

A Reprobate Mind

Romans 1:24-32

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FOCAL Read Responsively Romans 1:24-32

Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: **(25) Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. (26)** For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: **(27)** And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. **(28) And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; (29)** Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, **(30)** Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, **(31)** Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: **(32) Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.**

Not too long ago a well known homosexual talk show host made the following statement on national television:

“as a result of the [9-11] attack and the killing of 3000 innocent people, we invaded two countries and killed

innocent people Radical Christianity is just as threatening as radical Islam in a country like America where we have separation of Church and State.”

You may be outraged by these statements. You may also be outraged by the news that a well known singer is planning on mocking the crucifixion of Christ on network television. Fine – be outraged by these statements. But may I suggest a better way than outrage, email chain letters without end, and other solutions that only treat the *symptoms* and not the *root problem*. May I suggest that we look carefully at the Scripture to see not only *why* these things – these attacks on Christianity – are happening – but let's also see if the Scripture gives us a solution to the problems that are facing our nation.

It is easier to be a Christian in America today than it was in ancient Rome. In ancient Rome Christians were not just *mocked*, but they were also *mauled and martyred*. When the Lord originally wrote this letter we call “The Book of Romans” to the Church at Rome, He wanted believers to understand *why* Rome had fallen into such degeneracy. Many Roman citizens had moved from models of civil government and into every form of debauchery. Many Romans spent their days in sexual degeneracy, doing things that I cannot discuss in this gentle crowd. Before the Lord could share the *deeper truths of Scripture* with these Saints He wanted them to understand why their society was falling apart.

The Lord is always honest with us, telling us truthfully where we err before offering the solution of salvation in Him. He was doing the same thing with the Roman

believers. The Lord was telling the Romans – and us – great truths that we need to understand if we hope to reach this generation for Christ. The Lord was telling the Roman Christians to:

1. Listen, My Beloved – Rome Loved Others More Than She Loved Me

FOCAL Romans 1:24-25 **Wherefore God also gave¹ them up to uncleanness² through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: (25) Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.**

Our text says, **God gave them up to uncleanness**. The words **gave them up** is a Greek word, *παράδιδωμι*, *paradidōmi*, (*pronounced par-ad-id'-o-mee*), which means *to surrender to*, *to judicially give someone over to*. Why did God *give up on* many Romans? Because they gave up on Him. The Roman citizens refused to hear God. They, like Israel before them, rejected God's call to salvation through Jesus Christ. Can you imagine that? Yet this is what happened. The Bible teaches us that God the Father *surrendered* the Lord Jesus Christ to the Cross for our salvation. We are told later on in this letter:

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- 1 G3860, *παράδιδωμι*, *paradidōmi*, *par-ad-id'-o-mee*, From G3844 and G1325; *to surrender*, that is, *yield up, intrust, transmit*: - betray, bring forth, cast, commit, deliver (up), give (over, up), hazard, put in prison, recommend.
 - 2 G167, *ἀκαθαρσία*, *akatharsia*, *ak-ath-ar-see'-ah*, From G169; *impurity* (the quality), physically or morally: - uncleanness.

Romans 4:24-25 But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up **Jesus our Lord from the dead; (25) Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.**

Can you imagine how this makes God feel? He had been promising man for hundreds of years that Jesus Christ was coming to be the Messiah. Jesus was presented – from the Garden of Eden, through the Old Testament prophecies, through the many illustrations that the Lord would hand down through Israel – and people continued to reject the Savior.

Romans 8:32 **He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?**

God *never spared Jesus one moment of agony*, but allowed Him to suffer a living hell on earth so that we could go be with Him in Heaven. And yet, God was still rejected. God gave the greatest gift He could to us to secure our salvation. He gave us His only Begotten Son! Jesus was *surrendered* to the suffering of the Cross so that we can be saved. How dare any mock and reject the offering, the *giving up* of the Son of Glory?

Yet mock they did.

Many Romans chose to reject the preaching of the Cross, chose to reject the One True God, and instead chose to follow the idols of their day. **They chose to follow**

sensual pleasures with one another, illicit sexual activity, fornication, adultery, homosexuality – rather than pursue a righteous relationship with God. This is why the text states:

FOCAL Romans 1:24 Wherefore **God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves:**

They **dishonored their own bodies between themselves**. In Roman society, as it is today, it is considered *honorable* for two people to use one another to satisfy their base desires. God calls such things *dishonorable*. The Bible tells us:

1 Corinthians 6:18 **Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.**

The Roman crowd *refused to love God*, but instead followed sinful and lustful practices. As they continued to reject the Lord in time the Lord ceased to call them to salvation. Oh, what a terrible thing, when God ceases to call to salvation! What a terrible thing when the Spirit of God *turns away* from the rejector, so that they are left to their own devices.

This could have been avoided if they would have rejected *idolatry* and turned to the Living God! Look at

the focal text again:

FOCAL Romans 1:25 **Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.**

Please hear my heart, dear Ones! They **worshiped the creature more than the Creator**. They put other loves before their love of the one true God. God made you and I to *love Him first and foremost*. You were made to love God first. If you do not love Him passionately *first*, if you love the **creature more than the Creator** – if you put your other relationships – wife, children, husband, work, self, whatever – before the Lord, then you are in idolatry. There are *consequences* for moving into idolatry. There are *consequences* for allowing your families to move into idolatry.

Illustrate I was saddened to hear that Steve Irwin, the famed *Crocodile Hunter*, died on September 4, 2006. Steve was, I believe, a great man, and I learned a lot about animals watching him back when I watched television. Steve loved animals - all animals. We watched and shuddered as he handled crocodiles, poisonous snakes, deadly spiders, tarantulas, and other deadly animals. Steve narrowly escaped death many times - but not this last time. I read in the news report on September 4 that "**The naturalist and television star Steve Irwin has died in a diving accident in far north Queensland.**" A diving *accident*? It was no accident that killed Steve. This dear man dove into waters filled with

deadly stingrays. The bull ray considered Steve a threat to the other stingrays and, following its natural instincts, drove a barb into Steve's heart. Dear friends, Steve died doing what he loved to do best – but his actions are the natural consequences of what he chose as his life's work. **There are always consequences to our actions.**

The first commandment God man was:

Exodus 20:2-3 I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. (3) Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Jesus reiterated this when He commanded:

Matthew 22:37-40 ... Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. (38) This is the first and great commandment. (39) And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. (40) On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

If you reject a loving relationship with God and choose, instead, to follow the *god of your own imagination* then even natural morality becomes tainted. When civilizations lose touch with God and Biblical Morality – what that homosexual talk show host called **radical Christianity** – then that civilization begins to crumble.

2. Listen, Dear Ones: Idolatry Leads To Sensual Perversion

A.W. Tozer said:

"God is holy, and He has made holiness the moral condition necessary to the health of His universe. ... Whatever is holy is healthy. Evil is a moral sickness that must ultimately end in death."

That's a good summary for these next few verses, "Evil is a moral sickness that must ultimately end in death". We read:

FOCAL Romans 1:26-27 **For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: (27) And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.**

God *does not regard* sexual sin – *homosexuality, lesbianism, adultery, fornication, bestiality, pedophilia* and the like as *harmless acts* or *alternate lifestyles*. These verses are a *very clear indictment against all sexual immorality*. Read the text line by line with me:

FOCAL For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections - vile, evil, terrible lusts that are not natural nor normal.

FOCAL For even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature - The women did change. They were not *born this way*, they rejected God and made the decision to *move* in this direction.

FOCAL And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lusts one toward another - Listen My Beloved, likewise also the men. The men were not born this way, they rejected God and made a decision to *move* in this direction. The text ends,

FOCAL And receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet - They brought this upon themselves. How did they bring this upon themselves? They rejected God, rejected Jesus Christ as Savior, and embraced the immoral rather than the moral, the darkness rather than the light.

Read further:

FOCAL Romans 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

When any society turns away from God it begins down a slippery slope that gets worse and worse. When a person turns away from God **in their knowledge**, when we do not consider the Lord before we act, then we have no barrier *other than government* to our evil.

Illustrate I stood in line at a local store and watched a young child curse and command its elders. This little one wanted a certain dress, to which her mother replied "no, not today". The child began to scream as if she were in great torment. After several minutes of this the child saw another thing it would like and, as if a switch were turned off, the babe immediately stopped crying and demanded the new dress.

Those who reject God in order to satisfy their own selfishness draw themselves down into a pit of destruction. Our Lord Jesus taught us that the proper order of life, the order in which God created us, was and continues to be **one man and one woman loving the One Almighty God**. Jesus said:

Matthew 19:4-6 ... Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, (5) And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh (6) Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

That which is **convenient** is that which is normal, Divinely ordained, the way the Lord intended it to be. When man and woman reject the normal, the God Given, then the Lord Himself *gives them over to the reprobate mind*:

FOCAL Romans 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

How do we Christians who know the truth encounter this present generation?

3. How Do I Respond To Those Of The Reprobate Mind?

FOCAL Romans 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate³ mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

How do Christians respond to those who have fallen into idolatry? How should we respond? First, it's good to recognize that those who have fallen into this evil are **of a reprobate mind**. The word **reprobate** is a Greek word

³ G96, ἀδόκιμος, adokimos, *ad-ok'-ee-mos*, From G1 (as a negative particle) and G1384; *unapproved*, that is, *rejected*; by implication *worthless* (literally or morally): - castaway, rejected, reprobate.

which means “a castaway or rejected” mind. They rejected God and God rejected them. When you are approached by people who have fallen into idolatry you need to understand that *they do not understand*. To try and explain *why* their lifestyle is wrong is like trying to explain the color *red* to a blind person. They cannot see – they are castaways.

a. Fight fire with Light: Rather than fighting *fire with fire* (so often the case among misguided Christians) let's DO what Jesus told us to DO. Don't fight fire with fire. Fight fire with light, the Light that is Christ. Look at how Jesus approached the sinner, the reprobate, and DO as He DID.

Take, for example, the **woman at the well**. This account in the life of Christ is only found in the **Gospel of John**, the **Gospel of Luke** gives us a summary of what this encounter caused in the life of Jesus:

Luke 4:14 And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.

Jesus Christ was **in the power of the Spirit** as He went into Galilee. What happened *before* He entered Galilee? Our Lord *encountered a Samaritan woman at a well*. The Lord knew this woman's spiritual condition, knew that she was an *adulteress*, in *sexual sin*. Did He walk up to her and condemn her? No, our Master walked up to this woman and said to her:

John 4:7 ... Give me to drink.

He did not shun her, nor belittle her, but reached out to her. Jesus *opened up a dialog with her*, reached out on a common ground, and introduced Himself.

It is easy for us to say to one another what is right and what is wrong – our minds are not reprobate or castaway! The unbeliever trapped in darkness cannot see the Light of God, no more than this Samaritan woman could see that this was the King of Kings and Lord of Lords standing in front of her. **Fight fire with light**. Reach out in love on some *common ground* – in this case, it was a drink of water – and seek to connect with the lost.

Do not hate the sinner – seek to lead them from the sin! Remember, dear ones, that the same Jesus Christ can heal the Samaritan woman, the blind man, and the homosexual - if they will respond to Him. We are commanded to *reach out unconditionally in love, and to seek to heal through the power of God*. We who are saved have the *ministry of reconciliation*, as the Scripture says:

2 Corinthians 5:18-19 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; (19) To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

b. Show them that the Light that will save is Jesus alone: Once you have reached out and established

communication on some common ground, **present Jesus Christ as the Living Water of God.** Our Lord next told the Samaritan woman:

John 4:10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

Stand on Jesus. Stand on Him and His Word. Do not back down – let the idolater know that Jesus Christ is the solution to their problem, the only way to Eternal Life. Yes, they may reject Christ, but remember they are rejecting the Savior and *not you*. Do not let personal attacks sway you. This is a blind person – seek to lead them to the Savior where they can be saved.

c. Never join them in their darkness: Jesus *never* justified evil nor joined in the darkness of the lost. Our Lord told the woman at the well:

John 4:16-18 Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. (17) The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: (18) For

thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.

What Jesus plainly told this woman was you are an adulteress! You are in sexual sin and immorality! Too often Christians are being told that we should look the other way on the subjects of homosexuality, idolatry, adultery, and so forth. Not so! Our God is a holy God, and He commands us to stand in the Light of Christ. The Lord tells us through the Prophet Ezekiel:

Ezekiel 18:4 Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

and again:

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Idolatry and its sinful consequences lead to death. If we love someone, we will not justify their sexual immorality. **Dr. Albert Mohler** stated:

“... because God has spoken, we must obey. This is not a word submitted for our consideration. The living God allows us to hear His voice from the fire and survive. He has demands to make of us, as

Creator speaks to creature. And in the giving of the Torah, and the entire body of law, there is the requirement of obedience. This is repeated over and over again. It is stated in the form of a positive principle: **Israel is told, "If you obey, you will be blessed and you will live. You will prosper in the land that I am giving you."** The demand of obedience is also stated in the negative: **"If you disobey, you will be cursed. You will bear my wrath. The nations of the world will cast you out. You will go out before them, to be taken as their exiles. You will be cast out of the land."** The demand of obedience is very clear, and it is central to Deuteronomy chapter four. Even as the Lord God through Moses is preparing His people to enter the promised land by reciting again the law, He says to them, **"It is about obedience. I'm not giving you mere information. I'm not letting you hear my voice for your intellectual stimulation. It is not so that you will have an epistemological advantage over the pagan peoples around you! It is so that you would obey."**

The Word of God makes it clear that the so called *alternate lifestyles* are not *genetic caused*, nor are they *God Blessed*. They are the unnatural result of a life that rejects the One True God in favor of the false idols. Do not allow those with godless agendas pull you into *blessing their lifestyles*. Neither you nor I have the right to hate these people – neither should we pat them on the back and excuse their behavior. **Sin is sin, and the soul that sinneth, it shall die (Ezekiel 18:4, 20)**. Love them by standing firm that their behavior is godless, but continue to present Jesus Christ as the only Savior for

our souls.

d. Love the sinner while rejecting the sin:

Jesus “closed the deal” by clearly revealing Himself to the Samaritan woman. We read:

John 4:25-27 The woman saith unto him, **I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. (26) Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he. (27) And upon this came his disciples, and marveled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?**

We are to be careful not to fall into the traps of self righteousness nor of postmodern thought. Keep presenting Jesus as the Savior. Keep loving the sinner while reviling the sin. Keep reaching out - but do not be a partaker of their evil.

May God touch your hearts with these words.