

¹⁸For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. ¹⁹For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. ²⁰For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world,^[a] in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

(Diseased mind is the first sign. It's both a symptom of the terminal illness of sin and it's also a sign of the wrath of God against sin and sinners. Sin makes you stupid.)

²¹For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²²Claiming to be wise, they became fools, ²³and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

(Diseased worship is the second symptom. What is an idol? It is anything more important to you than God, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, anything you seek to give you what only God can give...An idol is whatever you look at and say, in your heart of hearts, "If I have that, then I'll feel my life has meaning, then I'll know I have value, then I'll feel significant and secure." There are many ways to describe that kind of relationship to something, but perhaps the best one is worship.)

²⁴Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, ²⁵because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

(Diseased relationships, fundamentally the marriage, is the third sign of God's wrath falling on those who refuse to repent of their sin. For Paul, in his day, he describes this sinful disease of the family in terms of sexuality, which is below and we'll get into it next week. Back to page 2.)

Doctors can be insensitive at times. They can be bearers of terrible news. And it can be very disturbing to get news about a bad diagnosis. There are ways to break bad news that aren't so bad. For instance:

I have great news. Science has just found cure for one of the most terrible cancers known to mankind! And we are going to get to try that cure on you!

This is what the apostle Paul does in Romans 1. Before he gets to the bad news, he gives the cure and makes sure we know it's going to work not just for us, but for anyone who trusts in Christ's promises.

The gospel is the cure for the greatest threat to humanity—proud unbelief. Unrepentant sin. And this universal corona virus has settled into the Gentile world, the Romans of Paul's day, and has manifested itself in certain cultural symptoms. It has infected their minds, infected their worship, even infected their bedrooms. Their institutions of education, religion and their homes (particularly their bedrooms) have been corrupted by the cancer of unrepentant sin, and they aren't even sorry.

Paul wanted his friends in Rome to understand that the Gospel of Jesus Christ, that the right standing of Jesus could be given to us, and our sins could be given to him, and we could therefore be rescued from the wrath of God upon sin and sinners. All who trust in Jesus, Jew or Gentile, could be healed of their diseased minds, their diseased worship, and their diseased relationships.

Knowing how upsetting it could be to hear how bad the prognosis is, he first gives the gospel, the holy cure and the only cure that once and for all, rescues sinners from the eternal death penalty for sin. Let's look at the text. (Go back to text on P. 1)

(Now back here from end of commentary on P. 1) The good news is that Jesus Christ promises to rescue us from these ugly, debilitating effects of sin. More importantly, he promises to rescue us from the wrath of God, which is the just response of a holy God to those who refuse his cure.

It's not that God just has the cure, but he's powerful enough to get it to us (v. 20).

It's not just that God has the cure, but we are the ones he gives it to (15-17).

It's not just that God has the cure, but it's free! (vs 5)

And it's not just that God has the cure, but it empowers us so that we can live out our justification, God's gift of Christ's righteousness. (16)

And we can live out our justification in a way that pleases him (17).

Even our struggles with sins of the mind, our idolatry, and our sins of the flesh cannot stop Jesus' cure. What shall we say, that our sins are so bad that Jesus cannot save us? Maybe if he hadn't fulfilled 50 prophecies and risen from the grave and given us his inerrant Word and his Holy Spirit, maybe I'd doubt his promises. But I believe he's worthy to be trusted, amen? That means that neither height nor depth nor things present nor things past, angels, demons, or any created thing (which includes you and me) cannot separate us from the redeeming love of Jesus, our Lord. And in that love we stand healed and ready to serve. Let us pray.

PRAYER:

Thanks this bottomless well of the gospel, the cure and promise that keeps on giving.