

Romans - God's Heart Explained

Week #2: Why do we need the Gospel? (part 1)

September 15, 2019

Paul's letter to the Christians living in Rome is perhaps the most influential book of the Bible outside the four Gospels. Its influence lies in the way God's heart is explained, and how His heart powerfully interrupts our empty existence. The American Pastor, Charles Swindoll describes Romans as God's grace invading the sin-fueled storms of our humanity - a grace that puts an end to our emptiness by offering forgiveness, new life through Jesus Christ and hope both for this present life we live and what lies beyond.¹ More than any other book, Romans explains our depravity, God's holiness, Christ's redemption and what new life in Jesus really means. You cannot follow Jesus well without comprehending what Paul writes to the Christians in Rome.

Our Sunday teaching on Romans this fall will speak to some of these deep truths that we must grow familiar with: human depravity; justification through faith; sanctification in Christ; glorification in God. But the mind is never the target ... it's our heart that matters. So, while engaging our minds with the goal of renewing them, we will consistently target our heart - because God wants our affections not merely our assent.

Study Questions:

Read Romans 1:16-32

1. Talking about sin directly confronts what is wrong with every one of us. As Pastor Ken said, it is difficult to digest and politically incorrect in Canada today.
 - Yet we all know there is something wrong both within us and our Cdn. culture today.
 - So, what are the common responses you hear about what's wrong and what's necessary to "fix" things at a personal, individual level? at a societal level?
 - Why is talking about individual sin and our personal responsibility for it politically incorrect?
 - Read Romans 3:9-20. Why is no government able to fix what is wrong with us?
2. Romans 1:24-27 describes our present sexual climate pretty accurately.
 - Why does Paul move from rejecting the obvious evidence that God exists (v.v.18-23) to our sexuality? why not pick violence? gossip/slander? materialism?
 - What is it about our sexuality that carries such deep spiritual feeling & meaning?
 - Where else in the Bible does God teach us how clearly our sexuality reveals our attitude towards Him?
3. Pastor Ken taught that when our rebellion against God finally reaches our minds and we *invent new ways of sinning* (v.30), we are approaching anarchy, totalitarianism, chaos and genocide.
 - Where do you see the nations of our world, including ours, sliding into this abyss?
4. "God's wrath/anger" (v18) is meted out by letting us experience all the consequences of what we freely choose.
 - Does it make you feel any better that God is not initiating punishment but simply letting our choices play out to their logical consequences?
 - Read Revelation 6 (for starters). What *will* happen when God finally does let the full extent of His righteousness take its measure against our human rebellion?

¹ Swindoll, Charles. Insight for Living Bible Study Guide: Romans 1-5. 1977, Insight for Living, Fullerton CA. Back cover.