

# Prone to Hate

*Lord's Day 2*

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**Bible Text:** Romans 1:22,23

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Let's turn in our Bibles now to Romans 1. We read from verse 16 to the end of the chapter.

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; 19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: 21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: 25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.

28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; 29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: 32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

That far we read in God's holy inspired word. May God bless that to our hearts.

Before we turn to the catechism, we read from Scripture Romans 1:22 and 23.

22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

In connection with that passage and that passage we read in Romans 1 that we treat and the truth of Scripture summarized in Lord's Day 2, questions and answers 3 through 5. I'll read those.

Question 3

Whence knowest thou thy misery?

Answer

Out of the law of God.

Question 4

What doth the law of God require of us?

Answer

Christ teaches us that briefly, Matthew 22:37-40, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and will all thy strength. This is the first and the great commandment; and the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

Question 5

Canst thou keep all these things perfectly?

Answer

In no wise; for I am prone by nature to hate God and my neighbor.

Beloved congregation in our Lord Jesus Christ, as God's children we carry within us because of God's work of grace, a threefold knowledge, the knowledge that I am a sinner who deserves to be cast into hell so that we cry out, "Lord, be merciful to me, the sinner." The knowledge that Jesus Christ suffered the curse in my place so that we hear God's declaration to us, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." And the knowledge of the thankfulness that we owe to God for delivering us, "What shall I render?" we say, "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits to me?"

When God saves us, he puts that threefold knowledge in our hearts so that we carry it wherever we go. When we drive to work in the morning and turn on the radio. When we do the laundry and clean the bathroom for the umpteenth time. When you wake up in the middle of the night, you feed a hungry baby. When you sit down to do homework. Or in more critical circumstances, when you face a crisis in life, whether a crisis in the home, a crisis as regards your health, a crisis as regards your finances. Whenever we face a crisis, we carry also that threefold knowledge of guilt, of God's grace and gratitude. If we are to die and if we are to live in true blessedness, we need that threefold knowledge.

The first part of that knowledge is the knowledge of our misery so the catechism begins to deal in this Lord's Day with the first part of the catechism concerning the misery of man. If we don't have the knowledge of our misery, we would never even look for salvation and then we could never be thankful. We would never look to Jesus Christ to cover over our sins if we didn't know our sins and sinfulness and the punishment that we deserve. If God did not reveal to us his wrath against all ungodliness and unrighteousness, then we would not look for the righteousness that God gives in Jesus Christ. We would not look for that covering. Where do we learn about God's wrath? Where do we learn about that misery that is ours by nature apart from Jesus Christ? The catechism answers: In the law. In the law of God. And what does the law reveal to us? That we are prone by nature to hate God and our neighbor.

So we want to consider that truth in the light of Romans 1 this morning that we are prone to hate. Prone to hate. One note in the first place: our hatred toward God and then our hatred toward the neighbor and lastly the conclusion that our only Savior must be Jesus Christ. Prone to hate. Our hatred toward God, the neighbor and then looking at our only Savior. If somebody asked you this morning, "Do you hate God?" I think our response would be one of surprise, "Me hate God?" And if we didn't give it much thought and if we didn't have God's word to teach us, I think most of us would answer, "No," because we tend to think pretty highly of ourselves. But you and I, beloved, need to reaffirm this morning that by nature we are prone to hate God. The natural man, of course, will never say that about himself, only the sinner convicted by God's grace will make that confession.

Then notice the catechism when it asks the question, question and answer 5, it does not say, "Do you keep all these things perfectly?" but it says, "Can you? Canst thou keep all these things perfectly?" And we answer by God's grace, "In no wise." That is to say, we confess we don't even have the ability. Not even the theoretical ability in ourselves to keep those things which God commands us. We were created to love but instead we hate.

Where do we learn that? Where do we learn that? Certainly not from the world. We are exposed to all kinds of ideas from the world and some very subtle, some not so subtle but we are immersed in the messages of the world so that there is a real danger that we adopt the ideas of the world as regards hatred and love. The world loves to talk about that, to talk about hatred and to talk about love. They will say things like, "You need to love yourself. First and foremost, you are number 1." The world will say that adultery and fornication and homosexual marriage is love. Free love they call it. You may love whomever you want to love and you may love them however you want to love them. The world say, "Love your children by letting them do what they want. Let them make their own decisions." But then if you discipline your children, well, that's hatred then. That's abuse. And now there are laws covering hate crimes and hate speech, including provisions that give special rights to those with alternative sexual preferences and if we righteously condemn those sins, if we point to Scripture and say that is wicked, well, that's hatred then. That's hate speech. That's intolerance. So the world calls what is hatred they call love and what is, in fact, love they call hatred. Listen to the words of Isaiah 5:20 that so describes society today and the wicked throughout the ages. "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!"

Romans 1 describes that hatred towards God. Romans 1:30 speaks and calls these wicked by that term, "haters of God." How do they manifest hatred towards God? Well, that section we read begins with idolatry. Hatred shows itself in the first place in the pursuit of idols. Whether someone is a highly educated philosopher, an evolutionary biologist or an uneducated pygmy, everyone knows, everyone knows that God is the Creator. They see God's eternal power reflected in creation. They know that God must be served. Romans 1:19, "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them." You see, what Romans is saying, "They know. They deny it. They say otherwise but deep down they know." Verse 20, "For the invisible things of him," that is the invisible things of God, "from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." God's works clearly display the invisible qualities so that no one has an excuse. No one can say, "I didn't know there was a God."

But what does fallen man do with that knowledge? Do they bow before God in humility? In adoration? Do they give glory to God? Are they thankful to God? Just the opposite. Romans 1:21, "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful." Instead of glorifying and worshiping God, fallen man, what does he do? He makes idols and those idols are not an effort to lead them to God, that's not their intent in setting up idols. It's not an effort to find the true God. Idols are man-made substitutes intended to suppress the truth about God. Idols are invented as means to set up gods that are according to our own pleasure. "What kind of god do I want to serve?" That's the kind of idol I make. Those idols might be made of silver and gold. They might be made in the shape of men or eagles or bulls or scorpions.

So we read in Romans 1:21, the second half, "they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." That's a very interesting word used at the end of that verse. They became fools. That same word is used by Jesus when he talks about the salt that had lost its savor. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became without savor." They lost their savor. They no longer were useful to give glory to God.

Verse 23, "And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God," the glorious God, the righteous God, the holy God, "And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie." All idols are lies. They do not represent God the way he truly is. "And worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen." That's what the apostle is talking about in verse 18 when he says, "they hold the truth in unrighteousness." That is to say, "They hold down the truth. They suppress the truth as much as they can by putting an idol in God's place." They do that because they hate God. They don't want the God that is revealed in Scripture. "Don't tell me about a God who punishes sin, whose wrath is revealed from heaven against my ungodliness and unrighteousness. Don't tell me about that kind of God. Give me a God that will let me live as I please. Who gives me what I want."

Whenever anyone pretends to represent God by a created thing, it is utterly degrading to God. Imagine, children, if someone made an image and they said this is an image of you but it was, in fact, an image of a cockroach? I don't think any of us would be happy with that kind of image. How much more is it the case when the holy and righteous and infinite God, the invisible God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth is represented by a mere creature? That's hatred. To make such an image is to change the truth of God into a lie.

But now, even if we don't make molten images, that doesn't mean we escape the danger of idolatry and hatred towards God. The fact of the matter is, anytime we represent God in a way that is inaccurate, when we represent God in any other way than he has represented himself in his word, we have set up an idol to replace him. Those, for example, who teach that God wants to save all men but that he is powerless to do so until man makes the definitive step, that's a misrepresentation of God. That's hatred of God. To represent him that way, it's hatred against the God who elected us, the God who chose us in eternity unconditionally. There are men in theology who say, "No, God looked upon us and chose us based upon what he saw in us, based upon conditions." I say it's hatred of the Father who elected us, it's hatred of the Son who redeemed us by his precious sacrifice, the Son whose death on the cross certainly purchased our salvation. Not just made salvation possible but actually purchased our salvation. And so too, the Arminian theology is hatred against God. The Spirit, who is grace, is absolutely irresistible in regenerating and saving us. We ourselves fall into that idolatry when we rely upon ourselves to save ourselves, to accomplish our salvation. When we think it's up to us and

that God cannot save us unless we help him, we fall into that same error. Arminianism is hatred of God.

Another idol that men use that men set up as a substitute for God is the idol that denies God's providential rule over all of creation. Man sets up an idol. Deism is an idol. It's an error that denies God's rule in the creation. Deism says God created everything, he winds it up like a clockmaker and then he leaves it to its own chances and circumstances. He is separate from the creation altogether. He does not rule in the creation. That's hatred of God to depict him that way. Deism denies that our God is a loving God who operates in the creation, working all things together for our sakes. Anytime we lose sight of God's providential rule, when we forget that God is operating in our circumstances, we are guilty of that wrong view of God. That's hatred.

Yet another idol that men have set up is the idol of evolutionism in the place of God the Creator. Evolutionism says God didn't create all things, it came about by chance. Creation made itself. There are those who imagine that Scripture's account of the creation in six days some 6,000 years ago, they imagine that God's word concerning the creation is not accurate. We must go to the scientists now to learn how God actually created the heavens and the earth. Science must tell us whether, in fact, there was an Adam and an Eve who ate of the fruit in the garden. That's hatred against God.

Lastly, men make an idol to mention no other idols, there are many, of course, beyond this. Men make an idol when they represent God as a loving God who will save everybody in the end. They represent God as a God whose wrath does not burn against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men as Romans 1 declares, verse 18, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." That's hatred to deny that. They say, "No, we are preaching a God of love," and yet it's hatred against the God who has revealed himself otherwise in his word. Of course, that hatred goes all the way back to the garden when the devil tempted Adam and Eve and Adam and Eve joined in fellowship with the devil. They chose against God and plunged the entire human race into the darkness of sin and the result of that is that by nature the way we are born in Adam, what we inherit from Adam naturally, by natural birth, we inherit corruption. Only corruption.

Every last human being except for Jesus Christ is prone to hate God and his neighbor. We must confess that, beloved. "This morning I am by nature disposed to hate God. I am willing and eager to hate God. I cannot avoid hating God. I am this by nature." "The carnal mind is only enmity against God." When we see that about ourselves, beloved, does that not show the work of God already in our hearts that God would show to us that we are sinners? That we fall short of his righteousness? That's a work of God's grace for him to show us our sins and our sinfulness.

When we hate God, it's inevitable that we hate our neighbor as well. That's the order of Scripture. The Ten Commandments starts out with our duties to our God and then our duties towards our neighbor. Also in this passage that we read, Romans 1 speaks first of our hatred towards God and then our hatred towards the neighbor which is also a

manifestation of hatred against God. Romans 1:18 when it says, "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." Ungodliness is a lack of reverence towards God. There is the hatred towards God. Ungodliness and then unrighteousness, although it includes breaking the laws against that concern our duties to God, it also regards the breaking of God's law concerning our duties to our neighbor. Hatred to God leads to hatred of the neighbor and so we find in the following verses. What is described first? First is described idolatry against God, verses 19 and following. Then, beginning at verse 24 and then also verse 26 and following, the apostle talks about hatred towards the neighbor. One follows the other. They both go together.

When mankind hated God, replacing him with lying idols, what does God do? He gives them over now to all kinds of sins. How is mankind's hatred to his neighbor shown? It is significant that the inspired apostle begins with a discussion of sexual sin. The apostle perhaps started with that because of the prevalence of those sins in that day. He was writing from Corinth which was known for its sexual sins but how descriptive of society also today. Verse 24, "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves." They hated God so God let them follow their own sinful cravings and what that shows is idolatry is connected to immorality. They dishonored their bodies by their practices. They committed fornication and adultery. They divorced. They remarried. That's the first step. But it gets worse.

Verse 26, "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet." Because when people allow themselves to walk in sexual sins, they always graduate to greater and greater debauchery and so when people allow themselves to fulfill their lusts, eventually it leads to homosexuality. The world calls that love. God calls it hatred. It's hatred against God because God has forbidden it but it's hatred against the neighbor because it's using the neighbor. A despicable using of others to fulfill their own lusts. That's not love. And whether or not the other person is a consenting adult, that doesn't change the hatred expressed towards them. It's hatred of people. It's hatred also against God who created us to love. It's hatred against a God who designed one man to love one woman for life.

But that's not the only thing that idolatry leads to, it leads to all sorts of other sins. Verse 28, "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient," that is, things which are shameful. They are not fitting. "Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful." Violating God's laws in every conceivable way, all of them manifestations of hatred. That's hatred. We ourselves are guilty of the same.

Verse 32 goes on, "Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." They know that God is coming to judge. They know that they are worthy to die. They know that they are worthy to experience the eternal death of hell but that doesn't stop them. Not only do they still commit those sins, they have pleasure in them that do them. They consent and agree with those who commit those sins. What an apt description of those who enjoy watching depictions of sin in the movies or on the television.

This is what we do by nature: we hate God and we hate our neighbor and we can do nothing else. When God opens up our eyes, when he is working a work of grace in our hearts, he shows us that about ourselves, "This is the way I am," so that we can say with the apostle that we are haters of God. Since that is the case, the clear implication is and that's the context of Romans 1 as well, we need a Savior. The light that we have within us by nature is only darkness. The wisdom that we have by nature is only foolishness. And how great is that darkness and how great is that foolishness. How foolish then to think that we could stand before God on the judgment day and be justified. That's why the apostle begins this section that we read by boasting in the Gospel. Verse 16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

We are powerless to save ourselves but God is mighty to save all those who call upon him. He is mighty to save those who call upon him because he has already caused them, he has already begun the work in them. When the law reveals the wrath that we deserve for our ungodliness and unrighteousness, the Gospel reveals a righteousness that is from outside of ourselves. Verse 17, "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." The righteousness of God is the righteousness that he provides in Jesus Christ. God accounts that righteousness as ours. It's a righteousness that is revealed from faith to faith. It's a righteousness that is apprehended by faith, not by works but that faith doesn't stand still. It's from faith to faith God causes us to grow in that faith. More and more we recognize, yes, our sins and sinfulness but also the righteousness that God freely gives us.

Though we battle against that hatred of God and our neighbor, it still shows itself. We become weary in our worship of God. We don't love God as we ought. We grumble as the Israelites grumbled. We hate our neighbor. But then God, by his grace, works in us so that we make the confession, "Yes, I am prone to hate God and my neighbor. I need Jesus Christ to cover my sins." That's why we need to know our misery, beloved, so that we would look for righteousness and God's word to you and to me today is to believe in that righteousness, that perfect righteousness which covers over all of our sins. Believe that Christ has made the payment for all of those sins and all of that wickedness that we have committed. Believe and rejoice in that provision. Amen.