

God Gave Them Over to... (Written message)

Paul's Long Introduction (vs 1-17)

- Explains the Gospel 1-4
- His calling vs. 5 -6
- Paul's audience – Roman Christians and his affection for them vs 7 – 15
- One of the most powerful faith statements in the Bible all Christians must know. V. 16

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."" Romans 1: 16-17

[The Protestant Reformation. Verse 17 is a restatement of Habakkuk 2:4 that inspired Luther to revolt against the Roman Catholic Church in what became known as The Protestant Reformation. (1517 Wittenberg, Germany)

Why did Luther revolt? Luther was disgusted with the church because it was **selling salvation** at a price—offering forgiveness of sins for self-indulgences of the people. These were sins of every kind that Paul discussed in the following verses, and we are about to.

These words – *"the just shall live by faith"* – got to his spirit. The Holy Spirit revealed to Luther what we know today—believers are saved by grace thru faith apart from works . We do not need a priest as intercessor because Jesus our Savior and Lord is our High Priest.

"This hope we have as an anchor of the soul,

a hope both sure and reliable and one which enters within the veil, where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”
(Hebrews 6: 19-20)

What irony? Luther was put on trial for heresy—being tried by the heretics for heresy.]

The Wrath of God (vs 18 – 32)

Paul moved from the love of God expressed thru the gift of salvation in Jesus Christ alone (the Gospel) to his calling and this audience to **consequences** of NOT believing and receiving the Gospel as truth—rejecting Christ as Messiah and only means of salvation—restoring us to God.

▪ The Aim of God’s Wrath (v 18 – 21b)

*“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, **so that they are without excuse.** For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks*

Five Characteristics of the Objects of God’s Wrath:

- Ungodliness
- Unrighteous
- Suppress the Truth in Unrighteousness (do more evil to refute truth)
- Did not honor God
- Were not thankful for Who He is and what He did for them

▪ **What Indicts Them:**

"...but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures."
(They worshipped themselves and man-made idols.)

They know that God is—He revealed Himself to them. So, the Holy Spirit spoke these terrifying words thru Paul, ***they are without excuse.***

Watch out for the "THEREFOREs (more importantly, what follows them)

*"Therefore God gave them over in the **lusts of their hearts to impurity**, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. **For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie**, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator (idolatry), who is blessed forever. Amen. Romans 1: 24-25*

This speaks to all forms of idolatry and pagan practices that included child and human sacrifice and temple prostitution, other blood sacrifices and self-mutilations. There were things even God's people practiced that on more than one occasion He said He could imagine they would commit such sins.

*"For this reason **God gave them over to degrading passions**; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error." (AIDs comes to mind. Nearly 70% of all AIDs cases in the U.S. were among homosexual men.)
Romans 1: 26-27*

The Bible on homosexuality. I want to begin this challenging section in a way that provides background and context to the key Bible passages dealing with this lifestyle. In the U.S. in the last thirty years, homosexual lifestyles have gained much more acceptance. There is a reason for that. In the late '80s, a strategy and campaign (for lack of a better word) were developed and adeptly executed to “flip the narrative” on opinions and perceptions of homosexuals and their lifestyles.

Part of that sought to make Christians and those who oppose their lifestyles look like bigots and haters. It was very successful in many ways. While it did not change the hearts or minds of biblical Christians, it ultimately led to anti-discrimination laws, the legalization of same sex marriage, and legal adoption by homosexual couples began. A “revisionist” approach to these Scriptures also ensued and continues today.

Three Must-Knows for Christians

- **Temptations of any and all kinds are not sin.** Acting on them in ways contrary to Scripture are sin. That troubles some, but it is what the Bible teaches. **Jesus was tempted by Satan in all ways as we are without sinning because He did not act on them.**
- **Sin is sin.** Another truth that troubles even some Christians was the new way of seeing our sin that Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount. Sin is sin. (Read Matthew 5: 21–48) Not one of these passages calls out homosexuality by itself as being worse than the others. Remember, we once lived in sin, apart from Christ, under its eternal condemnation. But by God’s grace we were saved through faith in Christ whose blood removed them. We pray for the lost—whatever keeps them from the cross of Christ.

- **Love one another.** Love your neighbor as yourself. Love your enemies. All commands of Jesus that many Christians fail to apply when they believe the sins of another are worse than theirs. Failure to respond as Christ did and would give credibility to some of their claims against us. This is not being tolerant of accepting any of these sins in any way.

Now let's look at other Scriptures that deal with this subject. There are Old Testament verses Paul would know well as a Pharisee and have in mind as a Christian apostle and teacher. All of these scriptures reinforce the following:

- ***God hates sin and expects His people to run from it.***
- ***Sins can be forgiven, or they lead to condemnation and death.***
- ***Living in sin as a lifestyle is evidence that a person is not born-again in Christ.***

Old Testament

Remember the Jews had been in captivity for hundreds of years—exposed daily to the many false gods and pagan rituals of the Egyptians. They thought their God had abandoned them. Finally, God raised up Moses to deliver them. Once free in the desert, God began giving them His commandments to live by. These Levitical laws were specific to the Jews at that time because God wanted to make them a pure and holy people. They are among lists of many laws and sins. [I pulled these verses out because this section of my message deals specifically with homosexuality. The New Testament verses below show the lists to which I refer.]

"You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination. 'Also you shall not have intercourse with any animal to be defiled with it, nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with it; it is a perversion.'..." Leviticus 18: 22-23

"If there is a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act; they shall surely be put to death. Their bloodguiltiness is upon them. " Leviticus 20: 10-13

Jesus fulfilled the requirements of the OT law in every way.

New Testament

The Apostle Paul listed these sinful practices among many others.

"Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God." 1 Corinthians 6: 9-11

Further, Paul later instructed his young pastor protégé with similar teaching.

*"that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, the sexually immoral, men who **practice** homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, and **whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine**, in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God with which I have been entrusted." 1 Timothy 1: 8-11*

Some argue that Jesus did not specifically mention or use the word homosexual.

"For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness,

*slander. These are what **defile a person.***” Matthew 15: 19-20

Homosexuality falls among the sins of sexual immorality to which Jesus spoke. Note that Jesus did not mention drug use, or kidnapping, or child trafficking, addictions, or many other sins of His day and ours.

The practice of homosexuality is a sinful lifestyle, like many others, and it carries dangerous consequences—some physical health issues, others societal ones.

Those who live and practice such things should easily understand why their “agenda” troubles Christians and non-Christians alike. They have successfully forced their thoughts and practices throughout our culture—same-sex marriages, adopting children, and forcing their agenda on schools and corporate America under the guise of being sensitive to and tolerant of the lifestyles of others. The big problem is:

This is in total conflict with the teachings of Jesus and the Bible.

And despite the laws that have been passed permitting such practices, we know Jesus confirmed marriage as a holy union between a man and woman. Here we read as He quotes Genesis 1: 27 and 2: 24 explaining marriage is between a man and a woman when asked about divorce by the Pharisees.

*“And He answered and said, “Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning **MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE,** and said, ‘**FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH**’? “So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.””* Matthew 19: 4-6

Finally, the third condemnation when “God gave them over to...”

*"And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, **God gave them over to a depraved mind**, to do those things which are not proper, being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents (this was one of the Ten Commandments), without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them."*

Romans 1: 28-32

The Death Penalty for Sin Never Went Away

More Signs of the End Times

"For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths." 2 Timothy 4: 3-4

This describes our culture today and, sadly, even the teaching in some churches. But make no mistake about it.

God did not change His mind—about loving us to the point of sending Jesus to save us from our sins OR giving us over to ourselves to the point of death, and that, eternal death Jesus called Hell.

I beg you consider the words of our risen Christ that alone can speak truth and life to you.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. " John 3:16

"Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me." John 14: 6

For Christ's sake,

Walter