

# A Glory Problem

6.9.24

Message 7

Romans Series

## **Romans 1:18–32 (CSB)**

<sup>18</sup> For God's wrath is revealed from heaven against all godlessness and unrighteousness of people who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth, <sup>19</sup> since what can be known about God is evident among them, because God has shown it to them. <sup>20</sup> For his invisible attributes, that is, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen since the creation of the world, being understood through what he has made. As a result, people are without excuse. <sup>21</sup> For though they knew God, they did not glorify him as God or show gratitude. Instead, their thinking became worthless, and their senseless hearts were darkened. <sup>22</sup> Claiming to be wise, they became fools <sup>23</sup> and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man, birds, four-footed animals, and reptiles.

<sup>24</sup> Therefore God delivered them over in the desires of their hearts to sexual impurity, so that their bodies were degraded among themselves. <sup>25</sup> They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served what has been created instead of the Creator, who is praised forever. Amen.

<sup>26</sup> For this reason God delivered them over to disgraceful passions. Their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. <sup>27</sup> The men in the same way also left natural relations with women and were inflamed in their lust for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their own persons the appropriate penalty of their error.

<sup>28</sup> And because they did not think it worthwhile to acknowledge God, God delivered them over to a corrupt mind so that they do what is not right. <sup>29</sup> They are filled with all unrighteousness, evil, greed, and wickedness. They are full of envy, murder, quarrels, deceit, and malice. They are gossips, <sup>30</sup> slanderers, God-haters, arrogant, proud, boastful, inventors of evil,

disobedient to parents, <sup>31</sup> senseless, untrustworthy, unloving, and unmerciful. <sup>32</sup> Although they know God's just sentence—that those who practice such things deserve to die—they not only do them, but even applaud others who practice them.

### Summary:

A. The Apostle Paul confronts the believers in Rome with a stark reality.

1. God is righteous and wrathful.
2. The Gospel is the Good News of Jesus' kingship, and that kingship is everlasting.
3. Because He is a good King, He cannot allow sin to go unpunished.

B. The stark reality is that we all fall short of the Glory of God.

1. Even though God has made His glory and truth clear, many people suppress and reject the truth and trade away God's glory.
2. When humanity intentionally rejects what God has made clear, unrighteousness and foolish behaviors increase.

C. As thinking and feeling grow more wicked, humans do increasingly wicked things.

1. This increasing wickedness manifests primarily in sexual sin and sexual perversion.
2. Obvious and natural behaviors are deemed unnatural and are exchanged for what Paul says is unnatural.

D. How do we or societies get to this place?

1. The digression the Apostle Paul describes has been true for almost every kingdom, empire, or world power.
2. Read the history of Ancient Greece, that they became full of every kind of sinfulness and excess.

3. The same was true for Rome, an empire that at one time ruled the world that was defeated not from the outside but rotted from the inside out.
4. Could it be happening to America?
5. Is it happening in your family?
6. How do we get here? By misplacing glory.

## 1. A Problem of Misplaced Glory.

A. In 1648, a group of church leaders gathered and asked: "What is the chief end of man?"<sup>1</sup>

1. "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever."
2. In other words, humans were created for the purpose of glorifying and enjoying God.
3. When we reject this purpose, we create problems for ourselves called unrighteousness and ungodliness.

B. Paul ties it all to a problem of Glory.

1. Because God has made His glory evident, people are without excuse.
2. Because humanity exchanged the glory of God for the glory of mortal things, we stand judged and handed over to the consequences.
  - a. Furthermore, God is not passive in this handing over.
  - b. If people choose to worship lesser gods, and if they willfully take the glory and worship that belongs to God and give it away, God becomes active in the consequences.
3. This isn't unique to Romans.

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<sup>1</sup> Question #1 of the Westminster Shorter Catechism, [https://prts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Shorter\\_Catechism.pdf](https://prts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Shorter_Catechism.pdf)

C. Think about Adam and Eve in the Garden:

1. Was that not a failure to give God glory and to express gratitude?
2. Satan's temptation was aimed at these elements:
  - a. Is God really good, or is he withholding from you?
  - b. Is the truth He revealed the only truth or just His opinion?
  - c. **Satan tempted Adam and Eve to suppress the truth and to exchange glory and gratitude for pleasure, excitement, and the possibility of a world without God's rule.**

2. God gave them over (delivered) them.

A. Paul describes in Romans what God has done throughout human history.

1. If humans want to express their unrighteousness, He lets them.
  - a. God set life and death, blessings and curses before Adam and Eve, and they chose death.
  - b. God gave Israel what they asked for:
    1. When they sought after God, they had good judges, good kings, and good seasons.
    2. When they rejected God, they had evil judges and kings and seasons of exile, famine, and destruction.
  - c. The results are not karma, chance, or anything random.
  - d. While God may not be active in EVERY detail of judgment, He was active in removing His blessing and exposing the unrighteous to His wrath.
2. Notice the **Consequences**:
  - a. Bodies are degraded vs. 25

b. Receive in their person due penalty for their error. Vs. 27

c. Those who do such things deserve to die Vs. 32

3. This is a different picture of God than what many modern people have.

a. Many modern Christians think the idea of an angry God is not true or accurate.<sup>2</sup>

b. But the God of Scripture is both loving and wrathful.

c. They are not exclusive.

d. Just as a loving father cares for a baby one minute but is capable of killing a threat, so God is both loving and wrathful.

B. Three times Paul says God handed them over to show there is a normal progression of sin, individually and corporately.

1. It begins by denying God what is his: glory and gratitude.

2. This leads to claiming to be wise, which leads to foolishness and idolatry.

3. Idolatry and adultery are always related because both involve giving to one what was meant for another.

a. When we have sex outside of marriage, view nakedness other than our spouse, including pornography, or give emotions and feelings reserved for our spouse, that is adultery.

b. When we give worship, glory, and gratitude to others while ignoring God, that is idolatry.

C. The Apostle Paul says that sexual sin, whether it's fornication, pornography, or homosexuality, is a problem of both glory and gratitude:

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<sup>2</sup> Such as Brian Zahn

<sup>24</sup> Therefore God delivered them over in the desires of their hearts to sexual impurity, so that their bodies were degraded among themselves.

<sup>25</sup> They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served what has been created instead of the Creator, who is praised forever. Amen.

<sup>26</sup> For this reason God delivered them over to disgraceful passions. Their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. <sup>27</sup> The men in the same way also left natural relations with women and were inflamed in their lust for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their own persons the appropriate penalty of their error.

<sup>28</sup> And because they did not think it worthwhile to acknowledge God, God delivered them over to a corrupt mind so that they do what is not right.

1. It is a problem of glory because it exchanges the glory (the intention of God) for a lie
2. And it exchanges God's glory and design for another kind.
  - a. Think of it like this:
    - b. When we engage sexually outside of marriage, we are declaring that God was wrong in confining me.
    - c. When we exchange healthy sexuality with our spouse of the opposite sex for sexuality with a member of the same sex, we are telling God that He made a mistake.
3. This is a sin of gratitude:
  - a. Why would God restrict me from having this kind of fun/pleasure/goodness?
  - b. Why would God keep me from being happy and my true self?
  - c. When we share God's glory with someone else, we misappropriate glory and fall into unrighteousness.
  - d. **Wrong worship creates false gods.**

4. Notice that this argument works for all of the sins Paul mentions.

<sup>29</sup> They are filled with all unrighteousness, evil, greed, and wickedness. They are full of envy, murder, quarrels, deceit, and malice. They are gossips, <sup>30</sup> slanderers, God-haters, arrogant, proud, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, <sup>31</sup> senseless, untrustworthy, unloving, and unmerciful.

a. Theft is easily a sin of gratitude, for to steal is to say that God made a mistake by giving that to them.

b. Yet all sin, according to Romans, begins from misplaced glory and ingratitude.

### 3. Homosexuality and the Worship Problem

A. Scripture condemns all sin.

1. All sin separates, but not all sins are the same.

2. We have a skewed understanding of sin today.

a. Yet, even our own human justice system proposes that not all crimes are the same.

b. For example, Murder has more severe consequences than jaywalking.

c. The Old Testament demonstrated that the greater the sin, the greater the sacrifice.

**3. Even though Jesus paid the price for ALL sins, outside the kingdom, not all sins are equal.**

a. Jesus warned strongly about causing a child to go astray.

b. The Apostle Paul claimed that sexual sin was more dangerous because, in his words,

1 Corinthians 6:18–20 (CSB)

<sup>18</sup>Flee sexual immorality! Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the person who is sexually immoral sins against his own body. <sup>19</sup>Don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, <sup>20</sup>for you were bought at a price. So glorify God with your body.

#### 4. What about homosexuality?

B. An argument that has the appearance of credibility is the argument that Paul does not condemn a loving relationship between two people of the same sex, but instead, oppressive practices like pederasty.

1. On a Sunday morning, I want to be careful with my words and images.

2. I encourage you to be at the June 26<sup>th</sup> Wednesday night service for a deeper dive.

3. But Pederasty is the practice of an older man helping a younger man with teaching, experience, and other favors in exchange for sexual pleasure.

a. This practice is well recorded in the Greek Philosophers and known to the Romans.

b. But the argument is that God would not deny true love, so as long as what we do is loving, then it must be good.

4. But my friends, I can't help but see that this line of thinking is the Trojan Horse of sin.

a. For it seems right on the surface.

b. But it is the same old trap: A good God wouldn't withhold anything good from you, and if this feels good to you, then it must be okay.

C. Many argue that homosexuality, if condemned at all in Scripture, is only condemned in the Old Testament and does not apply to us today unless we want to keep the whole Law.



1. However, the Apostle Paul condemns not only the practice but also the source, which he says comes from sinful thinking and feeling.

a. The idea that as long as a person remains celibate doesn't line up with Paul's teaching here, either.

b. The "look, don't touch" approach to sexuality is condemned by Jesus, who said to look lustfully is to commit adultery.

c. You can't be a celibate adulterer, a celibate child-molester, or a celibate homosexual.

2. Temptation is different because Temptation is not a sin.

a. Jesus was tempted in every way but without sin.

b. It's what we do with the temptation.

c. Do we foster it, encourage it, or act on it?

d. Do we allow the temptation to become our identity, our purpose for living, our pride and joy, our idol to worship?

e. This applies to all and any sin.

D. Paul goes further and declares that those who approve of such things are under wrath.

1. It is tempting to focus on homosexuality, but that is not the only sin mentioned.

2. Paul throws a grand net that threatens all of us.

3. For we all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

E. According to the Apostle Paul, the proliferation of sin is a sign of moral decline.

1. But can I tell you that this isn't new?

2. By Genesis 6, God is ready to start over and sends a flood.

3. In the days of Abraham, Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed for their wickedness.
4. Throughout their history, Israel experienced exiles and invasions because of their sin.
5. Revelation depicts one final outpouring of God's wrath upon sin.

F. As I read this passage, the point is clear:

1. We all need Jesus.
2. The Gentile and the Jew, the poor and rich, the resident and the alien, the homosexual, the liar, the thief, and the gossip.
3. None of us are untouched by sin.
4. We all need Jesus.

### Summary: A Problem of Glory

A. Romans tells us that all this unrighteousness comes from misappropriating glory.

1. It is misplaced worship
2. It is the worship of self over the worship of the Creator.
3. It is the glorying in what is made over the One who made it.
4. And it all leads to death.

B. But Jesus!!!

1. When we confess our sins and give our lives to Jesus, this all begins to change.
2. Jesus alone has the power to not define us by our sin.
3. In Jesus, our old identities are wiped away, and we are called Children of God and recipients of God's righteousness.

## Prayer: How do we pray today?

A. If you are living under God's wrath, as Paul has mentioned, and you are ready to change and be changed, when we stand here in a minute, would you talk to God about it?

B. For a few minutes this morning, would you all join me in a time of confession of sin: for our families, for ourselves, and for our nation?

a. To confess is to say the same thing about our life that God says.

b. If you are a gossip, say it.

c. If you are hiding something, confess it.

d. To confess brings our sin from the darkness of our inner world and exposes it to God's light.

Before communion this morning, let's take a few minutes for a time of confession.