

## Romans 1

**Romans 1**  
**Tape 8118**  
**Pastor Chuck Smith**

What a joy it is. To labor for the Lord and to serve the Lord. And that brings us to Romans, chapter one, where Paul said:

*Paul, a servant*(a bondservant or bonds slave) *of Jesus Christ*, Paul wrote his letter to the Romans while he was in Corinth at about 60 AD. It was his third visit to Corinth. And in his opening here, he will express to them the desire that he has had, to come to Rome. A long standing desire, but up until this present, the time that he wrote, he was hindered from going. Now when we closed the Book of Acts last week, we found Paul in Rome, at the end of the Book of Acts. That was three years after he wrote this desire that he had to come to Rome. Now he speaks of his desire as having been a long standing desire. We know that it was the will of God that Paul was to go to Rome. Jesus said, "As you have borne witness of Me in Jerusalem, so must you bear witness of Me in Rome". This desire to go to Rome was a desire that was put upon his heart by the Lord as the Lord said that He would write His desires on the fleshly tablets of our hearts. So God had put upon Paul's heart that desire to go to Rome, but it was several years before the desire was a fulfillment. Often times God reveals His will in advance, but it takes time for it to be accomplished. Look how long Abraham waited for the promise of God to give him a son through Sarah. And so often times like with Abraham, we get impatient waiting upon God. And we think, well, maybe God needs my help. Maybe God can't quite do it without me getting involved. As the general rule, we are able to pretty well mess things up when we get involved. And then it takes a little longer for God to unscramble our mess before He can go ahead with His program. So Paul is writing. And so you were three years ahead of this writing last week. Now we are going back three years earlier as Paul was writing to the Romans, expressing his desire to come.

He calls himself a servant of Jesus Christ. When Paul was on his way to Damascus to imprison the believers of Jesus Christ. Breathing out murder against them. Very strong in his feelings against Christianity. Determined to wipe out this sect! The Lord apprehended Paul. And as he was lying there on the ground, the Lord spoke to him and said, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest Thou Me?" His response was, "Who art Thou, Lord, that I might serve Thee?" And it was at that point that Paul became a servant of Jesus Christ.

Now he is writing to the Roman church many years later. About twenty seven or so years later. And he calls himself a slave or a bonds slave of Jesus Christ, *called to be an apostle*, Writing to the Ephesians, he said Paul an Apostle by the will of God. Here he speaks of his calling to be an Apostle. One who has been sent out by the Lord and *separated unto the gospel of God*, Or the Good News of God. About the only place you are going to find good news today is in the church. You won't watch it or you won't see it on the television newscast. You are going to see bad news only. You won't read it in your newspapers. But the good news of Jesus Christ is just as good as it ever was! The news that God can transform our lives from darkness to light! From the power of Satan unto God, the wonderful good news!

<sup>2</sup>(Which (that is good news) *he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures*,) As you go through the Old Testament and the prophesies of the Scriptures, they are prophesying of the coming of God's anointed King or the Messiah. Jesus Christ is the Messiah! And thus the good news is that God has fulfilled the promises to their fathers, the prophets. And God has sent the Messiah, the Savior into the world. Isaiah said all of us like sheep had gone astray. We turned everyone of us to our own way. And God laid on Him the iniquities of us all. The good news of the Messiah who would come and who would bear our sins. God would put on Him the iniquities of us all. But by bearing our sin, He would grant to us eternal life, forgiveness of sins.

So the promise of this good news by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, <sup>3</sup>*Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord* (Over three hundred predictions concerning Jesus. Giving details and aspects of His life were fulfilled by Jesus Christ. It, as far as mathematical probabilities, is impossible for anyone to fulfill those predictions. And yet Jesus did.)

And so he was declared, Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, *which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh*; Many of the promises concerning the Messiah were related to David. It started when

David had his friend Nathan over. As they were sitting there talking, David said, you know Nathan, I was watching the people go into the tent over there to worship God. For they had moved the Tabernacle to Jerusalem. I was sitting here in my palace. In all my luxuries of my palace. And here God is dwelling in a tent. That is not fair Nathan. I'm going to build a house for God that is going to excel anything. I mean I'm not going to spare any expense. I'm going to build God a magnificent house! His friend Nathan the prophet said that that sounded like a splendid idea. Do all that is in your heart. Nathan went home. He couldn't sleep that night. God woke him up and said Nathan, you spoke out of turn. You didn't wait on Me. You didn't listen for My voice. You encouraged David to build Me a house. Nathan, I can't have David building Me a house. This guy's hands are too bloody. So you're going have to go back and tell David that he can't build Me a house. But you tell David, I'll build him a house! And that there will be one of his seed that will sit upon the throne forever. That is the Messiah will be a descendant of David.

So the next morning as Nathan came into David he said, Oh, David I've got some bad news and some good news. The bad news is that you can't build God a house. You are a man of war. Your hands are bloody. But the good news is that God said He took you from the shepcote and from following after the sheep and He made you the ruler over His people. And God is going to build you a house. And there shall never cease one of your descendants from sitting on the throne. David immediately recognized that as a promise that from his descendants, the Messiah would come.

So David went in to the Lord. He said, oh Lord, You took me from the shepcote, following after the sheep. You made me the ruler over Your people. Oh God, You have done so much! I mean I'm amazed at what You've already done for me. But now You speak of the future! What can I say? Here, David, probably the most articulate man who ever lived. A man who was gifted in words praising God. The Psalms are the witness of how capable this man was of expression of praise and thanksgiving. And yet, so overwhelmed by the goodness of God, is that he is speechless!

You know, I love it when you just get to that place of awe and wonder so much that you just can't say anything. Saborollan said when prayer reaches its ultimate, words are impossible. And you have been so overwhelmed by God's love and grace that I just, you know, just can't. Anything you say is almost cheapening what God has done. In trying to express thanks, there aren't any words in the English language that are adequate to express the feelings of your heart and your spirit for what the Lord has done for you. This is happening to me more and more. God is blessing in such glorious ways, that I find myself at a loss trying to express how much I appreciate what God has done and what God is doing. I find words are inadequate as the Scriptures speak about the joy. It says it is unspeakable or that it is indescribable.

Paul in describing the glorious trip that he had to heaven. He said that it was impossible, it would be a crime to try to describe the glory and the beauties that he heard while there in heaven. It would be a crime to try and describe it because language hasn't been invented.

The modern philosophers today talk about the ultimate experience. And the difficulty of having the ultimate experience. Now were are not sure that anybody has yet had it because the difficulty is that if a person did have the ultimate experience, they wouldn't be able to describe it because there haven't been words that have been created that could describe or define the ultimate experience. So if you had it you really couldn't share it. Because there isn't language to share it. And so if you had it and you should say to a friend. Oh, oh, last night, I had the ultimate experience. And if they say, oh great, tell me about it. They'd know that you don't know anything about it. Because if you knew anything about it, you knew you couldn't describe it. Julian Huxley, who has had such a tremendous influence on our present educational system thought that the ultimate experience was perhaps dying under or while hallucinating on LSD. He influenced a lot of people. In fact they were having so many of the university students in Europe committing suicide, thinking that maybe this was the ultimate experience, death being the ultimate experience. Can you imagine that? That they had to start telling the classes, we're not certain that death is the ultimate experience. In other words, don't try to find the ultimate experience in suicide or death because we're not certain that that is it. Oh, poor world. As we get down a little bit Paul is going to tell us about it. Professing himself to be wise, he became a fool because they began to worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator.

<sup>4</sup>*And declared to be (In the Scriptures) the Son of God with power;* The son of David according to the Scriptures but also declared to be the Son of God with power. For unto us a child is born. Unto us a Son is given.

The child was to be of the seed of David, but He was also to be the Son of God given to us. A child is born, a Son is given. The Psalm two speaks about the Son of God. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, we are told in John.

So declared to be the Son of God with power *according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead*: The greatest proof that Jesus is indeed the promised Messiah is the resurrection from the dead! In the gospel of John, as he closes his gospel, he said, and many other signs Jesus did, which I did not record. But these things are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and by believing you might have life in His name. Now as John gave to us the sign of Jesus, the works, the miracles that prove that He was supernatural, the Son of God, the final sign would be His resurrection from the dead. When the Jews asked Jesus for a sign, He said there will no sign be given to this wicked and adulterous generation except the sign of Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The only sign Jesus was going to give to them was His resurrection. And so Paul said, by His resurrection from the dead He was declared to be the Son of God.

<sup>5</sup>*By whom* (That is by Jesus.) *we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name*: So Paul experienced the grace of God. He talked of himself as the chief of sinners and yet as such he experienced the grace of God. You, too, can experience the grace of God. God's blessings, God's unmerited favor and this theme of God's grace. We are going to discover it throughout the whole book of Romans. And I pray that as we come through the book of Romans, that you will come to a fuller, richer understanding of God's grace than you ever have before.

You see, so much of our training is that of reward for good behavior and punishment for bad behavior. So if you want to receive special favors you are especially good. I mean that is just the way it is. If you don't want any dessert, just be bad and you will be deprived of dessert. You have to go to bed right after dinner, but you don't get dessert because you have been bad today. So it's the reward system. The reward for being good and the punishment for being bad. And it so clouds our attitude mentally that we carry this over to God. And there are so many times where we feel, well I've been so horrible. I've been so miserable. I've just been out of sorts and surely God won't bless me today because I've been so miserable. And God doesn't bless you. And you say, see, I knew it! I knew God wouldn't bless me. I've been so horrible. Well, no, that isn't why God didn't bless you. The reason why God didn't bless you is that you didn't believe and trust Him to bless you. If you believe and trust God to bless you, He will! If you believe that He won't, He won't. You don't have faith for the blessings. You know that I have discovered this interesting thing about grace. That I have learned to expect to be blessed by God though I realize that I don't deserve it. You know what? The blessings have never stopped because I'm trusting God to bless me because I know that God loves me and wants to bless me! God wants to bless you. God wants to just lavish His love upon you.

Jesus said if you earthly fathers know how to give good gifts to your children. Now I take my grandkids into Toys R Us and I turn them loose and we go up to the check stand and check out the toys that they have chosen. And I love it! I love it! It's just, I don't know, it just does something for me to see their smiles and to see their reactions and their responses. Before they can hardly talk, when grandpa is coming down, it's Chuck E Cheese or Toys R Us, you know. I mean it's just a routine. And it's a joy! Just a joy. And so with God! And if you, being an earthly father. I'm just an earthly father. I'm not even a good example, but God loves you and just wants to bless you! And the lack of blessings is not because of the lack of devotion, it's because of the lack of faith. The lack of devotion often creates the lack of faith. And if you believe something to be true, and in a sense, if I believe that, you know, as long as I'm doing this, God isn't going to bless me. As long as I'm doing that, I'm not going to expect God to bless me. He doesn't. I mean, the blessings are received by faith in God's grace. We are going to get into that quite a bit as we go through Romans. So that you will discover the key to being blessed by God. When I discovered this several years ago while going through Romans, I discovered the grace of God. And the fact that God will bless me because of His love for me, not because I deserve it. Not because I'm worthy. But even when I'm totally undeserving and unworthy, He even often times chooses that to show His grace. Just to say I still love you, Chuck, in spite of the fact that you've really messed it up. I still love you. It's just sort of an assurance of saying, I still love you. And what a joy it is to be blessed of God. And not on a reward of my goodness but just as a sign of His tremendous love for me. So we've received grace and apostleship for the

obedience to the faith among all nations for His name. The Lord had sent Paul out to all the nations. Apostleship means to be sent out. Sent out by God to all of the nations for the name of Christ.

<sup>6</sup>*Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ:* I've been called to be an apostle. You also, have been called by Jesus Christ.

And so his address of the letter is <sup>7</sup>*To all that be in Rome, beloved of God,* You know, you love everybody, but your family is beloved. They are close. There is a special kind of a love for those who are in the family. And being in the family of God, you've got a special relationship. For God so loved the world, but you are beloved of God. You are special. Very special. You're of the family of God; and thus in that intimate circle of beloved of God and *called to be saints:* It's rather tragic that the Catholic church has set up a long list of qualifications in order to be sainted by the church. You've got to live sort of an exemplary life. You have to do many wonderful deeds. Then after you die you have to answer the prayers of the people so that they can give testimony that they have prayed to you and their loved one was healed or some miracles were done as they prayed to you. And if they get enough witnesses and testimonies to say, well, we prayed to Saint Charles and he, you know, did this for us and did that for us and all, then they will have their meeting and their counsel. They will consider you. And then they will acclaim that you were a saint. And you will get the official title of saint. The Lord doesn't put you through all that rigamarow. The Lord just calls you a saint. That's neat. I like the ring. It sounds great! Saint Charles, I mean, doesn't that have a ring to it? I mean it sounds good.

You know I like it that John referred to himself as the disciple that Jesus loved. Nobody else said that about him. Mark, Matthew, Luke, they don't say John was the disciple that Jesus loved. Only John says that. He calls himself the disciple that Jesus loved. Well, you are the one who He has made a saint. You've been called to be a saint. And that's just by His grace. Again, it isn't that I'm deserving that title, but that's something that He has given.

No wonder he follows that by saying, *Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.* Now notice this is so typical. Paul begins all of his letters with this grace and peace. It is always in that order. You never read peace and grace be unto you. And the reason being is that you cannot know the peace of God until you know the grace of God. It is not until you know the grace of God that you can enter into the rest that God has for His people or that peace. As long as you are trying to be good enough to be accepted by God, you'll always be struggling. You'll never be at peace. It is only unto you come to the place where you understand it is God's work and God's love for you that has put you in the family of God. As undeserving and unworthy as we are, but God's grace towards me and the finished work of Jesus Christ, my righteousness is imputed to me by my faith in Jesus. And there I rest and because of that I have now peace. But I didn't have real peace until I knew and discovered the grace of God. And then it follows that, I'm resting. Not in my works but in the finished work of Jesus Christ. Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>8</sup>*First, (He said) I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.* Now it is interesting that we don't know anything of the origin of the church in the city of Rome. But it shows us how the gospel had spread. In fact in the first thirty years of the early church, the gospel was taken into all the world. When Paul wrote to the Colossians, just a couple of years later, he said and the word of the gospel as it has come to you as it is in all the world.

In the last chapter of Acts, we find that when Paul finally arrived at the Roman port of Puteoli, when the saints in Rome heard of Paul's arrival, they came on out to the Appian Way to meet Paul, all the way to Appii to meet Paul there and some as far as the Three Taverns. They came over to meet him. There was a strong body of believers there in Rome. And their faith was spoken of throughout the whole world. People were talking about the wonderful church in Rome. It's exciting that God is working in so many places today! We could very well write to many of the pastors and say, you know we thank God for your faith and how that, you know, your church is being blessed and people all over the world are hearing of what God is doing there in San Diego or there in Albuquerque or Ft. Lauderdale or Spokane or Seattle or all around where God is working in such a glorious way.

<sup>9</sup>*For God (He said) is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, (The good news of Jesus!) that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers;* (Interesting, that as Paul speaks about his prayer life, he declares that God is his witness. Jesus said, when you pray, go into the closet and shut the door and pray to your Father, which sees in secret. And your Father which sees in secret will shall reward you openly.

Paul could not call others to bear witness, though they were his companions. He didn't say that Timothy will bear witness that I'm always praying for you. Or Luke will bear witness of my prayer for you. Or Aristarchus will bear witness of the prayers that I've prayed. No, he says, God is my witness, that without ceasing, I'm mentioning you always in my prayers. This man Paul is an Apostle, a servant of Jesus Christ, and really an example. He was able to say, be ye followers of me even as I also am of Jesus Christ. The prayer life of Paul. God bears witness.

<sup>10</sup>*Making request, (His prayer was, that) if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you.* My desire, my prayer. I want to come. I want to visit you. I'm praying that that will be the will of God. Now Paul was desiring to go to many different places, and God stopped him. They has tried to go to Bithynia but the Spirit hindered them. Now Paul is praying that it will be God's will, after all this time, I'd like to come and visit you in Rome. Not that I might see the sights of Rome. Not that I might walk through the Forum and you know, see all of the wonderful sights there in Rome. <sup>11</sup>*For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end (the end result) ye may be established (to be more established in you faith. Not to come as a tourist or a sightseer or to satisfy a curiosity of just seeing Rome, the lights of Rome and all. But my desire is to impart to you some spiritual gift. The end result is your being established.);* <sup>12</sup>*That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.* That just by our sharing together, I will be edified, you will be edified. That should be the experience. Whenever we gather with the body of Christ, there should be a mutual edifying, blessing. Oh, how good to see you! Oh, what a blessing it is to be able to spend this time with you. And as we share with one another what God is doing in our lives, it is always just a blessing, an edifying experience. And that's what Paul is desiring. That I might come and share with you what God has been doing in my life. I want to hear what God is doing in your life. That we might just have mutual benefit by our visiting together.

Now he says, I want you to know. <sup>13</sup>*Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto, Up to now I have been hindered.) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles.* I want to see God's work in your life. Now the Bible speaks about fruit abounding to our account. The fruit of the ministry. People's lives being blessed. People's lives being edified through the ministry. That's the fruit of the ministry. The blessings that come to others. So Paul desires that he might bear fruit in Rome there also. He might be able to bring others to the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

<sup>14</sup>*I am debtor (he said) both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.* <sup>15</sup>*So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.* I want to come and preach the gospel! <sup>16</sup>*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.* So Paul's expression of his desire to preach the gospel in Rome, the capital of the world. He had that opportunity. It didn't come just as he was expecting or hoping. He came to Rome as a prisoner of the Roman government because of his appeal to Caesar. But God blessed his time in Rome as we studied in the last chapter of Acts. Many were converted. Paul wrote later to the Corinthians, telling them of the conversion of many, even those of Caesar's household. And so a great ministry there in Rome. Fruit as he desired.

So in the gospel of Christ, <sup>17</sup>*For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.* The righteousness of God through faith. It's revealed in faith. There is that righteousness that is of works. That is doing the right things. And there are many people who practice hard at doing the right thing.

The Pharisees, look how hard they struggled to do the right thing. Jesus spoke of the Pharisees of straining at a gnat. It was unlawful to eat anything that had blood. All of the meat that they butchered had to be thoroughly bled to be kosher. To be eaten. So if they were jogging down the street and a gnat would go down their throat they would gag themselves straining at a gnat, trying to regurgitate the thing so they wouldn't swallow it and thus violate the law of having blood. They tried hard to be righteous. But the righteousness was self righteousness. And God said our self righteousness is as filthy rags in the sight of God. All of that tremendous endeavor of the Pharisees was, Jesus said, except your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you are not going to enter the kingdom of heaven.

So the righteousness of God is the other righteousness versus the self righteousness which is my work. It is the righteousness which is through faith in Jesus Christ where God imputes to me the righteousness of Christ. Now when Jesus said to His disciples, except your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, I'm certain that their mouths dropped open and they said, no way. I mean these guys practice being righteous. And Jesus said, that isn't sufficient. You've got to exceed, but Jesus was talking about not righteousness that comes by our works but righteousness that comes by our faith in Jesus Christ. The righteousness that God accounts or imputes to me. And as we go in Romans, this will be one of the subjects that Paul takes up in great detail. That righteousness which is of Christ through faith. Now the righteousness of God is revealed. As we get into verse eighteen, the wrath of God is revealed. So the revelation of the righteousness of God. That is which is imparted to me that the just shall live by faith, by my faith in Jesus Christ. God accounts my faith for righteousness.

But on the other side of the coin, the wrath of God shall be revealed. Now not a popular subject. People don't like to hear about this. The moment you mention the wrath of God then they give you some kind of a classification of hell fire, brimstone preacher. And they don't want to hear of the wrath of God. There is all of this flowery talk of the love of God and you know, God is love and love is God. This whole bit. And they don't want to know. They don't want to hear that God's wrath is going to be revealed. And yet if we do not teach that God's wrath is going to come against all ungodliness and the unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth of God in unrighteousness, we are not being honest with the people. We are not declaring the full gospel. There is that other side. Yes, God is love. Yes, God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son. But the other side of the coin is: <sup>18</sup>*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;* You cannot sin without paying the consequences for your sin. Either your sins will be forgiven by the grace of God through Jesus Christ or you will be punished forever for your sins. The Bible speaks of the judgment of God that is going to come upon this earth as God will judge the earth for their wickedness and their sin. And I do believe that that day of God's judgment is not far off. I believe the conditions of the world are getting to that place where God must judge the world. Now we do know historically that God has judged the world with a flood. We know historically that God has judged certain cities. When the wickedness gets so bad then God just says that's it. And He wipes out that generation. As He did in the days of Noah. When the hearts of men were only evil continually. He did that in the case of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, where their sins became so blatant that God wiped them out. So the wrath of God will be revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth of God in unrighteousness. It's not that they don't know God. But they hold the truth of God in unrighteousness.

And so Paul tells us and he gives now the indictment. This is the cause. This is the reason. <sup>19</sup>*Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.* No man has an excuse for not believing in God for God has revealed Himself unto man by His creation. And it is God's intent that man in observing God's creation, comes to the acknowledgment and the knowledge of the existence of God. You cannot have design without a designer or a machine without a mechanic or an engineer who designed it. And so here we are. The wrath of God has been revealed because when they knew that God existed. That which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God had showed it unto them. The Bible tells us that the heavens declare the glory of God. You go out and look up into the heavens. You see the moon, the stars, the planets, the galaxies. They declare to you of the Creator. And even scientists today are forced to admit the day of creation. They call it the big bang. But when it all started, we say that there was a Creator. God was the first cause, not the big bang the first cause.

<sup>20</sup>*For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:* The heavens declare the glory of God. The earth shows His handiwork. The life forms show design. Oh, what fabulous design. You look at the plants, the flowers, the insects, the animals, and man. You have to marvel at the design. We are in a day in which men are, you know, making everything very small. Trying to make miniature kind of chips and so forth. Everything is smaller and smaller, doing more work. Can you imagine how large an ant brain must be? Yet the wisdom that the little ant has. He knows that winter is coming. He can't swim so he lays up store in the summer. You've probably met some of them lately in your kitchen. They are gathering up for winter when they can't get out. Now what tells that little ant where the food is? And how does he tell his friends? How does he

communicate? I've found something, you know. And then to watch four of five of them working together to get one crumb off the table you know. Amazing! And yet their brains can't be that big. Solomon, that wise man said, go the ant, you sluggard. Learn of his ways and be wise. There are four things on earth that are small but are exceedingly wise. He talks about the ants laying up their food in the summer. Design, marvelous design! They tell you of the wisdom of God. The heavens, the awesomeness of the universe tells you of the glory of God! And day unto day they are talking to you. And night unto night they are speaking. And it's a universal language. That is why in every culture, even the most primitive, there is the awareness and the consciousness of God and the worship of God. Many times it's false. They have been lead astray, but yet the basic idea and concept of the existence of a Creator, a higher power, is there. Why? Because it is revealed throughout His creation.

But, <sup>21</sup>*Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.* Now we have the downward plunge of man. Yes, God exists. It's obvious in creation. The design testifies of the Creator. But yet men do not glorify Him as God. We are exalting man. We are in the age of humanism. Where man is exalted. Actually I guess we are getting to the place of animalism and treeism because they are beginning to exalt the animals and the trees above man. But the worship of the creation rather than the Creator. First of all they knew God but they wouldn't glorify Him as God.

How do these things come about? You have to get really imaginative. How did you get your eyes? Well, zillions of years ago when you were just a worm, the sun began to give you ultraviolet radiation that caused a mutation of your cells that created a freckle. Unfortunately the freckle wasn't on the tail end. And gradually through a process of many mutations, that freckle turned into an eye. In a socket. That could move. And you could see around. So you became a salamander. And as you were trying to make your way over the rocks, the coral, fresh out of that hot ocean, your poor little bottom side got scratched. Scabbed over. It became callused. And it continued to grow and develop until it became legs. And then you could walk. You see, as I said when you try and put God out of the equation, it takes an awful lot of imagination. They became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

<sup>22</sup>*Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,* Why do we laugh at this? Because it's foolish when you really stop to think of it. To think that your body could have developed through billions of years of fortudious occurrences of accidental circumstances is ridiculous. But he is on the downhill plunge.

Next, <sup>23</sup>*And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man,* The worship of man. And today we see that don't we? Young people by the thousands worshipping man. Gathering at the concerts worshipping. Worshipping the creature, man. Making their gods like unto corruptible man *and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.* Save the kangaroo rat. And it's amazing how many people will rally for these causes. But just take a good look at them. But really the tragic thing is that the government listens to them. They all look pretty much the same. Cut out of the same cloth.

Now because of this, changing the glory of an uncorruptible God into the image of a man or beast or birds or whatever. <sup>24</sup>*Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts,* God gave them over to the lusts to following and doing the lusts of their own hearts. *to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:* (A further step down.) <sup>25</sup>*Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.* I would like to suggest that the worship of the creature is irrational. To take a rose. To look at its beautiful design. To see the glorious color. To hold it to your nose and take a deep breath. And smell that marvelous fragrance. Then to hold it out and admire it and to say "That's God". That's ridiculous. That's not God. That's a creation of God. And it's irrational to behold the beauty of the rose and to worship the rose! The rational thing is to worship the One who was able to create such a beautiful flower. To put in it such a pleasant fragrance. Worshipping the Creator rather than the creature. But man has got things all mixed up today. And we are worshipping the creature rather than the Creator. And we are ascribing to the creature all types of miraculous powers of developing organs and so forth in order to meet the various recognized needs that I might have. So we're going downhill! Changing the truth of God to a lie. Oh how that is being done today. Because they did not want to retain the truth of God. They changed it into a lie.

<sup>26</sup>*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: (Or lesbianism.)* <sup>27</sup>*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 recompence of their error which was meet. (Which was fitting for what they had been doing. It is interesting to me that Satan will bring man to the lowest level of filth.*

Take the worship of these men in India, who have declared that they have had an experience of becoming gods, the avatar. They've gone through this transformation. And they have gone through the next level of evolutionary development. And they have entered into the god state. The Sibabbas and the others that brilliant professors go over to learn and to sit and to worship these men. Now these men who have elevated themselves to this god level. The Sibabbas and these others. To show you the level to which Satan brings a man's mind when he has taken over and has control. It is considered by these people that go over to worship the Sibabbas and so forth, a tremendous honor to drink his urine or to eat his defecation. Because they feel that god, Sibabba is entering them. Look at what Satan is reducing people to!

Some of the practices in homosexuality are much the same. The scating and so forth in homosexuality is the same thing. Satan will bring you to the lowest filthiest level! So here are men who refuse God. They don't want retain God in their minds. They won't acknowledge the truth of God. And so you are on a down hill skid to the lowest levels of depravity and filth. It isn't just a, well you know, I just don't want to believe in God and all. Hey, that is just the beginning. You are on the way down. And you are going to end up at the bottom! For this cause God gave them over to their vile affections. Now it is interesting to me, he says the wrath of God is going to be revealed from heaven. And it's when man gets to this level that the wrath of God is revealed. The wrath of God was revealed against Sodom and Gomorrah when? When it came to the place where the homosexuals were actively operating in streets brazenly. Parading their gay pride. That's when God said, "It's enough". And He destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. And I believe that the activity of the homosexual community, the gay pride parades and things of this nature, are only an indication of that we are at the place where the wrath of God will soon again be revealed from heaven. The judgment of God against the unrighteousness of men.

<sup>28</sup>*And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, (I don't want to know about God.) God gave them over to a reprobate mind, (Void of God and the understanding of God.) to do those things which are not convenient (decent);* <sup>29</sup>*Being filled with all unrighteousness, (and now the activities), fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,* <sup>30</sup>*Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,* <sup>31</sup>*Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:* <sup>32</sup>*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.* There are things that you abhor. That you would never think of doing. And yet it is interesting how that in television and movies, people take pleasure in those that do them. We watch these horrible things. People being blown away and you know, the tough guy. Heads rolling and things like that. There is some kind of a reason why people watch that stuff. They take pleasure in seeing fornication or adultery or stuff like that portrayed in movies. So not only do they do them but they take pleasure. Those who take pleasure in those things are guilty. The Bible says, don't be deceived. God is not mocked. What so ever a man sows, that shall he also reap. And if you sow to the flesh, of the flesh you are going to reap corruption. If you are sowing this stuff into your mind. Taking pleasure and sowing this junk into your mind to the flesh, then you are going to reap corruption. People just don't go out and do these things. They are things that are planted in their minds.

Bundy confessed to James Dobson of being hooked on pornography. How that pornography finally didn't satisfy. He had to actually go out and experience. And thus that chain of murders. You are sowing that in your mind. You are planting seeds of corruption. Oh, that God would help us to keep ourselves pure. Our minds pure! Our hearts pure! That we would sow to the Spirit. And that's why you are here tonight. You are sowing to the Spirit tonight. The Word of God is Spirit and it is Life. And this will transform you. This will change you. This will elevate you. It'll lift you out of the pit and this world and its corruption. And it will put you on another level, a higher level. A pure level. A holy level. That's why it's so important that we guard what goes into our mind.

And that we plant to the Spirit, that we study the Word and we stay in the Word, because we are living in a corrupt world and it is trying to infect you with its corruption and evil. You've got to stand.

Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself. We've got to make that purpose in our heart. I'm not going to defile my mind. I'm not going to defile my body. I'm going to stay pure for God's sake. I'm going to seek after God. And as you do, you're lifted higher and higher.

You turn away from God. You don't want God in your mind. You take that path. You begin to worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator. You'll end up at the bottom of filth. You are moving in one direction or the other. Upward or downward. And you determine the direction by your own desires. I want to seek God. I want to be conformed into His image. I want to be pure and holy as He is pure and holy. Moving up. I don't want to keep God in my mind. I want to do my own thing. I want to follow my own desire. You're moving down. And Satan will take you to the bottom. You'll find yourself doing things that you never dreamed that you would ever do or were capable of doing. You find yourself in that pit.

Now Paul here in chapter one is showing that without God, we're all of us are lost. The whole world is guilty. As we move into the next chapter he will confirm that. There is none righteous, no not one. And so as we move into chapter two he'll show us that we are all guilty thus we all need salvation that God has offered to man. We will understand now even more the grace of God. It's extended to man at the bottom of the pit. That man who has gone all the way down to the depths is not beyond the love of God or the reach of God or the grace of God. For God's grace reaches to the lowest hell to bring a man out of the pit who is ready to be destroyed. Oh how marvelous is the grace of God that He has offered to you and to me!

Father, we thank You for Your Word. It is Spirit. It is Life. And Lord, we see the world around us. And we see the very things that Paul is describing here and men who did not want to retain God in their minds. And so were given over by God to reprobate minds. To do these filthy things. To live lives like animals. Lord, we want to live like You. We want the higher plane, Lord. We want to be conformed into the image of Jesus. Purify our minds and our hearts. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

A fellow wrote to Ann Landers and said: Dear Ann, please help me I am confused. I'm having an affair with two different women at the same time. And I want to get married but I don't know which one to marry. Please advise me but don't give me any of that morality stuff. She wrote back, dear two timer, you say that you don't want any of that morality stuff, but that's the only thing that separates man from the animal kingdom. Therefore I advise you to write to a veterinarian for advice.

There are two planes upon which to live. The Spiritual plane or the fleshly plane. After God or after the animals. Now no wonder man looks to the animals to find his roots. He is living like an animal. And thus he looks to the animal kingdom for his roots. But your roots are not in the animal kingdom. You are not a highly evolved animal. We have fallen from the image of God. The roots are upward. Man was made in the image of God. He's fallen from that image. If you want to find your roots, find God. And you'll find life and what life is all about. The life that God intended. Life on the highest plane. As we go through Romans, I pray that God will bring each of us into life in the highest plane. That life in Christ. That life in the Spirit.

May the Lord be with you and bless you. May He fill you with His Spirit. May He guide you with His counsel. And may we each one be drawn closer to Jesus Christ with each day.