles Darwin made popular, again (it's an ancient pagan myth), the idea of evolution from a single-celled organism, not by guidance of a sovereign God, not for the purposes of a sovereign God, not ordered by a sovereign God, but just chance and time.

If you have chance and time evolving, can you have a universal moral order? You cannot. Can you have an objective truth, goodness, and beauty? You cannot. So as their worldview became more evolutionary, they began to say that it's all subjective, it's all relative. And they began



to try to live that way. "Question everything," they would say. Mankind can't live that way. We can't hang things in air. We have to have a hook at the end of the day. We have to have truth. We have to have a standard to live by.

Today, relativism is fading away and a new law, a new fundamentalism, is taking its place. The new law is anti-Christ, anti- God's Word. Justice is injustice. Love is hate. Boy is androgynous unisex being. And if you say otherwise, you are excommunicated. You're a bad person. You're unloving. You're unjust. The relativism of the Enlightenment, of modernism, is fading away and a new totalitarianism is being established in our society. A new law, a new theocracy.

The only people who the new theocracy is going to hit head-on are the people who say, "No, there's another law. There's another Lord." Those people will collide with this new totalitarianism. And I don't think it's going to be persecution at first. I think it's going to be discipline of the Church first, and perhaps later, after we repent, persecution. That is what's taking place in our country. All this to say, there is a truth revealed in nature that they are suppressing.

Does everyone suppress all truth at all times? No, we're not demons or devils. Everybody suppresses different truths at different times depending on where it threatens our will or what you think is the good life. Our founding fathers believed in this moral law that is self-evident. But there's a big self-evident truth that they suppressed, that slavery was wrong. We look back at that and we think they were bad people.

But what about us today? There are different things that are being suppressed, like sanctity of life. We're like, "Guys, you can't murder babies! You can't do that. You can't vacuum babies out." And they make up all sorts of justifications for this new law. They suppress this truth because their religion believes in radical egalitarianism, the removal of all hierarchy in the family. They want men and women to be equal and

for men and women to be equal. They both have to have equal footing in the career world, and so they have to have access to health care to make sure they level the playing field and equalize the family sphere, which in turn empowers the state sphere.

Every feminist, every young girl who thinks that they're loving and they're trying to do the right thing but they're stumping for feminists or they're running interference for them don't understand the game that's being played on them. They're being played, and the game is egalitarianism, to remove the power and organization of the family sphere that God designed to then empower the state. Abortion is essential to do that, because a woman doesn't have the same ability to enter the job force and be independent when they have a baby. They have to have this abortion sacrament to be able to carry out their egalitarian agenda.

Why are we suppressing the obvious truth? Because it goes against our will. This is the problem; the wrath of God is revealed on the nations of man, because they have the truth. Obviously, they knew slavery was wrong. They know abortion is wrong. They're suppressing those truths, and therefore they get wrath. Why are they suppressing it? Because at some points this moral law conflicts with their agenda. Not at all points. Nobody is totally evil. On one hand, they would say, "Don't murder," so they uphold that law. But they say it's okay to murder in this specific sphere.

They just have different versions of suppression. These guys suppress this, these guys suppress that, and the Christians are pretty simple and confused these days. That's why we're getting disciplined. But we have not only the moral law, truth, goodness, and beauty, but also the Bible, which interprets it all for us. I can only have this conversation because I have what the Bible says about the natural world and truth.

Verse 19, "For what can be known about God is *plain*." It's clear. It's obvious. You don't need a Master's degree. Babies know it. Children know

it. Out of the mouths of babes comes common sense stuff about God all the time. "For what can be known about God is plain to them." How is it plain? God has shown it to them through his creation. The creation is a display, it is a revealing, a demonstration of God in the physical realm so that we might know him.

He lives in another reality by truth, goodness, and beauty, and that's invisible to us, but he demonstrates what he's like to us by truth, goodness, and beauty in nature. Also, our heart, our consciences, our sense of love and justice, all of these things throughout all of nature are making plain what God's really like. That doesn't mean anybody and everybody can see it if they just make a decision to. You need to be regenerated by the spirit of God. You need to be born again. You need to be given eyes to see so your will is converted and you stop suppressing the truth and let God be God.

"For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived." Perceived means they mentally understand it. They really do get it; that's why they foam at the mouth when you threaten the thing that they suppress. That's why when you step on toes they freak out so much. They know. They're sensitive about it. They're triggered.

"Ever since the creation of the world in the things that have been made." The world is a masterpiece. It is art that is messaging to us, signifying meaning, communicating God and the character of God. This is why I think the earth is young. It may look really old. I know what it looks like. But you have to understand the purpose of the creation. I'm not deciding based on what geologists tell me. I don't trust modern day experts. They're not even sure what boys and girls are, much less how old a rock is.

They might be right with whatever they think, but I don't have total certainty in the opinions of men. The way I see it is that the earth is

created as a display of the character of God, and therefore it must be beautiful, magnificent, fully developed. The idea of God creating an amino acid and over billions of years it slowly turns into something, that does not fit this purpose.

You wouldn't even create something so boring. If you wanted to sign your name off, if you wanted to tell people what you were really like, an amino acid? That's an ancient pagan myth. I believe God said, "This is what I am. This is what I'm like," kapow, an explosion of creation. And now everything works in perfect order and symmetry and beauty in ways that you can not make up. I think of the perfect ecosystems. It's more complex than an automobile engine. It's more beautiful than any of the greatest paintings, because it was made miraculously by God's Word as a display of who he is, which means that when we suppress the truth that we clearly know, we deserve more wrath.

"So they are *without excuse*." This is tough, but legally there is no excuse. The Bible says that every man, when he stands before God in judgment, his mouth will be shut. It means there will be no extenuating circumstances. There will be no defense. You won't be able to blame other people. You won't be able to blame your surroundings. You won't even be able to blame the various parts of yourself that you always blame. We think we're made up of three different parts. "Oh, I was hungry. It was my stomach." No, it's you. "Oh, my chemicals are off." No, that's you. Sin starts in the heart. You keep blaming other parts of you. Nobody gets away with, "No, that was my hand. That was my fist. It has a mind of its own."

We are whole beings. It's a Greco-Roman idea that there's these different parts of us, and what we love to do is say that deep down we're good. "God knows my heart. It's these rotten fists. It's these messed up chemicals. It's because I'm sick. It's because somebody did something bad to me when I was a kid." Those are temptations, perhaps, but that's not an extenuating circumstance. You're not a victim. Sin is down there in the

heart, and no matter who you are, when you stand before God, either you're going to get the wrath or Jesus got the wrath on your behalf on the cross of Calvary.

We don't do anybody any favors by letting them off the hook, saying, "Somebody did something to your mama, treated you wrong when you were a child." I'm not saying people don't get treated badly; of course they do. But that's not a viable excuse before the court of God. You still have sin in your heart, and you're still responsible to do the right thing yourself. They didn't make you do it. Nobody made you do it. You did it yourself.

"They are without excuse, for although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him." Our nation, if you think of our nation corporately, knows God, but refuses to honor him or give thanks to him.

"They became futile in their thinking." That means there's mental effects. When you reject Jesus, to put it plainly, you get dumber. Sin makes you dumb. Have you ever met a man with a beautiful wife, great children, and a great life, and he goes off and is a slave to his hormones? You think, "How dumb can you be?" Then you think, "Well, I'd probably be that dumb. I'd better watch myself."

Sin makes you do dumb things. You become a fallacy factory. You swallow every single fallacy. You become a sucker, a sucker for every lie, every little play in the book. You become a gullible, useless idiot when your thinking is futile. You're ready to believe anything and everything as long as it confirms your bias and promotes your agenda against God. Have you ever met someone like that? They're just living against God and any little thing that would confirm that bias, they swallow it up.

"Their foolish hearts were darkened" as well. There's mental effects, but also they become darkened and depraved in their behavior. "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." When you stop honoring and thanking God, what happens? As soon as you're not honoring and thanking him, you're doing the great exchange, and it means you're honoring and thanking something else. There's no neutral space. There's no buffer between worshipping God and idolatry. You can't stay somewhere in the middle.

Our nation is either honoring and thanking God or worshipping idols. That's true of a nation, that's true of a church, a family, and every single individual on the planet. You're either worshipping King Jesus or an idol. There's no middle space. There's no "good people." Now, there are good people in the common use of the word, but everybody is either honoring and thanking God or exchanging the glory of God for some other idol.

Paul lists some things that are strange to our modern eyes. He says they're exchanging the glory of God for "images resembling man, birds, animals, and creeping things." Do you know anyone who has a statue of a creeping thing on their mantle and they bow down to it? In that time, when he thought of the Gentiles, that's what it looked like. That's what pre-Christian pagan idolatry looked like.

Every one of our ancestors at one point was half-naked, painted, murdering people for the slightest offense, getting on ships, going into villages, raping, and pillaging. We all come from Gentile hordes, unless you're a Jew, and their history isn't perfect either. We all are condemned. We all need the glory of God. But in that day and age, all the Gentile nations were doing this. What we might think of as a savage in the jungle or a Native American in a jungle worshipping buffalo or something like that, that's how everyone was in the whole world whenever Jesus came. The whole world was involved in paganism and animism.

Are these cases of mistaken identity? No. It's exchanging the glory of God for a created being. But we live in a post-Christian world in which everyone's a little bit more sophisticated. Everybody now knows you don't worship animals, but we still have idols. More sophisticated idols, perhaps. More religious, dressed up idols. Idols like money, sex, power, romance, entertainment, collective man, the State, etc. Anything you turn to for victory, for deliverance, for escape. It could even be the self. At the end of the day, it is.

Escape is a pagan concept of salvation. Whatever will provide escape from your problems, whether it be drugs or whiskey or meds or a boy that will get you out of that house, is an idol. Whatever promises you total security in the midst of all your troubles, that you'll have all your bills paid, pantries and refrigerators full of food, a closet full of clothes, and everything taken care of for you, whether it be your job or the government, is also an idol. Anything promising you security or escape is an idol.

But there is one God who promises more than escape and security. Our God promises us victory. Our God promises not just that we escape our problems, but that we have victory through them, to more than conquer them. Our God doesn't just promise us security. He gives us freedom. We get to have freedom *and* victory over our problems.

It's like when a momma bird sends her young out. They don't stay in the nest, getting everything they need from their momma from the rest of their lives. When God saves us, we don't become lab animals that get their one little pellet every day, that don't have to work, that don't have to explore. We become real humans. We begin to exercise dominion. We begin to experience victory and learn to be like Jesus in many ways.

An idol makes promises that it can't deliver. The devil always writes checks that he can't cash, because it's bait. It's not real. It's an illusion, a mirage. An idol always promises security but it can't give security. God

won't let it. The idols of this world are blind, deaf, and dumb. They promise escape, but the person who grabs hold of a bottle of whiskey to escape, do they ever escape? What about with drugs? They never escape. Have you ever met one addict that's better? I haven't. They look to that as an idol. "This will give me escape. This will fix my problems."

This is also true of anybody who turns to the government for security in all things. "They'll keep me safe. They'll keep me healthy and whole. They'll keep food on my table. They'll be my momma, my daddy, my grandma, and my grandpa. They'll be everything for me. They'll take care of my kids, take care of my retirement. They'll even bury me." Anybody who thinks this way, are they happy? Only as long as the Netflix keeps coming.

But eventually they get tired of Netflix and they start beating down doors. They have a welfare mindset. Never content, always entitled, everyone else is at fault, and they're always looking for other people to fix their problems. They turn to the idol, like money, and they get a bunch of money, but they're not happy. They don't even have time to spend it. It never delivers. And then what comes next? What always comes next is self-pity and anger as they lash out against the world. They freak out, they flail, and they revolt.

This is pagan religion. Pagan religion always turns to alternate saviors that promises acolytes security and escape. They don't ever get it. And eventually they say, "We need to just burn the whole thing down. We need to revolt." I read something along the lines of "When kids are no longer content with the movies and the sports, they're going to start burning things down." It's been happening since the 60s, because the false gods, or false idols, can't deliver. The only one who can deliver victory in this life is Jesus Christ. He's the only one brings contentment and victory in the midst of trial.



This is what's taking place in our nation: we are exchanging the glory of the immortal God for images of man, or collective man. "We will build a better tomorrow. We will make America great. We will, with the strength of our own hands, build a future that we can all believe in. Hope, freedom, change... liberté, égalité, fraternité!" That's the cry of the French revolution. This is humanist man and his attempts at partnering with idols, with collective state, to regain paradise. This is always a delusion. It always leads to burning the whole place down. It leads to revolution and anger. All of that is what Paul's talking about when he says "exchanging the glory of God for the image of man."

But then what happens once you turn to idolatry? After idolatry comes perversion. A man sells out his family for money. All the pastors know what's coming next. A woman sells out her family for her ambitions, we know what's about to happen. it's just a matter of time. A young man has impressed by his professors' syllogisms and decides he doesn't believe in Jesus anymore, but science... we all know what's about to happen. Idolatry begins, and it's all very white collar. It's sophisticated. But pretty soon it devolves into sexual immorality, all manner of perversion and debauchery, theft, embezzlement. It always gets ugly.

And if that train isn't restrained by God or the cops or whoever, it just keeps on rolling. That's the procession. "Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity" (verse 24). If you want to worship animals, you become an animal. If you want to worship blind, deaf, and dumb gods, it's what you will become. He turns you over to impurity. He no longer restrains you from being as bad as you could be.

"To the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator who is blessed forever." He goes on to describe homosexuality and other manners of sexual perversion. These things are commonplace in pagan societies. This is where it all eventually leads. Does it sound familiar? This is a description of what is taking place

in our nation as the truth of God's Word is being rejected and suppressed and we are instead turning to idols to save us.

The number one idol today is the State, and that goes for everybody. Why do you think we fight over who's going to be president so violently? Because the head of the Executive Branch has the power to carry out executive orders, to change this society for better, to liberate us, or to "make us great again." We all have this deep inside our DNA, this worship of the collective man, of the State. "The messianic state" is what it's been called for hundreds of years by Puritans and other wise Christian leaders. It's Caesar. "Caesar is Lord." *Kaiser kurios*. The Church has been fighting this spirit of state worship for thousands of years.

We're turning to the State, we're becoming androgynous, rejecting male-female, embracing homosexuality, which leads to no more fruit, no more offspring, barrenness, and our whole society's degenerating and slowing to a grinding halt. And it's because God has turned us over. So the wrath of God is revealed in the United States. If you understand Romans 1, you can see what's taking place in our nation as a whole.

So what's the only solution? It's what we read earlier in the chapter. "The righteousness of God has been revealed." It's a righteousness that comes not by works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, and when someone receives the righteousness of Christ and believe the Gospel, they have the power of God unto salvation so that they can actually change, so that they can experience true victory. That goes for an individual or a family or a nation.

The only way back is for the heads of the households to the heads of the Church, from the father to the pastors to the elders, to begin to proclaim God's Word, to say, "We don't want your meddling, your messianic salvation. Get out of our business. We follow Jesus Christ." The only way is to repent of our idolatries, to repent of our state worship, our whiskey worship, our drug worship, our worship of sex, money, materialism,

whatever it is, and to say, "In this household we follow Jesus. In this church, we follow Jesus." And then, hopefully, as judgment continues to pour on our nation, we might be able to experience some respite as God blesses us in the midst of a degrading culture. I think that's our best shot.