

**Not Ashamed
(Week 5)
Romans 1:24-32
“When God Gives Up”**

Introduction

“Therefore God delivered them over in the desires of their hearts...”

Romans 1:24a

It is important for us to be reminded that mankind did not start off in depravity, and then, God revealed Himself so that they could see the truth. The fact is... man actually BEGAN with the truth and turned away from it. At creation, God and man were united. It wasn't as if Adam and Eve were born into some kind of darkness and had to figure a way to find the meaning and truth of their existence. They started off knowing God, and they willingly rebelled against Him! As a result of this rebellion, mankind has been falling away ever since.

Scientists are constantly speaking these days about “evolution”. According to this theory, all of the creatures of earth including mankind are “improving themselves” in order to better adapt to their surrounding environments. Evolutionists would argue that man is a much improved creature, comparatively speaking, to his humble beginning, as whatever he was when he crawled out of whatever primordial slime in which he was formed.

But, *The Bible* doesn't speak to the “evolution” of man. According to *The Bible* man is not evolving, but rather devolving. In short, we aren't getting better. We are getting worse. The devolution of mankind is evident all around us. While we have increased in knowledge, much as the Prophet Daniel had predicted (**Daniel 12:4**), sadly, our moral status is one of utter depravity. Consider for a moment the rise of school shootings and other random acts of violence that seem to occur daily all around us. It seems that the more “intellectual” we become, the less we are able to restrain ourselves. We are a society of arrogance, corruption, pornography, and violence. If this is what it means to evolve, then God help us, when we finally arrive at our final consummation.

Sadly, although our intellect may indeed be increasing, our souls are perishing. We are excessively feeding our brains, while starving our very spirits. Without God, life is meaningless. And apart from our acknowledgement of Him, we become far less human and more like all the other animals. This is the devolution of man, and how does it happen? It happens when we are so self-consumed with our own passions that we turn our backs on God. And after a time, when we ignore His pleading for us to return to Him, He finally turns His back upon us.

Years ago when I was studying theology, one of my instructors took us through the book of *Romans*. I will never forget the words that he said, as we studied this first chapter. He said, “The worst thing that can ever happen to a person is when God looks at them and says, “Your will be done.” What a powerful and tragic truth this is. There is nothing sadder than when God gives up on a person. For in that moment, their situation becomes utterly hopeless. I am reminded here of the words of Christ:

“No one can come to Me unless The Father Who sent Me draws him, and I will raise him up on the last day.” **John 6:44**

Did you catch that? No one can come to Jesus and be saved unless God The Father “draws him”. So what happens when God gives up on someone and stops drawing them to salvation? Damnation, that's what. Utter hopelessness. This is why it is so tragic when God says, “Have it your way.” And this is the perfect description of what is happening to people all around us. God has “given them over” to their own wickedness. Three times in today's passage we read the words, “God gave them over.” Mankind is devolving before our very eyes, for God has given them over to Degradation, Disgraceful Passions, and Depraved Psyche. This is why we must reach any who will heed their final warnings and turn back to God through Christ Jesus.

Degraded (in their) Persons

“Therefore God delivered them over in the desires for their hearts to sexual impurity, so that their bodies were degraded among themselves. 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. Romans 1:24-25

The first thing that we need to discuss is the reason that people are willing to turn away from God. Adam and Eve did it over a piece of fruit! In short, they made a conscious decision that whatever pleasure they might derive from eating that forbidden fruit was actually worth risking their relationship with their Creator. When you place it in this context, it seems silly doesn't it? But never underestimate the power of sinful desire.

It is interesting to note, that Paul goes from speaking about idolatry to sexual immorality in the same breath as it were. This makes perfect sense, however, when you begin to understand how idolatry came about in the first place. Mankind did not like God's rules regarding sexual sin. God intended for a man and woman to be joined in an inseparable bond, and to only have intimate relations with one another. In short, sexual intimacy was designed and given so that a married couple could share in something with one another which no one else could. Thereby, God offered His creation a marriage bond that was completely “set apart” for every couple. This is why marriage is commonly referred to as “Holy Matrimony”. The word *holy* means *to be set apart or consecrated*. And this is exactly what God intended for every married couple to be, completely “set apart” for one another, sharing an intimacy that no one else could share. It was designed to bond two people together, to join them together as one. It was a perfect union, meant to be incorruptible.

Enter sinful desire. People wanted to have sexual relations with not just one person, but with whomever they pleased, whenever they pleased. They wanted that forbidden fruit. And they knew full well, by such self-indulgence, that they were creating enmity between themselves and a Holy God. They would be rebelling against his created order. So what was their solution? Did they repent and return to God's commands for sexual purity? No, they actually created gods for themselves and made sexual promiscuity a part of their worship of these “deities”! In short, they created lavish temples for their fake gods and had ritual prostitutes, who served at these places, in order that they may indulge in their wicked desires.

Just imagine being so perverse, that you would go to great lengths to create your own religion that would make allowances for your own perversions, and you are beginning to understand the degradation of fallen mankind. God says that they were “degraded among themselves”.

The word *degrade* means *to devalue to make something lesser*. In order to give in to their every lustful whim, mankind took what God had intended as a sacred bond and exchanged it for something cheap and superficial. And, as a result of their own lust, God gave them over to degrade themselves all the more, and thereby, began the process of man's downward spiral, his devolution into depravity.

Disgraceful Passions

“For this reason God delivered them over to disgraceful passions. Their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. 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. Romans 1:26-27

The sad thing about sexual sin (or any other sin for that matter) is that it doesn't satisfy in the long term. So, what happens to people who are sexually immoral, when their sins no longer satisfy their uncontrollable thirst for more? Answer, they are compelled to enter into even more deviant passions in order to appease themselves. Just as no one starts out to become an alcoholic or a drug addict, no one

thinks that they will ever become enslaved by sexual sin. But they are wrong. Homosexuality is a direct result of one who has been given over completely in the pursuit of sexual gratification. Rather than surrendering their will over to The God who made them, they are willing to exchange His love and grace for shameful perversion.

Make no mistake, although we live in a culture that is attempting to normalize and even glorify such behavior, it is, according to The Scriptures... SHAMEFUL. It was much the same in Paul's day. In the original text, Paul starts out by saying "**Even the women**" were given over to such wanton behavior. It was generally believed that women possessed more self control than that of men. In a world where motherhood was valued by women above all else, it was shocking for Paul to see those of the feminine gender falling into such unnatural perversions.

Paul goes on to say that men, in the same way (homosexual) were "**inflamed in their lust for one another**". And so, the degeneration of mankind continues along its downward spiral. Homosexual sin is not only shameful, it is a crime against nature and nature's God. And what I find most amazing, in this modern "enlightened age" in which we currently find ourselves, is just how radically militant those who espouse this particular perversion have become. The radical homosexual movement in this country is comprised of some of the angriest people that I have ever seen in my life. How is it, if this perversion is so "natural", that those who practice it are among the most miserable on the planet? Have you ever looked into the suicide rates among homosexuals? The results are staggering.

I know from my own life experience that when I do something right, I feel good about it. How is it then, that those who claim their sexual perversion is "right for them" are so miserable? I will tell you why. There can be no satisfaction in rebellion against God. Paul says that those who practice this abomination have "**received in their own persons the appropriate penalty of their error**". In other words, God has given them over to their own disgraceful lusts, and they are not only consumed by them, but they are in a constant state of misery as a result. And thus, the devolution of mankind continues.

Depraved Psyche

"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. They are filled with all unrighteousness, evil, greed, and wickedness. They are full of envy, murder, quarrels, deceit, and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, arrogant, proud, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, senseless, untrustworthy, unloving, and unmerciful. 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."
Romans 1:28-32

A depraved mind. That is what is waiting for those who ultimately reject the truth of God and are abandoned to their own devices as a result. What is left of a man, who has turned his back on God and has sinned away his opportunity for grace, is more animal than human. The ultimate reality of sin is that it glorifies self and has no room for empathy or compassion for little else. The one whom God has left behind is caught up, not only in sexual immorality (*pornea* in the Greek), but is filled with all kinds of unrighteous desires. Paul's list of the traits of the depraved (reprobate) mind is thorough, but not exhaustive. He describes for us in detail the outward traits that spring from the soul that is abandoned by its Creator. It is a dreadful state, which we see all around in this modern age with an ever increasing abundance; self-absorbed people, who in their hatred of God live only to gratify themselves at any and all cost. It is both a meaningless and futile existence, that leads to only one final reality... death. This is the wages of sin. **Proverbs 16:25** tell us:

"There is a way that seems right to a person, but its end is the way to death."

Sadly, according to Paul, those who are condemned know that they deserve to die for their sins, but still refuse to turn away from them (**vs 32**). In fact, instead of being sorrowful for their sins, they not only continue in them, but applaud others who do so as well. Misery loves company I suppose.

I once heard a story about how a certain breed of monkeys are captured in Africa. It seems these primates love sweets (just like many of us). These monkeys can be enticed by fruit, as well as, cookies. The way that the villagers capture these monkeys is by placing something that is sweet inside a jar with a small opening. The jar is then secured to a tree, so that it cannot be carried off. The monkey's small hands will just barely fit into the mouth of the jars when they are open and outstretched, so that when they reach inside and grab the bait, they cannot pull out their hands without letting go of the cookie or piece of fruit, and subsequently, they are caught. Why? Because they refuse to just let go!

That, my friends, is a perfect example of what sin can do to a person. Just like those monkeys, we could be free by just letting go of our sins and turning to Christ for salvation, but many would rather be enslaved, than to give up their favorite "passions". And, as a result, they go from being Degraded, to Disgraced, and finally into Depravity of the mind. Sinful man is not evolving, but rather, he is devolving, and that is the grim reality of what we see everyday in this fallen world.

What a tragedy it is, when God says to us, "Your will be done." So please listen to reason before it is too late. Turn away from your sins and surrender your life to Christ, while there is still time. He longs to offer you forgiveness. He longs to see you restored to fellowship with God The Father, the way that you were designed to live. He longs to give you a life that has meaning. We are not made to live as animals, but rather, we were created in the image of God Himself (**Genesis 1:26-28**). Turn your life over to His control, before He decides that you have gone too far in your sins. Like the prodigal son, He will welcome you home with open arms, but you must first be willing to return!

So there it is, a picture of humanity that has turned its back upon God. God gave them over to their own passions, because they chose to worship created things above their Creator, and as a result, they are left without excuse. The history of man is a story of devolution, from a creature made to worship his Creator to that of Degradation, Disgrace, and ultimately, utter Depravity, as God gives up on him.

There is only one hope for the downward spiral of man, and that hope can be found in the person of Jesus Christ. He is the Savior sent to seek out that which was lost. He is the Light in the darkness, the Deliverer Who has come to set us free from sin. Have you turned your life over to Him? Do you know for yourself what it is like to walk in light, rather than darkness? No matter what you have done, or what you are doing, He is the answer. Do not wander in the darkness, until it is too late. Come home and return to the only hope for your salvation. The Father longs for you to turn around and be forgiven.

"Seek The LORD while He may be found; call to Him while He is near." *Isaiah 55:6*

Let all of His "lost and found ones" say TRUTH!!!