

CCLEB SERMON

NOTES

SUNDAY JUNE 21, 2026
ROMANS 1:18-32

PASTOR YORDANYS OLIVE

THANKFUL FOR THE RESCUE



A while back, I was driving down 9th Street when I noticed a car coming toward me the wrong way. At first, I thought, "There's no way." So, I started honking my horn and trying to get the driver's attention. I wasn't upset. I was trying to help. The driver was heading into danger, and I wanted that person to realize it before it was too late. But the driver just kept going. I honked again. I tried to signal again. Nothing. In fact, the driver got upset and gave me the middle finger and kept driving. And I remember thinking, "This person has no idea how much danger he was in". If the driver had understood the danger, the warning probably would have been appreciated. But because the driver didn't see the danger, the warning was rejected.

In many ways, that's what Paul is doing in **Romans 1**. He wants us to hear about the Good News of God's love, God's grace, God's forgiveness, and God's salvation. But before we can appreciate the rescue, we have to understand the danger. And that's exactly what Paul has been showing us throughout this passage. Last week finished with our study with one of my favorite verses in the book of Romans. **Romans 1:16-17 NASB**. That's good news, isn't it?

REVEALED

The righteousness of God is **REVEALED** v17

The wrath of God is **REVEALED** v18

In **verse 17**, the righteousness of God is revealed. In **verse 18**, the wrath of God is revealed. Paul is showing us two realities that every person must understand.

Brothers and sisters, Paul is not changing topics. He is making sure we understand why the gospel is so important. And before we can understand the Good News, we need to understand the bad news about humanity.







From **Romans 1:18** to **Romans 3:20**, Paul is going to show us the condition of humanity apart from God and why every one of us needs the gospel of Jesus Christ. So, today let's take a closer look at **Romans 1:18-32**. Starting in **verse 18**.

The wrath of God.

When we hear the phrase "the wrath of God," many people immediately picture an angry God in heaven, ready to punish people for every wrong thing they do. The problem is that we tend to define God's wrath through the lens of human anger. We think about the times we lose our temper, get offended, or become frustrated in traffic. That's the kind of anger we're familiar with. But God's wrath is not like human anger. **Romans 1:18 NASB**

God's wrath is holy, it is righteous, it is controlled, it is perfectly just and it is His settled opposition against sin.

Now let me show you something beautiful from the original language. In Greek, there are different words for anger.

Two Greek Words for Anger	
 Thumos	Orgē 
 Explodes	 Builds
 Emotional	 Deliberate
 Impulsive	 Controlled
 Human anger	 God's wrath in Romans 1:18

One word is thumos. "Thumos" is the kind of anger that boils over. It explodes. It's the kind of anger that makes us raise our voices, slam doors, or say things we later regret. But that's not the word Paul uses here. The word used in **Romans 1:18** is (Orgē). "Orgē" is different. It describes a deep, settled, and controlled response. It doesn't explode. It builds over time. Think of it like water building behind a massive dam.



It is indignation that accumulates like water behind a dam. The pressure is real. The response is real. But it is steady, controlled, and purposeful. God is not losing His temper. God is expressing His holy and righteous response toward sin. Because God is perfectly holy, He cannot ignore sin, excuse sin, or pretend that sin doesn't matter. His wrath is not a flaw in His character. It reflects His holiness and His justice. God's wrath does not flow from cruelty, or emotional instability. His wrath flows from His holiness. And because He is perfectly good, He must respond to evil. If God ignored sin and evil, He would not be just, He would be unjust.

Let me put it in this way: If a judge let every criminal go free, we would not call him just, but corrupt. But a good judge must do what is right. And our God is the perfect Judge. The wrath of God is the very reason we need salvation. The gospel reveals that Jesus Christ took that righteous wrath upon Himself on the cross so that we could be saved. Without Him, we would remain under the wrath of God. I love how Paul says it in **Romans 5:8-9 NKJV**. That's the Good News.

Now notice something important. God's wrath is revealed against those who "suppress the truth". The word "suppress" means to hold down, to push away, or to reject.

In other words, the problem is not that people can't find the truth. The problem is that they don't want the truth. Why?

Because the truth demands a response.
The truth calls us to repent.
The truth calls us to surrender to God.
So instead of submitting to the truth, people push it away.

Now that raises an important question: **How can God hold people accountable if they don't know the truth?** Paul's answer is simple. **Romans 1:19-20**

Without Excuse

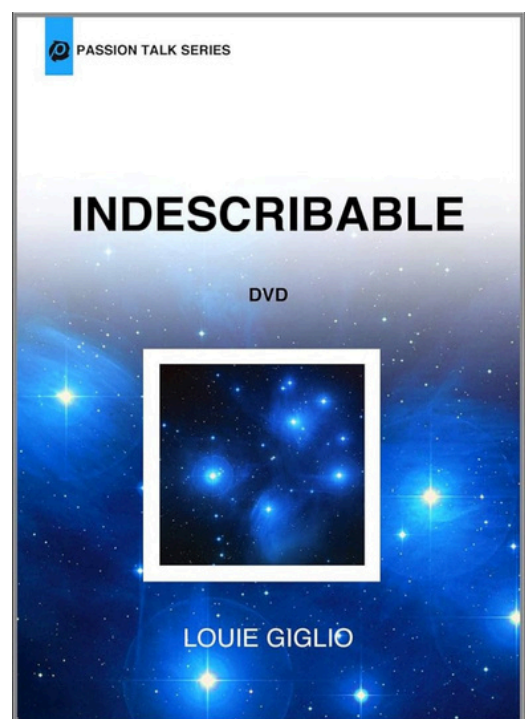
God has clearly revealed Himself through creation; every person is accountable before Him and left completely without excuse. The heavens, the earth, and everything God has made testify to His eternal power and divine nature. Creation is constantly declaring the glory of God. Every sunrise, every mountain, every ocean, every star in the sky points to the same reality: There is a Creator. Paul's point is that humanity cannot stand before God and say, "I didn't know You existed". God has made Himself known through what He has made.

Psalms 19:1 NASB

You cannot look at a painting and say there was no painter. You cannot look at a building and say there was no builder. In the same way, you cannot look at creation and honestly conclude there is no Creator. The evidence of God's existence is all around us. That is why Paul says humanity is "without excuse."

By the way, if this topic interests you, I highly recommend Louie Giglio's Indescribable. It's a fascinating look at how the universe itself points us to the greatness and glory of our Creator.

The problem is not that God has failed to reveal Himself. The problem is not a lack of evidence, Paul says they knew God. They could see His power in creation, yet instead of worshiping Him, they rejected Him. Instead of thanking Him, they ignored Him. Instead of giving glory to the Creator, they gave their hearts to created things.



And brothers and sisters, when people reject the truth about God, they don't stop worshipping they simply start worshipping something else. Paul now shows us what happens when humanity turns away from the Creator. **Romans 1:21-23**

Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. Instead of turning to the Creator, they turned away from Him. Instead of lifting their hands in worship, they crossed their arms in rebellion. This is still a problem today. People enjoy God's blessings while rejecting the God who gives them.

They breathe His air, eat His food, walk on His earth, and live by His grace and mercy, and yet refuse to thank Him or honor Him. Paul shows us that when humanity pushes God away, something else always takes His place. When the Creator is rejected, creation becomes the object of worship. When truth is suppressed, lies begin to rule. When light is rejected, darkness moves in.

And what is the result of this rejection? Paul tells us in **verses 24-25**

When people continually reject God, ignore His truth, and choose sin over Him, God eventually gives them over to the sinful desires they insist on following.

Three times in this chapter we are going to read the phrase, "God gave them over" or "God abandoned them".



The consequences are devastating. What Paul is describing is the result of continually rejecting God and suppressing His truth. The people wanted life apart from God, and God allowed them to experience where that choice would lead.

When Paul says, "**God abandoned them,**" he is not saying that God pushed them into sin. He is saying that God allowed them to continue down the road they had already chosen. They rejected God. They rejected His truth. They rejected His design. And eventually, God gave them over to the consequences of those decisions.

What they thought was freedom became bondage.
What they thought would satisfy them only led them further away from God.
And the consequences are devastating.

In the verses that follow, Paul gives us a list of what happens when people reject God and are left to their own desires. And if we're honest, many of these things are not just found in ancient Rome. We see them all around us in the world today. **Romans 1:26-31**

I know that some of you would like to explore this list in more detail and may have questions about some of the things mentioned in this passage. We recognize that these are important subjects, and we have planned a separate study where we will take time to address several of them more carefully. But, for today, I want us to stay focused on Paul's main point in this section.

Paul explains that because people rejected God and exchanged His truth for a lie, God gave them over to their sinful desires, leading them to abandon His design for sexual relationships. Since they thought it foolish to acknowledge God, He also gave them over to their foolish thinking. The result was a life marked by rebellion against God and filled with every kind of wickedness.

But Paul doesn't stop there. Beginning in verse 28, he shows that the problem is bigger than one particular sin. The issue is humanity's rejection of God. As we read this list, we realize that Paul is not just pointing to the sins of certain people he is revealing the tragic results of a life lived apart from God.

He's describing what happens when people try to live life without God at the center. He's describing what sin does when it is left unchecked.

And if we're honest, not every sin on this list describes us, but every one of us can recognize the same sinful tendency in our hearts.

That is Paul's point.

The problem is bigger than a particular sin. The problem is that humanity has turned away from God. And that is why we all need the gospel.

As Paul continues his argument, he reminds us of something very important about the justice of God. **Romans 1:32**

Paul says the problem gets even worse.

Not only do they practice these things, but they also encourage others to do them as well. In other words, sin is no longer something to be hidden. It becomes something to be celebrated.

What God calls sin; the world calls good.

What God says is destructive, the world promotes and applauds.

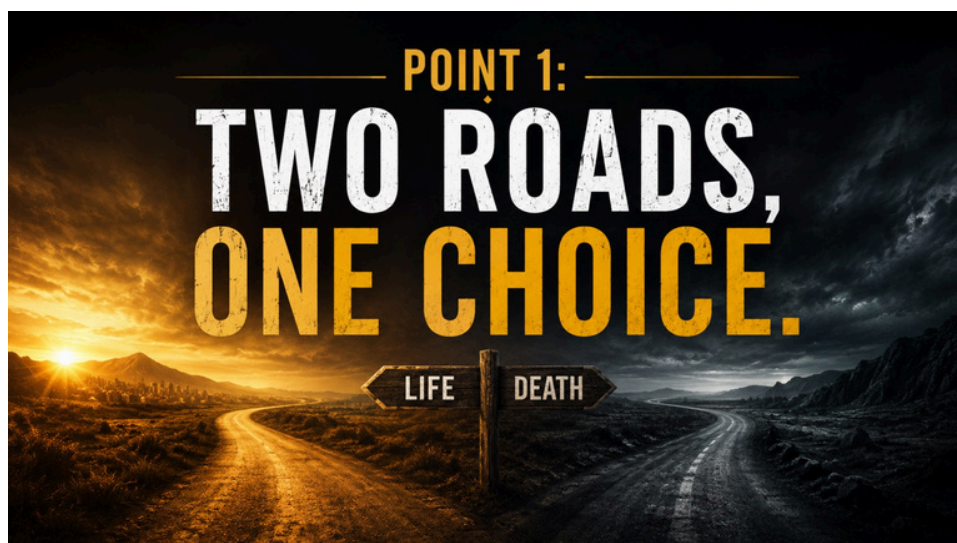
That is how far the human heart can drift when it turns away from God.

But God's justice still demands a response to sin, and only Christ can save us from the judgment we deserve.

I want to finish with some practical applications.

Point 1: Two Roads, One Choice

There are only two conditions before God. You are either under His grace through faith in Jesus, or you remain under His judgment. **John 3:36**



That is why we are "Thankful for the Rescue". One of the things Paul identifies in this passage is that people knew God, but they would not worship Him or even give Him thanks. As believers, our response should be the opposite.

Point 2: Don't Turn Away from the Warning

This brings me back to the story I shared at the beginning. The driver didn't appreciate the warning because the danger wasn't understood. But after walking through Romans 1, we now understand the danger.



So don't turn away. Don't get angry with God for telling you the truth or for correcting you when you are heading in the wrong direction. He is not against you, He is warning you because He loves you. And His truth will set you free. God's truth is not meant to condemn you; it is meant to rescue you.

Point 3: We All Need Rescue

What we learn from this chapter is not to compare ourselves with others or point fingers at people. Paul's goal is not for us to look at this list and say, "I'm better than them." His goal is for us to recognize our own need for rescue.

As we read this list, we should be reminded that apart from God's grace, we are all sinners in need of a Savior. That truth should humble us and fill our hearts with gratitude. It should affect the way we live, the way we think, and the way we treat others.



So instead of pride, let there be humility. Instead of comparing ourselves to others, let us thank God for the rescue.

Point 4: Be Thankful for the Rescue

Be thankful for the cross.

Be thankful for the resurrection.

Be thankful for God's grace.

Be thankful that Jesus Christ, the Messiah, took your place.

Be thankful that He bore the punishment for your sin.

Be thankful that He died the death you deserved and gave you the life you could never earn.

Be thankful that through faith in Him, your sins are forgiven, your debt is paid, and your future is secure.

Let that gratitude be reflected in the way you worship, the way you live, and the way you love others.

