

## Lesson #4 – Book of Romans

As we pursue the truths in the book of Romans, I would like to remind us of some basic principles around which we exist.

As you and I seek the truth – we need to understand that when we receive that truth, we must incorporate it into our being. Why?

You build upon the truth you receive. In other words, if you reject truth when you receive it, you have a greater chance that you are subject to lose the truth you have already received.

Your ability to recognize future truth is impaired. If you get some truth and you receive it properly, you will get more truth. If you get some truth and reject or fail to act upon it, not only will it be more difficult for you to recognize truth, you could lose the understanding that you have already received.

You and I build upon what we have already received as “line upon line” precept upon precept. Look at **Isaiah 28:9** & following – Whom will he teach knowledge and to whom will he make to understand the message. Those who move from milk to meat. For precept must be upon precept, line upon line, here a little there a little”

We build upon what we know

Paul says of the pagan man in Romans 1:22 “Professing to be wise, they became fools” All of this because they reject the knowledge of God that they have. The invisible attributes of God are clearly seen (vs 20) God has shown it to them and they rejected it as truth.

Further they then worshipped what they created rather than the Creator. Result – God gave them up to uncleanness. It was God who gave them up.

As I said last time, you and I are only responsible for the light we have received. However, we are responsible to move in that light. We are judged by what we already know, not by what has yet to be revealed to us.

This is so very true regarding the Grace of God. And, as stated many time before by me, if you and I refuse to accept His grace, and insist on somehow earning His favor through our activity or actions, we will slowly move toward legalism in our relationship with Him. We will lose the understanding that we already know. We will hear a message about our responsibility to “do in order to receive” and before you know it, you have set about to “stumble your own walk with Him.”

There is also somewhat of a warning offered by Paul in verse 25 of Chapter 1 “who exchanged the truth of God for the lie and worship[ed and served the creature rather than the Creator. For this reason (what reason”) they found themselves worshipping the creature rather than the creator. For this reason, God gave them up to vile passions.”

A side note here beloved, We tend to worship God not as creator, but as redeemer. Redeemer He definitely is, however we need to begin to see Him as the creator of all things.

As mentioned last time, the teaching hitting our young people is that all of the world around us is randomly designed. The big bang theory if you will.

Beloved, nothing is random. All, everything, is by His design – period. “By His own will, He begat us” The sooner we see Him as He is, that is He never reacts, but only acts, and that “all of His ways are known by Him, from the beginning” We will tend to worship Him as He is.

Also, I am convinced that we need to view Him as creator. He will make a way where there is no way. He will create something where now there is nothing. Think about this as you pray to Him. We say “nothing is impossible with God” yet we pray as though the solution is not possible with Him.

Creator – that’s what He is...

To expand this thought even further, we would all do well to reflect upon His Glory and His creation.

Remember the children of Israel while in the wilderness. At the time when Moses was called by God to meet Him on the mountain, while Moses was away, his brother was encouraged to fashion out of gold an animal for which they could worship, God did not like this very much. (Exodus 32)

I do not think we have any idea just how **vile** our worship of idols are before our Heavenly Father.

We read in scripture that “we become what we most look at” or to say it another way, we become what we worship. (Psalm 115) “Those who make them (idols) are like them.” And so is everyone who trusts in them.”

To examine this thought further, we are instructed to “not love the world, or the things in it.” 1<sup>st</sup> John 2:15 – “love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

If we view the world as “harsh and cruel and unforgiving” then guess what, we become harsh, cruel and unforgiving.

Is the world impersonal, materialistic harsh and unforgiving? Well guess what, if you worship the world and its possessions, you too will become impersonal, materialistic, harsh and unforgiving.

We become what we most worship.

Remember the example in the Old Testament of the Egyptians and their idol worship?

They worshipped death and the “bugs” that crawl out of the dead things. These beetles they called the “scarab” beetles for they appear in the corpus of dead things. They just appear, so the Egyptians worshipped them as “created” things for they came out of nowhere.

Today there is jewelry of a scarab beetle that some folks wear around their neck on a chain.

Today, the Egyptians worship death and the scarab beetle that represents this death. So guess what? Dung and death are everywhere throughout Egypt.

Sad.

Let us look at verse 24 of chapter 1 – “therefore (what is the word there for?) corresponding to the previous verses, they worshipped the creature rather than the creator. Anyway, “God gave them up to uncleanness”

Now foremost in these next verses is the issue of homosexuality. God gave them over to a debased mind- (vs 28). Well what does this mean?

A debased mind is one that lacks “judgment” – the ability to judge things properly. It becomes a worthless mind. A mind that cannot think properly anymore.

Notice all of the unrighteous behavior listed in verses 29-32. The summarization of this entire matter is that those who practice such matters deserve death. “ Not only those who do these things, *but those who approve of their doing these things.*”

How common in today’s T.V. is the homosexual relationship? It is no more subtle in its appearance, it is straightforward. And if you and I disapprove, we are considered bigots or homophobes.

Take a stand beloved. Time is short for you and I to take a stand against this stuff. We are the salt that prevents rot. Don’t lose your savor.

The end result of homosexuality is the judgment of God.

Now beloved, there is no question that homosexuality is a sin against God. There are those who would claim that it is “born” in them. They came into this world just different and we need to understand and accept that.

Beloved, the Apostle Paul outlines certain things that are especially aggregates to a Holy God. In 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 6 verse 9 & following he mentions fornications, idolaters, adulterers, homosexual’s sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will have any inheritance in the kingdom of God,

And then he says in verse 11 of Chapter 6, “And such were some of you, But you **were** washed, you **were** sanctified, but you **were** justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of God.”

In a sense, those who claim that the homosexuals were born that way, are correct. But truth be known, everyone of us were born with the sin of Adam hanging on each one of us. We were all born as “killers” liars, blasphemers etc.

**Thus the need for the New Birth.**

Notice what follows in the way of activity – God gave them over to a *reprobate* (debased) mind – this means a mind that is no longer able to determine proper judgment – a mind void of judgment.

So as we move to chapter 2 of Romans, we are dealing with the righteousness of God Himself. This is the key as we view this chapter.

So Paul is now dealing with the “moral man” or the Jew.

This righteousness is contrasted with the activity and life of the Jew. They were saying one thing and doing just the opposite in their own lives.

They had the law to keep them on track.

Notice closely that in the previous chapter the emphasis was on “they them”

Now the plural becomes singular. The they and them becomes “you”

The Jew was no more moral than the gentile, however he had guard rails to help direct his behavior.

If you are getting my drift here, what I am saying is that the moral man is in trouble here too.

The moral man lives by a set of standards, as did the Jews. The moral man places upon himself guidelines and precepts to live by. The problem that moral men face, that is folks that set standards to live by, are also in trouble. Why? Because righteousness cannot come by the rules. Righteousness cannot come through a standard of behavior.

It is hard for us to understand sometimes but If there had been a standard to live by, or if you will a set of do’s and dent’s (or if you will – a law placed upon yourself) then Christ died in vain. Look closely at Galatians 2:21. “I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the law (anything you and I set up in our lives in order to walk uprightly) then Christ died in vain.”

It is easy for us to just disregard this essential verse, however if we will incorporate it into our living today we will see that everything we set up in our lives in order to improve our *condition with Him*, improve our *standing with Him*, improve *His acceptance of me as a person in His sight*, then there was no need for the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. There would be no reason for the “gospel”

His death would be in vain

The Jews had not heard this. The gentiles had, but had forgotten it. Paul says in another place that the gentiles had heard the truth from him, but folks had sneaked in among them to bring forth “another” gospel. One that included them. One that added to the finished work of the Lord Jesus. One that included certain things in their lives in order to be accepted by Him.

What things you ask? How about what **you eat**. How about what **you wear**? How about where **you go or don't go**? How about any “**rules to live by**”

More in the next lesson.

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