

## **Romans 1:24-32** **God Delivers People into Corruption**

Romans chapter 1. We will back up a couple of verses and take verses 24 to 32. He says, **Wherefore**, or *on account of this*, **God also gave them up**, or literally, *gave them over*. This is the first of three times that we are going to find this phrase that God gave people over. Verse 24, verse 26, and verse 28, showing the three stages in which God gives people over to.

### **24) God gave them over to uncleanness in the lusts of their own hearts...**

And the word *lusts* - this particular word it is the only time in the New Testament that it is used because it is specific *lusts of corruption*. It says, **lusts of their own hearts**, different than *lusts of the flesh*, this is *lust of the heart*.

**... to dishonor their own bodies among themselves,**

**25) who changed (or exchanged) the truth of God into the lie, and worshiped and served the creature (or creation) more than the One who Created, who is blessed forever. Amen.**

**26) For this cause (or on account of this and for this reason) God gave them up, (again, gave them over) to vile affections (that is, passions that are dishonorable): for even their women exchanged the natural use to that which is against nature.**

**27) and likewise also the men...**

And I will read the Greek text in verse 26 instead of *women*, it says *females*; and instead of *men* in verse 27, it says *males*. So he is making reference to a sexual make up of both females and males. **For even their females (verse 26) did exchange the natural use for that which is against nature,**

**27) and likewise also the males, leaving the natural use of the woman (or female) being burned (or inflamed) in their lust toward one another, men with men working that which is shameful, and receiving back in themselves the recompense (or reward) of their error, which was necessary.**

**28) And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them up (gave them over - there is the third time) to a reprobate mind, (reprobate means of mind that rejects the things of God). He gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do the things which are not convenient (or proper);**

He now lists in verse 29 five major sins.

**29) having been filled with all unrighteousness, fornication (which is sexual immorality), wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness,**

Found in these thirteen expressions:

**full of envy, murder, debate (or strife), deceit, malignity, (that is, injury to others), whisperers (people who slander behind people's back),**

**30) backbiters** (are people who slander in public to their face), **God-haters, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,**

And then you have a lifestyle listed with verse 31.

**31) without understanding,**

If you are following with the Greek text, all of these words have the alpha privative, they are all listed together in a group.

**31) Without understanding,** That is, *without perception of spiritual things*. They are *without faithfulness*, that is, they are **covenant breakers**, They tell you their word, they will sign a contract, make an agreement, but they break it. **without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful** (unloving and unmerciful):

**32) who while knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do they do the same things, but they take pleasure in,** in fact, the word is *to applaud*, **they applaud those who do them or practice them.**

Beginning at verse 18. Paul began this section. Remember the book of Romans is The Constitution of the Christian faith. As we study the various doctrines of the Christian faith, and as we studied the first hour, remember Paul is saying that he is the one that God has chosen to reveal the mysteries of Christ to. And he is ministering the gospel of Jesus Christ. Not only do we have his writings to check, but the book of Romans is all contained in one document all of the doctrines of the Christian faith.

The first doctrine is condemnation. Not one that people want to study, but it is important that we understand. In verse 18 Paul says, **The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven, right now, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth** (that is, *in suppression*) **and unrighteousness**. They suppress the truth. *Ungodliness* means *a lack of reverence for God*. And *unrighteousness* means *not living in a right way lined up with how God wants*. And these are people who are choosing this way, suppressing the truth of God.

He then spent the rest of the time, verses 19 through 23, telling us that there will not be anybody that will have an excuse that stands before God. That to the Gentiles who were not under the law, who were not raised under the law, to them God uses creation as the means to testify to their hearts. Not the law of the Old Testament, but Creation. And we saw that Paul is stating for us that all of Creation displays the invisible attributes of God, His character and His attributes. That every human being has an insight and have been enlightened at one time or another as to the truth about God. That He exists as God, and His power, and His righteousness displayed in creation. This is to the Gentiles. So that there will not be one person that will have an excuse when they stand before God.

Now, not everybody is going to hear the gospel. But the Bible teaches that every human being has been enlightened by the Spirit of God called *light*. The light has shown into their hearts the truth about God to begin with, and their heart had a response. Either they were

receptive and they were drawn to the light to seek out the gospel, or they resisted the light and walked away. But every single person has been and will be enlightened to God: that He exists; that He is the Almighty, the all-powerful; exactly what His name is; and who He is. If they follow the Light they will be drawn to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

But Paul says there will be those, mostly, who will take this enlightenment and they will suppress it; try to block it out, push it aside. It is always there but they just want to get rid of it, they want to block it out. And for those people who do that, God gives them over to the very things that they worship. Every single human being worships something, even if it is just themselves. But we all have our idols, the very things that we live for, strive for.

In fact, Paul says that people who suppress the truth and live for the lie, they make up their own version of who God is. They make their own gods, some even out of stone or wood. And the psalmist says those who worship them are like them. You become like the one that you worship, or the thing that you worship.

So at verse 24 it introduces to us two judgments. For those who suppress the truth, who want to re-create their own God, their own version of God, God gives them over to two areas. Verses 24 and 25 have to do with judgment, physical judgment, judgment against the physical body. Here is what he says, **On account of this**, that they have made the creature (stone, wood, birds, reptiles) their own gods. **God gives them over in the lusts of their hearts, into uncleanness to dishonor their bodies amongst themselves, who exchange...** And that is the word. Some English texts say *change*, but it is literally the word *exchange*. **They have exchanged the truth of God and they have replaced it with the lie.** Definite article, the lie of Satan. **And they worshiped and served the creature more than the One who created, who is blessed forever.** So God gave them over.

Verse 26, this physical judgment. Since they have chosen a certain way and refuse to submit to the truth of God verse 26 says, that God has given them over unto passions, dishonorable passions. He doesn't say *passion* is wrong, but dishonorable passions. Passions that are used for what God did not intend them for. And then he explains: **that their females exchanged the natural use for that which is against nature: and likewise the males, leaving off the natural use of the female, become inflamed in their lusts toward one another; males among males working that which is shameful and receiving the reward.** *The recompense* is the word for *paycheck*.

We mentioned to you before that Paul all through this letter is mentioning the basic principle that God has placed into life. Galatians chapter 6 verses 7 and 8, a person will reap what they have sown. Believer, nonbeliever, everybody is going to reap what they sow. If we sin, we will reap the consequences. If we sow to the Spirit and submit to the Spirit of God, we will reap the presence and ministry of God. So he says they are going to get payment due.

Now if you think this is a terrible thing for God to do, let me tell you that Leviticus chapter 18 verse 22 talks about this issue of homosexual and lesbian relationships. That all are to be put to death according to Leviticus chapter 18 verse 22. So you can see why this is God

giving people over physically to receive in themselves that reward, the reaping for what they have sown.

And then the mental judgment in verse 28. There is physical judgment to cause people to be given over to corruption. But it says, **According as they did not approve to have God in their knowledge**, verse 28, **God gave them over to a reprobate mind - a rejected mind - to do the things that are not proper**. At the beginning of this, when it says that they did not approve to have God in their knowledge, the word *approve* means *rejection*. The same word for *reprobate*. So when they came to the truth of God they rejected it. They say, "I reject that," and then exchanged the truth of God for a god in their own imaginations that they want to believe in. So God says, "You have rejected the truth, therefore I will give you a reprobate mind." A mind that rejects the truth of God. When you hear it you are going to reject it. Is that what you want?

The same thing that God did with Pharaoh in the Old Testament. He told Moses to go stand before Pharaoh and tell him, "Let My people go." He also told him, "They are not going to let you go." But he goes and he says, "God says, 'Let My people go.'" And Pharaoh hardened his heart, said, "No." So then God hardened Pharaoh's heart. You want a hardened heart, I will give you one.

Is that not interesting that life itself is like a smorgasbord? We make choices and God helps us. You want to live in corruption? I will give you corruption. Whatever your choice is. It is judgment here and now, not just in the afterlife but here now that judgment is taking place now is being revealed from heaven now.

So they did not want, or they rejected to retain God and His knowledge in their minds, so God gave them over to a reprobate mind. A mind that rejects the truth of God. To do those things that are not proper.

But then in verse 29, again, we have the first of three lists that are given to you in the Scriptures. In verse 29, the word *full* is actually what is called a perfect participle. Perfect tense participle means a condition. And it lists five sins that God gives people over to and their condition is that they are full of these sins. Number one. Well, first of all, the word *all* goes with each one of these:

1) First of all, **all unrighteousness**.

It means *not being right with God*. Cannot stand to be do what God wants to line up with what He wants.

2) Secondly **sexual immorality**, full of it.

3) And then the word **wickedness**, or *evil*.

It is the same word used for *Satan*, he is *the evil one*. So everything that belongs to Satan, that is evil, they are now full of.

4) **Covetousness**, which means *having a desire to have more*. Emphasis on *desire*. So we can have a desire to have more than what we have and we think, "Well, I am not going after it, so I am okay." No, it is the desire to have more than what we have.

5) And then lastly the other word for *evil* only in a human sense: **maliciousness**. It is *the desire to do people wrong*, to do people harm. In Job it is used for the word *adversity*. To cause adverse - or cause problems for people.

This is a five stage condition that people have that God gives them over to because they have rejected the truth. But then right in the middle of verse 29 there is the word again: *full*. Now he lists thirteen - this is the second list - these five sins are expressed in thirteen different ways.

1) **Full of envy.**

2) **Full of murder.**

And we already know from Jesus what *murder* is. It is not just going out and killing people. It is having the hatred in your heart.

3) **Strife**, contention. Being a contentious person.

4) **Deceit.**

This word specifically means *to bait people*. So this is a deceptive way of cheating somebody rather than outright robbery.

5) **Evil mindedness.**

That is devising things from an evil frame of mind.

6) **Whisperers.**

These are not people who just go around and whisper, that is not evil. In fact the word whisper here and the word:

7) **back biter** or *slanderer* (the next word) both mean the same thing, except *whisper* means *somebody who gossips or slanders in secret, behind the scenes*. Or secondly, openly slander, in public. Slander people.

8) **God haters.**

Do not like to talk about God, do not want to hear about God.

9) They are **insolent**. That is to say their insulting, verbally attacking other people.

10) They are **proud**.

11) **They are boasters.**

This has to do with flaunting your material possessions in front of people. Boasters. As if that is the standard of success.

12) **Inventors of evil things.**

This would be inventors of ways to hurt other people.

13) **Disobedient to parents.**

It is interesting that this is one of the things that God gives people over to if they reject the truth of God.

Now, all of this leads us to list number three which is in verse 31. In the Greek text these lists are separated out fairly well so we can see that there are three lists. But in verse 31 now, the conclusion or lifestyle that people live who have this condition of being filled with all of this corruption, who have a reprobate mind, and have been given over to corruption. Verse 31 the lifestyle or custom is found in five things.

1) The first one, **Without understanding** is literally *without discernment of spiritual things*. That has been taken away.

2) **Covenant breakers.** They are not faithful. They are not trustworthy. You cannot take their word for anything. Even if they sign a contract, you cannot trust them to keep the contract.

3) **Without natural affection.**

The word affection is *family love*. Without affection for family.

4) Next, which is only found in the Textus Receptus, **They are unforgiving.** They will not forgive people for the wrongs that they do.

5) And lastly, **They are unmerciful.** No mercy. As we used to say, "We take no prisoners." No mercy.

So Paul is listing for us the fact that if you reject the truth of God He gives you over to the corruption that you choose to believe in place of Him and His truth. He gives you over to it. And then when you are filled with the corruption, the full life of corruption, it expresses itself in various ways in your relationships with other people. And the end result is a lifestyle that God is not in your thoughts, you do not understand the things of God, you are a God hater. You have no forgiveness, no mercy, cannot be trusted, because you only live for yourself. Whatever it takes. If I cheat you, it is your fault for being a sucker. You know, how they justify themselves.

But then in verse 32 as we finish out this chapter, Paul says literally, **Who having known the righteous judgment of God...** The text indicates they, while knowing it, they already know the judgment of God.

**...that the ones who are practicing such things are worthy of death.** They know it. And while they retain and they hold this knowledge, **Not only are they doing these things, but also they are approving of and they are applauding the ones who are practicing them.** This is what condemnation is to the Gentile.

Again the word *condemnation* is a judicial term. It is a legal term. It means to hand somebody over for sentence, and the condemnation is the sentence. And in God's law, spiritual law, He reveals His invisible attributes to everyone's heart and mind, enlighten them. And depending upon which way the response goes, if the response goes towards God then He leads them to Jesus Christ. And if the response is to reject truth but make up your own God or your own way of living God gives them over to it, because they will reap what they have sown. If they worship corruption they themselves are going to be corrupted, destroyed. But that is just here. And then there is eternal judgment waiting after this life.

Now in chapter 2 that will start next week, chapter 2 is going to address the Jewish religious person. This is the Gentile who has no religious background, have not been trained according to the Torah, the Jewish law, or all of the Jewish practices. But for the Jew they are convicted by the law.

But it is interesting that there is a statement that Paul is going to make: **that it is the goodness of God that leads people to repentance.** And the word *goodness* is the word *useful*. Very interesting. Everything that God does, even in bringing his judgment now while people are here on the earth is useful. Because even when a person rejects the truth of God and they experience the consequences for their sin, that is useful to bring people to repentance. But as we saw, as the condition continued to get worse, it is because they continue to reject the truth, suppress it, while knowing that the people who practice such things are going to be under God's judgment, they do it anyway. They reap the consequences and they either do not care or just keep right on going. But even God's judgment is useful.

I know I would not want to be in that position, where you stand before God and he says, "Well, you sinned in rejecting My truth and you adopted your own truth about who you think God was." My response, "Why did You not warn me before you got here?" See, God's wrath right now is being experienced. People reap what they sow. Period. And if people experience the judgment here and continue to move on and they do not repent, then their punishment throughout eternity is just a continuation. Only worse. So the way God has things worked out is that even when He reveals His judgment now, His wrath upon corruption and sin now, that is for our advantage. Because God uses that to convict us and we either move further into our sin, or we are convicted and we repent, and judgments of God are useful.

Everything that God does is useful. Even the hardships and the tragedies that He allows to come or He brings into our lives, it is useful. Because our soul might be going in a direction, and God cannot get our attention, and we are stubbornly doing our own thing, but He sees it is going to destroy us. So He brings something into our life to stop us. And we say, "God's not fair." Well, He cares for our soul. We might not, but He does. So He will bring things into our lives and the lives of other people to show us our need for Christ. Make us weak in the flesh so that He is our strength because our natural propensity is to rely on the human resources that we have instead of God. So He takes away the human resources, even our own physical strength, so that we trust Him. It is the goodness of God that leads to repentance.

Next week, we will study from the first eleven verses of chapter 2 where Paul is going to turn and talk to the Jew, the religious person. He has presented the case of how God works with

the Gentile, the nonreligious person. But chapter 2, because by this time he contemplates that the Jewish religious person is reading this and he is going, "Yep, those heathen."

He says in chapter 2 verse 1, **Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whosoever you are that judges: for when you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you the judge you practice the same things.** Heavy. Very heavy. It does not make any difference how religious a person is, every person is a sinner. And we have a tendency to judge our sins that other people are committing because we do not judge ourselves. My sins that you commit I will jump all over you for. But if you commit sins that I do not have a problem with, I will have mercy on you. That is the way it works in the human. We will get into that next week.

Let's close with prayer.