

Crossroads Baptist Church
March 12, 2006 10:00
Romans 1: 24-32
Romans #8

“Signs of the Wrath of God”

I. God's judgment is that He delivers us into the hands of our own desires!

God gave them over in the lust of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. In other words, Paul says that God's judgment against sin involves His delivering us into the hands of our own desires. We see God's hand of judgment against sin, when we see Him withdrawing the restraints in our society against that sin and that sin beginning to work itself out in our conduct individually and corporately. Paul is saying that in and of itself is a judgment against sin.

Consider the issue of abortion. We want the privilege of taking care of mistakes and in so doing, we are destroying our own future. It is not some outside force against America to judge and kill our children. We are doing it to ourselves.

And what Paul is saying is when a human heart says, I rebel against you God, I want to be my own god, I want to do it my own way, then God says, okay, have it your way. And that judicial deliverance, that abandonment into our own desire becomes our own punishment.

Notice here too, Paul's connection between sexual sin and idolatry. Paul was writing this letter to the Romans from Corinth. And Corinth was a famously immoral city. In Paul's time, the idiom 'to act like a Corinthian' meant to act in an immoral way. It was a sailor's port town.

Note that connection between idolatry and immorality. Why? Because if you will not conform your desires to the truth, you will conform the truth to your desires. And thus, there is always an inseparable

connection between idolatry and immorality. Idolatry is simply immorality worked out. And immorality is simply idolatry worked out. Thus, the connection. We either conform desire to truth, or truth to desire.

II. God's judgment is that He permits us to have our idols.

If you don't permit God to be God, then you will make a god and the judgment of God on us is that He will allow that.

First, we want a god that will not poke His nose in our business. Or, we make an idol out of something by vesting all our desire for significance and security and control and comfort in that thing instead of in God.

But we also make idols out of worshipping things that are good, but aren't God. Family, maybe. Family is a wonderful thing. But if you see your ultimate significance and your ultimate safety and your ultimate fulfillment and satisfaction as being vested in a person, your husband, your wife, your children, you have made them an idol.

There are so many other things that can be idols, money, work, power, popularity, wanting to be liked, appearance, food, anything under the sun can be an idol that we put our hope and our dreams in instead of God. And suddenly we have become no less idol worshippers than the human being who goes out and cuts down a tree and comes home and carves it up and sets it on his mantle piece and worships it at night. Because idolatry is placing anything before the one true God. And Paul is saying to us, that is what we need to be saved from, because every human being has a natural inclination to that idolatry.

There is one God. There is no God, but God.

III. God's judgment does not disqualify Him of His glory.

At the end of verse 25, Paul is speaking about our Creator and adds a phrase, He is blessed forever, amen.

And that is exactly the truth that Paul is sharing with you here. God's truth, God's glory, God's blessedness are independent of our assessment. They are independent of our rejection or acceptance of Him. God, in order to be blessed doesn't need to have our approval. God, in order to be true, does not have to have our concurrence.

God's glory is not going to be in the least diminished by my refusal to glorify Him, but, I will never participate in His glory, if I do not glorify Him.

You know it is one of the ironic things, isn't it, I can refuse to glorify God, and it is not going to impinge upon His glory in one iota. But it is going to destroy me. If I refuse to give myself away to Him, I am in the end destroyed, but if I give myself to Him, and I glorify Him, I find that I am made what I was intended to be.

IV. God's judgment is seen in the pervasiveness of sexual perversion in society.

He says once God in His judgment gives us over to unchecked, unclean desires, what results from that is perverted passions. Sexual perversions in which we fling in all directions against God's holy word.

Jim Philip puts it this way: "Man's refusal, even while knowing God, to honor Him as God constitutes a revolt against his own destiny." We're destroying ourselves in other words when we rebel against God.

The pervasive sin in our society does not merely await the judgment of God; it is the judgment of God. Paul is saying, look around Romans. Look around at your society, look around at the sexual perversion.

Then Paul gives us two examples:

A. The complete unnatural practice of lesbianism.

Verse 26. He says, "Let me give you a very good example of this. . . . for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural."

Paul did not say that it was unbiblical, but it was unnatural. The Bible already declares its case against homosexuality in Genesis 19, Judges 19, Leviticus 18 and 20, here in Romans 1 and I Corinthians 6.

But this is against nature.

Hodge comments that women are always the last ones to be swept under in pervasive societal moral degradation. Paul says, look, even your women have fallen prey to this.

Chrysostom said, "When God abandons a person to his own devices, everything is turned upside down."

B. The complete unnatural practice of male homosexuality.

The second example is in verse 27 and he goes to male homosexuality.

Their penalty is the behavior that comes with it. The behavior itself is God's judgment.

And that raises the issue of AIDS. Nothing else has to happen for God's judgment to be revealed. The judgment on the sin is the sin itself. AIDS is just a natural consequence just like cancer, death, and disease is a natural consequence of our sin that Adam and Eve committed.

But Paul continues... don't think these are the only sins. Someone said, Paul is an equal-opportunity critic. Look at verses 28-32. Now he gives a list twenty-one sins.

Unrighteousness, the very first sin in the list, is a general description. It speaks of the rejection of God's standards of righteousness.

Wickedness, delight in wrongdoing is the second thing.

"Full of envy," he says in verse 29. Envy is displeasure aroused by seeing someone with something that we want, and then we begrudge that person for that.

Malice. The desire to harm people. Spite.

Gossips destroying someone's reputation in secrets.

Slanderers, those who destroy people's reputation openly. Haters of God. Not merely ignoring Him, but actually resenting him and working hard to exclude Him from our thoughts and from other's thoughts.

Insolence. Treating others with contempt. Shaming them without mercy. Arrogant. Making unwarranted claims of superiority.

Boastfulness. Bragging about one's self.

Inventors of evil. Being creative in thinking up ways to sin.

Disobedient to parents.

Untrustworthy. Not keeping one's promises or doing one's duties, unreliable, not true to the covenant, unloving without natural affections.

Then in verse 32, he says that when we go beyond, actually participating in sin, but to enjoying it, enjoying in others, encouraging it, and actually advocating it, we are showing the full extent of depravity.

Aaron Burr, the third Vice President of the United States, was reared in a godly home and admonished to accept Christ by his grandfather Jonathan Edwards. But he refused to listen. Instead, he declared that he wanted nothing to do with God and said he wished the Lord would leave him alone. He did achieve a measure of political success in spite of repeated disappointments. But he was also involved in continuous strife, and when he was 48 years old, he killed Alexander Hamilton in a duel. He lived for 32 more years, but through all this time he was unhappy and unproductive. It was during this sad chapter in his life that he declared to a group of friends; "Sixty years ago I told God that

if He would let me alone, I would let Him alone, and God has not bothered about me since." Aaron Burr got what he wanted.