**The Book of Romans**

Part One:

God’s righteousness is revealed in His just wrath against mankind’s sin. (1:18–3:20)

***Why would God be angry?***

***Romans 1:18-23***

What is God’s wrath? For one thing, it is unlike our own, which, in our fallen-ness often is either a symptom of pride or a cover for our foolishness. In fact, while our anger has nothing to do with God’s righteousness (James 1:20), His wrath comes directly from it.

Paul explains that the foundation of man’s separation from God is his idolatry, our dogged persistence to worship anything or anyone other than the God who made us. Why is that so bad?

We were created to rule the world. Instead, our arrogance has ruined it. God’s holiness must burn against such injustice and waste, as well as the lies with which it began. We have betrayed our origins as made in God’s image, and now worship our fellow-creatures, and, of course, ourselves. And it all began when we rejected God, His love, and truth, attempting to be independent of our Creator in His Creation.

This is the very dark backdrop against which the glory of the Cross shines so brightly, the “bad news” which makes the Good News all the more glorious. It is man’s depravity, not his “self-worth” which is the measure of the work of Christ and the motive for eternal worship.

***The gospel reveals God’s wrath against sin. v. 18***

Instead of fire and brimstone, Paul has pointed to the Cross to show how God deals with sin. God must be angry with sin, or else He is not holy. Mankind has rejected God by suppressing, or hindering, or ignoring the truth of God, both that He exists and that His attributes are clearly demonstrated. The history of the world reveals one long, ongoing story of opposing God. Psalm 2. The death of God’s Son shows the seriousness of sin and the weight of God’s righteous anger. Isaiah 53:10-12

***God’s wrath is just because He has revealed Himself in Creation. vv. 19, 20***

Even if Jesus had never come, and even if the Bible had never been written, we still would be accountable to the God of Creation. Attempts to explain the cosmos as existing eternally or else “just happening” fall short, and will not excuse anyone on the last day. Everyone knows there is a God. Everyone. No amount of wishful thinking or philosophical-scientific musing can erase God-knowledge from man’s consciousness or conscience. Psalm 19:1-4; 97:6, 7

***God’s wrath is intensified because man has rejected Him in order to worship idols. vv. 21-23***

Paul explains that the choice not to worship God was not only made by the first humans, but has been repeated throughout man’s history in a series of downward progressions. . .

Ignoring God leads to dishonoring Him.

Dishonoring God leads to ingratitude.

Ingratitude leads to hollow musings about life.

Hollow musings lead to hearts devoid of light.

Darkened hearts produce pride-filled folly.

Prideful folly leads us to worship anything but God.

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✔ Sin: Fruit and Root. We normally judge sin by its fruit: internal turmoil and external dysfunction--for example, guilt / alcoholism, anger / murder, greed / debt. But Paul says sin’s root is more basic than its fruit, since all of the sins listed in vv. 24-32 originate in a refusal to know and love God. Rather than ask why we act as we should not, we ought to ask why we don’t love God as we should. Jeremiah 2:1-13; Malachi 1:6-8

✔ Why is God not a narcissist when He commands we worship Him? God’s demand that we love Him above all else is evidence of His righteousness, for He is the highest and greatest of all good. Were He to point us to lesser loves, He would not be righteous. As He is righteous, the greatest news possible is that loving Him supremely is true enlightened self-interest, and the proper foundation for all other loves. Mark 12:28-34